

MUNSTER PLAN COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
Meeting Date: September 12, 2023

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

Call to Order: 7:35 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Members in Attendance:

Steve Tulowitzki
Lee Ann Mellon
Bill Baker
Roland Raffin
Brian Specht
Rachel Branagan
Andy Koultourides (Arrived 7:39 pm)

Members Absent:

Staff Present:

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

Approval of Minutes:

a. August 8, 2023, Regular Plan Commission Meeting

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to approve the August 8, 2023, regular meeting minutes as presented.

Second: Mr. Raffin

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

Preliminary 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."

Ms. Christenson said we had a preliminary hearing on this. She explained the drawing on page three of the staff report is the existing site plan for the PUD. Building N is the larger one, building O is the smaller one. Page four of the report, the area outlined in yellow is what is being proposed with this PUD amendment, Building O is the backwards C-shaped building. From what has been submitted so far, we know that building O will be a hotel. The petitioner has been asked to submit a redline version of the design standards to show exactly what the changes are going to be with the design standards. She expects that staff will be getting that within the next month before this goes to a public hearing if the Board chooses to have this go to a public hearing in October. She said staff worked closely with the petitioner on the last PUD amendment and they were able to provide everything that was requested; a little more time is needed to get that red line version from the petitioner. She explained that her staff report appears incomplete but it has all the information available at this time. It shows the existing land uses and what the buildings are supposed to be.

Matt Kimmel of 631 Killarney Drive, Dyer from Centennial Village, LLC, introduced himself. He said this change to the PUD, as Ms. Christenson said, is a change from a one building structure at the end of Centennial Village Parkway to what is now being separated into two buildings. Building O is a five story boutique, a full story hotel with 144 rooms planned. That is the most significant change to the PUD standards. They had submitted renderings of the hotel; it has a European-type look. There is a very consistent image and architecture within Centennial Village which is the cast stone with the up and down light columns. It has an internal courtyard. They think this will be the most desirable hotel in Lake County. The other aspects of the changes to this PUD they are requesting have to do with height. This will be the only five story building currently planned in the Centennial Village. There are also some very slight modifications to the definition of some of the classes of uses of material walls. One change was more accurately defining what is in the exterior wall and defining what the parapet is. It was unclear in the original version as to how to do the calculation on percentage of exterior wall and exterior wall material. Secondly, a slight modification on the use of the piers on the exterior wall class goes from 75% to 70%. He will submit a redline version so that the staff can see that specifically. Those are the primary changes requested to the PUD. He said they went before the Board a few months ago with some other PUD changes. Mr. Tulowitzki said it says "Tapestry" hotel, he asked if Mr. Kimmel could share what stage of negotiations they are in with that hotel in Europe. Mr. Kimmel said Tapestry is one of the brand lines of Hilton Hotel. It is specifically designed for lifestyle centers and settings like Centennial Village. He said Hilton has been out to see the site three times. The US leader of the Tapestry brand has also visited this site. They believe this is an ideal setting for this type of hotel. Mr. Raffin asked what Mr. Kimmel envisions the materials to be on this building, if they would they be the design standards that were implemented throughout the rest of the Centennial Village. Mr. Kimmel answered that, per the current standards, they could build a hotel. A change would mean they would make the windows slightly bigger than the image; they think the windows are precisely the way they should be. It is cast stone on the first level and partially to the lower edge of the bottom second story windows. Up to the second floor is cast stone. Beyond that is synthetic stone. He has samples and you really can't tell the difference between the two. The reason for that is the structural engineers considered the load on this site. DVG is the engineer. Mr. Baker asked if the footprint for this building would change if the deal on the site doesn't happen. He asked for clarification on the original square footage for buildings O and N and if that had changed in the new plan. Mr. Kimmel said it has increased. Originally Building N was 42,000 square feet and Building O was a building that has essentially been moved to 98,000 square feet. Building N is not proposed at the moment. There was further discussion of future plans including the push of activity towards the lake. Ms. Christenson said the petitioner submitted a document that had changes in it but it wasn't redlined. It's a large document and for staff to go and compare the current standards with the revised version that wasn't redlined makes it very difficult to compare all of the edits being made. Mr. Kimmel explained how this hotel is a full service hotel in this market for meeting space, upscale cocktail space or wedding venue. Ms. Brangan said she agrees this can be a destination. Mr. Baker asked if parking was planned underground. Mr. Kimmel said there would not. Mr. Baker said it would be helpful if the petitioner addressed how the addition of 150,000 additional square feet would impact parking. Mr. Branagan said Building N should speak to building O in architecture. Mr. Kimmel said they are working on that. Ms. Christensen said the staff recommendation is to move this to a public hearing on October 10th. Mr. Anderson said this keeps us on track for the land use portion.

