

MUNSTER PLAN COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall and could be accessed remotely via Zoom, a video conferencing application.

Call to Order: Mr. Baker called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Members in Attendance:

Steve Tulowitzki
Lee Ann Mellon
Rachel Branagan
Bill Baker
Brian Specht
Andy Koultourides

Members Absent:

Roland Raffin

Staff Present:

Sergio Mendoza, Planning Director
Jill DiTommaso, Deputy Town Manager
Rachel Christenson, HWC Engineering
David Wickland, Attorney

Approval of Minutes:

a. October 10, 2023, Regular Plan Commission Meeting

Motion: Ms. Branagan moved to approve the October 10, 2023, regular meeting minutes as presented.

Second: Ms. Mellon

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Preliminary Hearings:

a. PC23-024 Scott Yahne requesting approval of a preliminary plat to consolidate (3) existing lots on the western side of Indiana Parkway into (1) contiguous 6.9885 acre lot at 9750 Indiana Parkway.

Scott Yahne said he is appearing on behalf of Floyds Concern at 9750 Indiana Parkway. His office address is located at 9301 Calumet Avenue, Suite 2F, in Munster, Indiana. He said they are seeking Preliminary Plat approval today. He said their engineer, Ryan, is attending via Zoom. He was asked to be brief since they hope to be set for a public hearing in November. He said within five days, they will also be filing the Final Plat and Development Plan applications which will coincide with this Preliminary Plat. In 2018, he was here before the Plan Commission. They had this plat fully approved at that time. It sat behind him in his office with signatures for easements that he had ready to go and record. The pandemic and a few other events hit so they didn't end up doing that. They no longer need to exchange easements of streets and sidewalks with the Town. This Preliminary Plat has been adjusted slightly from that plat but, for the most part, it is the same. Where they now have three lots for 3 Floyds, they are going to consolidate them down to one lot. Basically, the south side of Indiana Parkway will be consolidated into one lot. They can't consolidate the north side because it is on the other side of the street, so it will be its own separate lot. Mr. Baker asked that they prepare a breakdown for the next hearing to show the differences between the last time the Board went through this entire process and now, detailing what has been removed

and added. Mr. Mendoza said there are four lots of record. They want to combine them into two lots of record. They will feature an expansion of the facility for which they will provide a development plan. Mr. Yahne said originally, they were going to swap land with the Town for crossways parking or Indiana parking. That has been eliminated from the original. He said he would make sure Ryan gives the Board a red line version of this. He replied to a question from the Board about the amount of parking by saying that is part of their petition with the Board of Zoning Appeals. They will get that in November as well. It addresses the specific number of parking spaces. They exceed the demand for what is going to be added in there. As part of the plan, they will show the existing parking spaces in front of the distillery. There will also be some additional spaces. The Plan Commission will get a copy of the exact parking plan. Mr. Tulowitzki said 3 Floyds is a great partner for the Town of Munster. As a member of the Town Council and the Plan Commission, he said he was happy to know this project is funded, he looks forward to seeing more next month. He said he has had some feedback from members and residents of the Town as they were doing water tower restorations. He noticed the prominent water tower in the plan drawings near the 3 Floyds property. Since 3 Floyds is known for their graphic design, he suggested that there might be something the owners can do about that tower. Mr. Yahne said he would make this known.

Motion: Dr. Koultourides moved to grant preliminary plat approval for PC Docket No. 23-024 at a public hearing set for November 14, 2023.

Second: Mr. Tulowitzki

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Public Hearings:

- a. **PC23-021 Matt Kimmel/Centennial Village LLC, is requesting approval of an amendment to the Centennial Village Planned Unit Development, revisions to the CV Design Standards and Site Plan to include revisions to the size, location, and shape of Buildings "N" and "O."**

Mr. Mendoza said there have been some recent changes regarding the location of Building O. The applicants are now requesting that Building O be centered along the boulevard. There are also changes to Building N but that is not being addressed this month.

Matt Kimmel of 631 Killarney Drive, Dyer, Indiana, and representing Centennial Village LLC said they are here to get the Planned Unit Development Design standard to Centennial Village LLC modified to not only relocate Building O. He has met with the staff and Plan Commission members over the past few weeks to discuss the difference between the old location and the new location and the benefits of starting on Centennial Village Parkway. This will give it the prominence it deserves as a landmark hotel, a Tapestry by Hilton, which they believe will be the nicest full-service hotel in Lake County, Indiana. That, along with a few other minor changes, are all part of the Planned Unit Development design. It also has some allocation of square footage and some material design allocations for the exterior of the façade. They believe they are starting to figure out exactly how to resolve the site. They have some soil borings being taken place in the next month. He said they are here with additional details and Russ has brought a few answers to questions the Board had from last month's meeting.

