

MUNSTER PLAN COMMISSION
MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING
Meeting Date: May 11, 2021

Call to Order: 7:50 PM

The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall. In accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders 20-09 and subsequent orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic placing restrictions on the number of people allowed to gather in one location, some members attended the meeting remotely via Zoom, a video conferencing application.

Pledge of Allegiance

Members in Attendance:

Stuart Friedman (via Zoom)
Chuck Gardiner
Lee Ann Mellon
Roland Raffin
Brian Specht
Steve Tulowitzki

Members Absent:

William Baker

Staff Present:

Tom Vander Woude, Planning
Director
David Wickland, Attorney

Approval of Minutes:

a. April 13, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion: Mr. Gardiner moved to approve as presented.

Second: Mr. Specht

Resolved: Yes: 6. No: 0. Abstain: 0

Preliminary Hearings:

a. None.

Public Hearings:

a. PC20-008 BCORE Corridor Chicago LLC represented by Kimley-Horn requesting approval of a development plan to expand the driveway, alter a parking lot, and install landscaping and screening at the GE Appliance Distribution Center at 475 Superior Avenue.

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to continue PC docket 20-008.

Second: Mr. Gardiner.

Discussion: None.

Resolved: Yes: 6. No: 0. Abstain: 0.

b. PC 20-009 Guy Costanza/GM Contracting requesting approval of a development plan for a commercial development at 407-411 Ridge Road.

Motion: Mr. Gardiner moved to table the petition.

Second: Mr. Specht.

Discussion: None.

Resolved: Aye: 6. Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

c. PC 21-003 Michael J. Koufos/Kukla Properties LLC requesting approval of a development plan for the redevelopment of a former restaurant into an orthodontic office at 1734 45th Street

Mr. Vander Woude presented his staff report. He said that the applicant is redeveloping 1734 45th Street into an orthodontic office which includes interior renovation, removal of the former wood siding and mansard roof and replacement with brick and stone veneers, relocation of windows, new landscaping, and removal of the existing pole sign and replacing with a new monument sign. He said the applicant has received variances from the internal landscaping requirement. The approval is for the building materials, the landscaping plan, the architecture of the building, and the lighting plan. He said that zoning standards are listed in the staff report. He said any changes to the building and lot must comply with the standards. He stated that there are items that don't comply which are the rooftop mechanicals and the lighting plan because they are not included in the submittal package. He said he recommends approval on the condition that they present staff with an appropriate screening material and a lighting plan.

Mr. Raffin opened the public hearing. No comments. Mr. Raffin closed the public hearing.

Mr. Raffin said he thinks it's a good plan and agrees with the staff recommendation. He thanked Dr. Koufos for staying in town. Mr. Specht asked whether the wooden siding would be removed. Dr. Koufos said that they had already been removed.

Motion: Mr. Gardiner moved to approve with the following conditions:

1. A final code compliant lighting and photometric plan shall be submitted for staff approval.
2. The rooftop mechanicals shall be screened from the Frontage.

Second: Mr. Friedman

Discussion: None.

Resolved: Yes: 6. No: 0. Abstain: 0. Motion carries.

d. PC 21-004 Maple Leaf Crossing LLC requesting approval of a development plan for a professional office building at 9410 Calumet Ave. in the Maple Leaf Crossing PUD.

Mr. Vander Woude presented his staff report. He said that the Jay Lieser of Maple Leaf Crossing LLC has presented plans for the construction of a four-story, professional office building at 9410 Calumet Avenue at the northeast corner of the Maple Leaf Crossing PUD. The Maple Leaf Crossing PUD is an approximately 6-acre parcel located at the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Calumet Avenue and the CN Railroad tracks. The proposed building is the first building to be submitted for development plan approval. Staff reviewed the project at the April 29, 2021 meeting of the Site Plan Review Committee.

This project is governed by Ordinance 1803 which established the Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development at 9352-9482 Calumet Avenue. The ordinance was adopted in July 2020 by the Munster Town Council, on the recommendation of the Plan Commission. The approved PUD includes site engineering plans, a set of development standards, and a site-wide landscaping plan, which are attached

to this memo. Mr. Lieser has represented that the site plan is unchanged from that approved as part of the Maple Leaf Crossing PUD and is only seeking approval of the building design, including the architectural style and the building materials.

He stated that he provided the standards for review in staff report, which are taken from Ordinance 1803 and the zoning ordinance. He noted that the standards have all been met and they are seeking determination from the Plan Commission whether the project meets the height maximum of 60 feet, whether the windows are square or vertical in proportion, and whether the façade articulation is sufficient. He further noted that the signs depicted in the rendering do not comply with the zoning ordinance because they are shown to be applied to the second, third, and fourth stories of the building and that there is a generator shown to be adjacent to Maple Leaf Crossing that is not screened which is required by the standards.