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to set PC Docket No.23-021 to a public hearing.

Second: Ms. Branagan

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Board members suggested that the petitioner bring the following to the public hearing for review; samples of materials and aesthetics and an explanation of the expected effect that the additional 150,000 square feet on the 2 buildings will have on parking.

Public Hearings:

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

Ms. Christenson said this is a development plan review for building I in Centennial village. The only thing she found in review is that the landscaping did not specify plants that are listed in the PUD standards. Ms. Mazer did some research and found that the Board had approved these plants in other development plans for Centennial Village. They are consistent with what is being planted on site already. The other requirement, per the PUD standards, is that the individual site development plans for all the buildings include a detailed design plan of the site amenities. They were included in the rendering for the site itself, for the structure. If the Board wants to see that added, she said she had prepared a motion to include those things. She said that overall, everything lines up with what the standards show. The materials are in line with what is in the PUD document. Mr. Baker asked if the cross access agreement is in place.

Russ Posen of 1155 Troutline Road, representing Centennial Village, said this is Lot 8, Building I on the corner between North Centennial Drive and 45th Street. The building is 3 stories. The footprint is approximately 7000 square feet, about 21,000 to 22,000 total square feet of the building. The required parking for the site was calculated along with building M, which is Lot 9 on the east because it has the shared parking agreement. The total parking between Building I and Building M requires a total of 129 spaces. In the site plan, Building I provides a total of 23 spaces. The total with building M is 171 so there is ample parking in the development that will get shared. The main entrance to the site is on the east where there are ADA spaces and parking. The striping to the northeast and the sidewalk adjacent to the building were requirements they adhered to when they did Building M. They are carrying that through here so there is access all the way to the east part of the lake where the path is to get to the west through the site and connect to the other walkable paths to the buildings that exist. The majority of site utilities were already provided when they did Building M. The landscaping does meet the PUD requirements as far as quantity and general location and is consistent with the site. Mr. Kimmel said the use is professional office building. They currently have proposed arrangements with the medical user on the first floor and shared coworking space on the second and third floors. There was some discussion centering on signage. There is an existing sign ordinance and a sign standard which is slightly different than our zoning ordinance. Mr. Baker opened the public hearing.

Gary Warfel from Saxon Partners at 25 Recreation Park Drive, Ma, said he is a developer, and he supports this development 100%. The changes made to building O checks all the boxes. They work closely with Hilton. He said the Town should do everything they possibly can to support this in getting that flag to this town because it's a game changer. This is the first four-star product in this area. The design is beautiful, it complements the cast stone on the other buildings, and it is reminiscent of the Waldorf Astoria downtown. He said it is a great project. Mr. Baker closed the public hearing.

Motion: Mr. Raffin moved to approve PC Docket No. 23-022 granting approval of a development plan of Lot 8, Building "I" of Centennial Village PUD as presented.

Second: Mr. Specht

Vote: Yes – 7 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.

Ms. Christenson said that this was seen last month at a preliminary hearing. She has added some graphics to the staff report for this. There were height restriction changes made by the Federal Aviation Administration. They used to allow the structures in this area to be seven stories in height. These regulations have now changed; new structures are now only allowed to reach five stories in height. Because of this change, the petitioner is reconfiguring the plan. In the first graphic on page three of the staff, it shows what is existing and currently approved. Page four is the interim plan the petitioner is requesting. This is unusual for a PUD but in meeting with the petitioner and the Town Management, they thought this might be the best way to proceed with this since it provides the Town and the petitioners with some safeguards. They have also presented their final site plan that they want to accomplish at the end. There are some differences between the three drawings. The intermediate and the final site plan are the ones they are looking at for approval. She explained the differences in the intermediate and final plans. The staff recommendation is to approve both an interim and a final site plan with this PUD. Mr. Baker asked if this means that they are working in stages. The petitioner has a presentation. Ms. Christensen said this is guided by our Munster character based zoning code. There is a special section within our ordinance that talks about the standards that we should be looking for in this PUD. She wants to be clear that this is the guiding document that is referred to because this PUD doesn't have a booklet of standards like we do for Centennial Village. It is a different type of PUD. Mr. Raffin asked how many square feet they are adding. The petitioner said he doesn't have the exact numbers, but it is roughly the same as what it was previously. It will be 650,000 to 700,000 square feet in total. Mr. Raffin said he is interested in traffic counts and traffic studies. Mr. Baker asked if a traffic light would be going in. Mr. Anderson said that the light is shown on the site plan but, much like the garage, it is not needed yet as determined by mutual concurrence.