Russ Pozen of DVG Team, Engineers of 1155 Troutwine Road, Crown Point, Indiana, said there had been a question about the square footage of the buildings. He explained that Building N was originally the middle, or anchor, building, that this building is replacing. Building N was 42,000 square feet and is being reduced down to 16,000 square feet in the newer configuration. This is a 26,000 square foot reduction.

Building O is changing quite a bit. It is replacing that location as the anchor in this area. It is going from 7,000 square feet to 98,000 square feet which has a hotel. There is a new increase of building square footage of about 60,000 Square feet, however, there are some intricacies of that which will add to the benefit of the community. It is not just added retail. It is a hotel and a banquet space that is replacing a prominent large banquet space at the Centennial. There are other uses and items that this hotel will bring to the community, things that the Town of Munster doesn't have and can definitely use. Mr. Pozen addressed questions about parking. He said they have a concept drawing, there will be more detailed engineering as they proceed forward but the two facilities together, Building O and Building N, will have about 203 parking spaces. He said the land plan easily shows 220 plus. As they nail that down, they will meet the PUD ordinance; they are exceeding that number of spaces in their current drawings. He said more details will follow about all the benefits of this beyond what Centennial Village already has to offer. Ms. Branagan said centering the building is perfect. She asked if they are accounting for event space parking or if that would be a separate parking calculation. Mr. Pozen said he hadn't addressed the details of the parking calculations and consideration of that use; however, the way Centennial Village works is that there is a lot of business opened and used at completely different times. There will always be a parking agreement with the facilities so parking that is nearby can be used and added. He said that question will be considered further when they get to the actual banquet facility development plan. Mr. Tulowitzki asked what the guidance is currently. Mr. Mendoza said the PUD requirements are 1.05 parking spaces per hotel unit. Mr. Tulowitzki asked about the overall plan and what had been applied to the Clubhouse. Mr. Mendoza said he could look into the impact it has on parking and if it meets the current standards. Mr. Kimmel said he would be happy to work with them on that. He said the point Mr. Pozen was making was to address critical comments in Centennial Village for peak parking times for different types of use. Within the hotel itself, there will be different functions; there will not just be hotel rooms. On the first floor, there will be a retail space which will likely be closed during the time that the banquet space may be used. There will be offsetting demands for parking that happens within the hotel but in other areas as well. Mr. Tulowitzki said the office space would not likely be open during a wedding. Mr. Kimmel agreed. Mr. Baker opened the public hearing.

Michael Goepfert of 10380 Oxford Place asked if the renditions of the hotel meet the standards for Centennial Village or is there an exception for a building like this. He said he asked because all the other buildings seem to be of the same design, and this one building is really separate from the others in the development. He said this also blocks the view of the lake. Mr. Baker closed the public hearing.

Mr. Kimmel responded to the comments. He said when you look at the design of this building, the first floor is precisely the same as the other buildings. It has cast stone, it has up and down lights, it has the uniformity across Centennial Village. This is a different building for a different use. They want uniformity there, but it does have a different form of detail than is on the other buildings. Ms. Mellon addressed the comment from Mr. Goepfert with respect to the centering of the building and the loss of the lake view. She said that in the preliminary stages of the development, a resident had brought an architect in who suggested the opening of the lake view. Those preliminary drawings had a very large block building in that space. The hotel design is very unique and by moving it to the middle, the symmetry of the entire development is better. Mr. Kimmel had explained to her that the lake was very low and couldn't be seen very well. There will be bike trails and he will be beautifying the lake area in his plan.

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to send a favorable recommendation to the Town Council for PC Docket No. 23-021 to change the size, location, and shape of the PUD including Building "O" in the Centennial Village Planned Unit Development.