Mr. Lieser said that they are proposing a building of Indiana limestone panels that are cut to imitate the shipping container metal panels. Mr. Raffin asked how they would keep the limestone clean. He said he built a house in Park West out of limestone and they do have to wash it. Mr. Raffin asked whether they would require cleaning in their covenants. Mr. Lieser said there would be a POA. Mr. Raffin asked architect Michael Stanula what would make the building unique. Mr. Stanula said that the theme of shipping containers is echoed in the limestone panels, which is timeless like the railroad is timeless. He said they are making their own identity. Mr. Raffin asked what the windows will look like. Mr. Stanula said the frames will be black and the windows will be tinted. Mr. Specht says that the limestone is attractive. Mr. Gardiner asked the architect to describe the façade articulation. Mr. Stanula said that the entrance on the east and west sides have a brick recess. He said that the building will look better when its dirty and weathered because the shadow lines will be more visible. He said the center portions are brick and the wings are limestone. Mr. Gardiner asked why they cannot meet the façade articulation standards. Mr. Stanula said that they are trying to maximize all the square footage they were given and when they push a building in or out they lose square footage and dollars. Mr. Gardiner asked whether the brick center of the building could be made wider. Mr. Stanula said that would push into the office spaces and change the window pattern. Mr. Gardiner asked whether there was any thought about the windows being more vertical. Mr. Stanula said that the building proportions call for horizontal windows. Mr. Tulowitzki said that the building reminds him of the Merchandise Mart which does have vertically oriented windows. Mr. Tulowitzki asked whether there could be additional façade articulation. Mr. Stanula said that would add cost. Mr. Raffin asked how they were framing the building. Mr. Stanula said structural steel. Mr. Raffin asked whether they would have a monument sign at the street. Mr. Vander Woude said there is no monument on the plan. Mr. Raffin asked about the generator. Mr. Stanula said they will screen the generator. They didn't want to put it next to the building because it is taller than he is and the tenant would be able to see it from their window. He said they will screen it just like the dumpster. Mr. Raffin asked about the signs on the upper floors. Mr. Stanula said that each tenant will want to have their identity on the building and they don't want to cluster them on the first floor. He said they want to include each tenant name on the corner of each floor. Mr. Vander Woude said that the signage above the first floor would require a variance; the Plan Commission cannot approve it. Mr. Gardiner asked if there were any safety concerns about the height. Mr. Vander Woude said that there are no safety issues. He said the Fire Chief reviewed the plans at a Site Plan Review Committee meeting and did not identify any issues. He said that the building itself meets the 60-foot height maximum but the rooftop screens exceed 60 feet. Mr. Specht asked when the Hyatt Place will start development. Mr. Lieser said that it should be on the Plan Commission's agenda in July and they would like to start in August.

Mr. Raffin opened the public hearing. No comments. Mr. Raffin closed the public hearing.

Mr. Vander Woude stated that the two recommended conditions of the approval are that all signs shall comply with Ordinance 1803 and all mechanicals shall be screened from public view in keeping with the Munster Zoning Ordinance. He said the other items discussed in the staff report are for the Plan Commission to decide whether they should be conditions of the approval.

Motion: Mr. Gardiner moved to approve PC 21-004 as described in the Staff Report with the following conditions:

1. All signs shall comply with Ordinance 1803
2. All mechanicals shall be screened from public view in keeping with the Munster Zoning Ordinance

Second: Ms. Mellon

Discussion: None.

Resolved: Yes: 6. No: 0. Abstain: 0. Motion carries.

Findings of Fact:

- a. **PC 21-003 Michael J. Koufos/Kukla Properties LLC requesting approval of a development plan for the redevelopment of a former restaurant into an orthodontic office at 1734 45th Street**

Motion: Mr. Specht moved to approve.

Second: Mr. Tulowitzki

Resolved: Yes: 6. No: 0. Abstain: 0. Motion carries

- b. **PC 21-004 Maple Leaf Crossing LLC requesting approval of a development plan for a professional office building at 9410 Calumet Ave. in the Maple Leaf Crossing PUD.**

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to approve.

Second: Mr. Gardiner

Resolved: Yes: 6. No: 0. Abstain: 0. Motion carries

Other Business/Additional Items for Discussion

Mr. Vander Woude reported that the Town Council approved the zoning amendments recommended by the Plan Commission at their last meeting.

Next Meeting: Mr. Raffin announced that the next regular business meeting will be June 8, 2021, at 7:30 p.m.

Adjournment:

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Mr. Specht.

Resolved: Yes: 6. No: 0. Abstain: 0. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

President Bill Baker
Plan Commission

Date of Approval

Executive Secretary Thomas Vander Woude
Plan Commission

Date of Approval