Tim Lentz of Michigan City, Senior Project Manager for Tonn and Blank, representing Franciscan Health and joined by John Gilmore, CEO of Tonn and Blank, presented a slide show showing the four step plan, a list of things that have to happen on this site in order for this full PUD to be fulfilled. There is a PUD that is approved today, the interim steps and the final proposed view for the site. Mr. Raffin said it should be presented as a 3D model including elevation. Ms. Christensen clarified that all buildings would need to go through site plan review. Mr. Baker asked for clarification on the difference between a utility yard and a central utility plant. Mr. Lentz said the utility yard is what exists today. Some of those mechanicals will be moved out of the yard into the central utility plant. Essentially, the utility plant houses different mechanical equipment than what is in the utility yard. As some of that equipment ages it will be relocated into the utility plant. Ms. Mellon said the proposal shows that the wetlands area has been reduced along 45th Street and the storm water maintenance currently in the southwest corner is removed. Mr. Lentz said that is a water quality management area. In the water quality management area, there still will be storm water that comes through the south side of the site. They had discussed how they manage the quality of the water on the south side and there are no problems with that. The north side is called an isolated wetland that will go away and there are no fees. The main wetland just stays. They used that north side one as a water quality management area. There will be a water basin holding water. When you drive by, you won't notice any difference. Ms. Mellon asked whether the stormwater maintenance on the south side would be underground. Mr. Lentz said, yes, that will have a hydrodynamic separator. that maintains the quality of the water before it leaves the site. It goes

underground so it is not taking up surface area. Ms. DiTommaso said that the whole area is served by the regional detention basin switch along the railroad tracks. In fact, in the entire subdivision, this industrial park, all the storm water goes to those basins, and they will continue to do so. They are there and they are being changed because NITDC is taking a little land. They are building walls to support their train tracks. Then they will be making sure that the volume hasn't changed. There will be some changes to those paths, but they have been there for a long time. Mr. Anderson addressed the question of a traffic signal addition. He said there will not likely be a traffic signal now but when the whole area is completely filled, but a traffic signal will be likely when the whole area is filled in, when the 700,000 square feet are added. Mr. Raffin asked about the amount of traffic coming into this office park now. Mr. Anderson said when the PUD was drafted, the traffic study was done. Mr. Raffin said that was a long time ago. Things have changed with Centennial Village and Maple Leaf Crossing as well as a lot of other things. The traffic study was done in 20108. Mr. Anderson said it is wise to keep our eyes on it; however, there is a light there and a continuous southbound lane, so it is a through light and a dedicated left. Mr. Baker asked what the next phase of construction would be. Mr. Lentz said it will be the hospital expansion, the vertical expansion, the central utility plant, and the parking that will serve the expansion. Mr. Baker asked if the ingress and egress construction traffic will come in through the south or the north side. Mr. Lentz said he would direct all of it south. Mr. Baker opened the public hearing. There were no comments; he closed the public hearing. Mr. Raffin asked why no one was in attendance from Franciscan as a representative. It was stated Tonn and Blank is owned by Franciscan, so he is in charge of all the construction and design for Franciscan Alliance, corporately. He is the corporate representative and is able to speak on behalf of Franciscan. Mr. Tulowitzki asked, out of curiosity, what sort of traffic they expect to be driven to hotels and other establishments in Town. Mr. Gilmore said the will be a regional medical center. The plan for Franciscan is they have the north, which is Munster and the south, which is Crown Point. He said you can see this consolidation happening in the news. There will be more and more people coming from out of town for specialty surgery and that sort of thing. This would drive those hotels and drive the economy. Mr. Raffin asked if there was a plan for a Dyer facility. The answer was that there are no plans for the Dyer facility other than what it is there now. It is staying open.

Motion: Mr. Specht moved to recommend to the Town Council a favorable approval of PC Docket No. 23-016 to accommodate a new site plan and an intermediate site plan.

Second: Mr. Tulowitzki

Vote: Yes – 7 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.