Second: Ms. Branagan

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

- b. PC23-025 Tim Lentz of Tonn and Blank requesting approval of a development plan for a hospital expansion with a 5-story addition on the southwest side of the campus, parking lot expansion, helipad relocation, a central plant addition and site work to accommodate the new addition at 701 Superior Avenue.**

Tim Lentz from Tonn & Blank of 1623 Greenwood Avenue, Michigan City, Indiana, said this is a 5-story hospital addition to the Franciscan Hospital Planned Unit Development to meet the hospital diagnostic needs. It is nestled within what is now a courtyard in the current dock. There is also a central plant addition that serves that building. The goal of the addition is to make it look like it belongs on the existing campus. They are using the same or similar materials as on the rest of the campus. They are not trying to change the look of the campus; they want to add this as a feature to the campus. This project also includes all the other site work for required parking for this addition as well as for the vertical expansion that was previously reviewed. All the parking for both the developments is included in this project. Mr. Specht said the Plan Commission looked at the project to add onto a building last month. Mr. Lentz said there have been a few things. Last month, there was a Planned Unit Development amendment to change the height of the building due to height limitations based on the FAA. They also had a Development Plan review for the vertical expansion of the cancer center which is now 3 stories and going to 6 stories. For review now is the Development Plan review for the hospital expansion. Mr. Specht asked what order the projects will be worked. Mr. Lentz said the vertical expansion and the hospital expansion will happen simultaneously; they are both in design now. They are still designing the interior of both spaces but they are well under way so they would be starting immediately. Mr. Baker asked Mr. Lentz if any time has been spent in discussion with staff about the number of tanks by the street and whether Franciscan had addressed all the concerns the Town has about the safety of that component. He asked if and what they are locating and what that will look like at the end of this project. Ms. DiTommaso said she has not yet reviewed these plans. Mr. Lentz said they are relocating the main bulk of the oxygen. It will be away from the street, slightly further from the street but not substantially. It is planned on the opposite side of the access drive. It still has all the required fencing around the oxygen tanks. There are standards requirements for bulk oxygen that they will meet. Mr. Baker asked if there were standard requirements considering the amount of semi-truck traffic that has come before the Board about other projects in that particular area. Mr. Lentz said he is not familiar with that. He said they are putting substantial fencing on that side especially with bricks and louvers so there will be protection from the roadway to the oxygen tanks. Mr. Baker asked if the Town staff had any additional issues with regard to the stacking of the GE distribution facility similar to what they had heard a couple of years ago. Ms. DiTommaso said the stacking generally happens further to the west on Superior. She doesn't know of any specific issues with them doing this. Mr. Raffin said he shares Mr. Baker's concern on Superior with all the semi-trailer traffic on that area of Superior. Mr. Lentz said he wants the oxygen protected as much as the Board does; it is vital to the operation of the hospital. They can look at other ways to protect it. He explained that the fencing he is referring to is actually concrete foundation and brick fencing. They can add bollards or other protections as needed. He added that the nature of the bulk oxygen, it is at the back of the property, is that it must be accessible to the drive for semi-trucks to deliver it. There is an inherent danger there, but they can investigate ways to protect it further from Superior. Mr. Baker asked Mr. Lentz about the 45th Street traffic signal. Mr. Lentz said they don't have a traffic study included in this submission. They have done traffic counts that show it doesn't

warrant a signal at this level of development. Mr. Baker asked what the Town standpoint is on this. Ms. DiTommaso said it is volume, for the most part; it is turning movements in and out of the hospital as well as along the road. She said she had asked them to look at 45th and Calumet Avenue as well. Mr. Lentz said they are adding 175,000 square feet of construction. Mr. Baker said that amount will significantly increase the amount of traffic on this site. He asked if it will be directed in through Superior or through 45th Street. Mr. Lentz said it will still be directed to the main entrance from the north. They are directing patients and traffic to the hospital- to Superior not 45th. Mr. Lentz added that there will still be additional traffic that comes in off Superior, mainly to access the expansion for the cancer center. The traffic study they did included the anticipated additional volume to the campus. Mr. Baker said he will continue to ask for a strategic overall plan on how all this development will impact the path to the Borman Expressway which is where all these people are going. There are new hotels, additions to the brewery, additions to the hospitals, the addition of Maple Leaf and Kenmara. He wants to know if this should be a staff initiative or is this a Town Council function. Mr. Mendoza said the Town may wish to explore a thoroughfare plan for some of these future land uses. He has seen plans that are made considering specific land uses. Those uses are identified by certain code depending on the use and structures are needed for those specific uses. He said there may be a thoroughfare plan on file that may not have considered all these proposed projects. He can research that and see all this was anticipated and if that warrants a new thoroughfare study. Mr. Tulowitzki asked if the comprehensive plan may have this information but to his understanding, that has been put on hold. Mr. Baker opened the public hearing.