Ms. Christensen said this area is the expansion of the Cancer Center. In this application, they are looking at building a three story expansion on the top of the existing three story structure. This is a development plan review; this is for the core and shell with that expansion only. The construction of the interior build out will come at a later date. Because this is just for the vertical expansion of the site, there are no changes to the existing site plan. This is an addition to the top of the building. The staff did ask that the petitioner provide some parking calculations to make sure the proposed addition to the structure would be accommodated with the parking currently on the site. They submitted parking calculations with the petition PC23-016 and everything appeared to be in order. The staff recommendation is approval of this development plan which is contingent on approval by the Town Council of the PUD amendment. The materials they are using are the same as in the existing structure.

Tim Lentz of Michigan City, IN representing Franciscan Health said this is a three story building today; they are making it a six story building. They are not impacting the site with this development because they are asking for the shell at this time. The appearance of the building will be the same on the top three stories. Mr. Baker said that the intermediate plan is adding two other structures but that is not part of this petition. Mr. Lentz confirmed this. Mr. Tulowitzki asked where the people who come to this facility and who work here might live. Lentz explained that this is a medical office building so each floor is set up for about 12 doctors. That would be 36 doctors coming to Munster, each with their staff. Ms. Branagan asked for an explanation as to why the windows differ on the top three floors. The petitioner said they had originally planned to continue the windows up. That didn't lend itself well to the site. They are also tying it in. They will be doing a separate development plan review for the hospital expansion and those two will tie together. Ms. Branagan said there is also a change in the brick pattern. Mr. Lentz said this is the same thing. It is to tie in with the hospital expansion. In answer to Mr. Tulowitzki's question about the design of the new parking facility, they said they haven't yet completed that, but it will tie in and will be attractive. They said there is also a plan for the top level parking garage. Mr. Baker opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, he closed the public hearing.

Motion: Dr. Koultourides moved to approve PC Docket No. 23-023 granting approval of a development plan for a vertical expansion of the existing Franciscan Health Medical Office Building at 701 Superior on the condition that PC Docket No. 23-016 is approved by the Town Council.

Second: Ms. Branagan

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Findings of Fact:

- a. **PC23-018 Jay Lieser of Maple Leaf Crossing LLC requesting approval of a development plan of 9470 Calumet Avenue, Lot 5, within Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development.**

Motion: Mr. Specht moved to approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 23-018 granting approval of a development plan of 9470 Calumet Avenue, Lot 5, within the Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development.

Second: Mr. Koultourides

Vote: Yes –7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

- a. **PC23-019 Jay Lieser of Maple Leaf Crossing LLC requesting approval of a development plan of 9460 Calumet Avenue, Lot 6, within Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development.**

Motion: Mr. Specht moved to approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 23-019 granting approval of a development plan of 9460 Calumet Avenue, Lot 6, within Maple Leaf Crossing Planned Unit Development.

Second: Mr. Raffin

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Additional Business/Items for Discussion:

- a. **PC23-020 Matt Kimmel of Centennial Village, LLC requesting approval of a final plat for Lot A to create two individual lots for building "M" and "I" in Centennial Village Planned Unit Development.**

Ms. Christenson said this is the final plat for Lot A to create two lots for Building M and Building I, which was seen last month. The staff has reviewed this final plat and has made sure it was meeting all the conditions the Board had on the preliminary plat. Her recommendation is to approve the final plat as presented. It was clarified that this is the final plat for Lots 8 and 9. Mr. Baker asked what had changed from preliminary to final. Ms. Christenson said they had asked the petitioner to include a parking access agreement between Lots 8 and 9 to facilitate maintenance. The cross parking easement is shown on the final plat and that satisfies what the Board discussed in the preliminary drawing. Mr. Baker asked if there would be a second document. Ms. Christensen said, no, this is embedded in the final plat. Mr. Raffin said this should be done on the entire site. Ms. Christensen said the Board should be mindful of this when doing subdivisions of this site and any future sites like this.

Motion: Mr. Specht moved to approve the Findings of Fact for PC Docket No. 23-020, granting approval of a final plat for Lot A to create two individual lots for building "M" and "I" in Centennial Village Planned Unit Development.

Second: Mr. Tulowitzki

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries

Next Meeting: Mr. Baker announced that the next Regular Business Meeting will be October 10, 2023.

Adjournment:

Motion: Mr. Tulowitzki moved to adjourn.

Second: Ms. Branagan

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 Abstain – 0. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm

Chairman Bill Baker
Plan Commission

Date of Approval

Executive Secretary Sergio Mendoza
Plan Commission

Date of Approval