Jerry Kuipers of 217 Carnaby Place said he is a retired Fire Chief. With respect to the oxygen, he said if you talk to the Fire Chief, he may be able to give good some input on that because on the National Fire Code there are recommendations for barriers for various types of tanks that could be applicable to this. He said he bought a lot and built a house several years ago. They were required to put a sidewalk in front of that house. His neighbor, because he is on a corner lot, was required to put two sidewalks in, both on the sides where there is public access. He said he is assuming that Franciscan owns the property all the way to 45th. There is nowhere to walk there, not all the businesses in Town have sidewalks in have sidewalks in front of their properties which have public access. He said that Gerber, just west of this location, has a sidewalk, (the former) Whole Foods has a sidewalk but as soon as you get to the Franciscan property, there is no sidewalk at all, it is just grass. He said everyone is discussing the Ridge Road issue, he is not here to discuss that, but one of the issues is relating to safety because you have people on the sidewalk and everything. There is no sidewalk on 45th Street. He has personally seen kids riding their bikes on 45th; he has seen people walking on the street on 45th. One time, there was a guy in a wheelchair going down 45th. He called the Police Department and told them they might want to get behind this guy until he got where he was going to make sure he wouldn't get hit. He said everybody is upset about the safety on Ridge Road but the speed limit on Ridge Road is 35 MPH, the speed limit on 45th is 45 MPH and there is no sidewalk. You make people walk on the street. He said there is concern for a traffic signal for cars but what about the pedestrians? Mr. Baker asked is there is a sidewalk plan for that area. Ms. DiTommaso said it was discussed. Mr. Kuipers said he is all for expansion and capitalism, he is sure it will bring them more money. His suggestion is to invest some of that money into the community and add a sidewalk of some type. It would not have to be concrete. There is that blacktop that was put along Calumet Avenue between 45th and the train tracks. At least that is a sidewalk and people can walk on it. His suggestion to the Board, if they are going to approve this thing, is that it comes with a caveat that they put a sidewalk in there. It should also come with a date, not the

year 2025, but yesterday or by summer of next year they should have a sidewalk in there. Mr. Baker closed the public hearing.

Ms. Mellon said she completely agrees. There was a time in the Town when there were businesses that came forward and they weren't made to put sidewalks in at the time because there were sidewalks to nowhere or whatever. Later, they started requiring more sidewalks. She said she lives by Community Estates. She has watched kids ride their bikes, not just along 45th but over the railroad tracks as well. They are just trying to connect themselves to Centennial Park or to their friends in Briar Creek or other subdivisions. She said Mr. Kuipers is correct. They are going to increase their business; they can add to the community as a whole and help everyone traverse safely. Ms. Branagan said getting sidewalks on every business there may need a joint effort. Several Board members answered that you have to start somewhere and when a business is requesting a variance, that is a good opportunity.

Motion: Dr. Koultourides moved to approve PC Docket No. 23-025, a Development Plan for the expansion of the Franciscan Medical Campus for a new 5-story building, a new central plant, a new 375 space parking lot, the expansion of existing parking with an additional 154 parking spaces, relocate the Helipad further north, and relocated the existing Superior Avenue access further west on the condition that public sidewalks are to be added prior to the completion of this project.

Second: Mr. Tulowitzki

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Findings of Fact:

- a. **PC23-022 Matt Kimmel of Centennial Village LLC requesting approval of a development plan of Lot 8, Building "I" of Centennial Village PUD**

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to accept and approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 23-022.

Second: Ms. Branagan

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

- b. **PC23-016 Timothy Lentz of Tonn and Blank Construction LLC is requesting approval of an amendment to the Franciscan Alliance Planned Unit Development to accommodate height restrictions on the existing Hospital campus at 701 Superior Avenue.**

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to accept and approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 23-016.

Second: Ms. Branagan

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

- c. **PC23-023 Tim Lentz of Tonn and Blank requesting approval of a development plan for a vertical expansion of the existing Franciscan Health Medical Office Building at 701 Superior.**

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to accept and approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 23-023.

Second: Ms. Branagan

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Additional Business/Items for Discussion: None

Next Meeting: Mr. Baker announced that the next Regular Business Meeting will be November 14, 2023.

Adjournment:

Motion: Ms. Branagan moved to adjourn.

Second: Ms. Mellon

Vote: Yes – 6 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm

Chairman Bill Baker
Plan Commission

Date of Approval

Executive Secretary Sergio Mendoza
Plan Commission

Date of Approval