



City of Racine

City Hall
730 Washington Ave.
Racine, WI 53403
www.cityofracine.org

Meeting Minutes - Draft

City Plan Commission

Wednesday, June 26, 2019

4:30 PM

City Hall, Room 205

Call To Order

Alder Meekma called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Present: 5 - Jason Meekma, Trevor Jung, Mario Martinez, Samuel Peete, Christina Hefel

Excused: 2 - Cory Mason, Marvin Austin

Approval of Minutes for the May 22, 2019 Meeting

A motion was made by Alder Jung, seconded by Commissioner Peete, to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2019 meeting. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

Public Hearings

[0763-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) Request by Tara Campbell of Faith Builders of Deliverance Holiness Church seeking a conditional use permit to operate a religious institution at 1913 Taylor Avenue (PC-19).

Attachments: [Public Hearing Notice](#)
 [Review and Recommendation](#)
 [Applicant Submittal](#)

Associate Planner Jeff Hintz explained the request and reviewed the location, zoning of subject and adjacent properties, surrounding land uses and business, the comprehensive land use for the property, the public hearing notice map, and photos of the site and surrounding area. He stated the property is a 1929 building located on the corner Taylor Avenue and Meachem Street. He stated the housing stock in the area predates the building by several decades. He stated the area is surrounded by R3 Limited General Residence and R4 General Residence zoning and that most of the Taylor Avenue corridor is zoned B1 Neighborhood Convenience.

Hintz the location of the tenant space within the building along with the floor plans submitted by the applicant. He stated there will be 18 seats for the worship space along with some office space for the ministry and open space that can be configured as needed. He stated that the church has been located at the site for three years and they have been working through the inspection process once they realized the process they needed to go through. Hintz explained the possible actions of the Commission and reviewed the required findings of fact for approval of conditional use permits. He explained the reason is that this is before the Commission as a conditional use is that

a stand-alone religious institution with no other activities, such as a bookstore or counseling which are proposed in this operation, would not lend itself to be a commercial use so the conditional use permit is to ensure that they have enough activities and are operating in a manner that is consistent with commercial development since it is a commercially zoned parcel. He stated an exception of the screening requirement along the southern boundary is being proposed due to nature of how the lot is split. He stated if a privacy fence were placed on the southern boundary of the property, it would render access impossible for the dwelling unit located on the south of the building. Hintz stated that based on the required findings of fact, staff is recommending approval of the request, subject to conditions. Hintz reviewed the proposed conditions of approval.

Alder Meekma opened the public hearing at 4:42 p.m.

Tara Campbell, the applicant, was present to speak to answer any questions.

Kenny Oliver, was present to speak to answer any questions.

Alder Meekma closed the public hearing at 4:43 p.m.

A motion was made by Alder Jung, seconded by Commissioner Hefel, to recommend approval of the request subject to conditions a.-j. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

[0764-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) Request by Damon Hassell of Alter Trading Corp. seeking a major amendment to an existing conditional use permit for a recycling drop-off site, to add a storage building measuring 3,484 square feet (PC-19).

Attachments: [Public Hearing Notice](#)
[Review and Recommendation](#)
[Applicant Submittal](#)

Planning Manager Matt Sadowski explained the request and reviewed the location, zoning of subject and adjacent properties, surrounding land uses and business, the comprehensive land use for the property, the public hearing notice map, and photos of the site and surrounding area. He explained that the property itself is zoned I2 General Industrial which is the heaviest class of industrial zoning. He stated there is R3 Limited General Residence zoning to the east, however, to the north, south, and west is all industrial zoning. He stated the comprehensive plan anticipates that the site will be maintained for industrial use and that the properties across the street would be retained as high density residential. Sadowski showed the pedestrian view of the property and how some of the materials on the property can be seen. Sadowski reviewed the site plan for the request. He stated the site plan proposes a formalized drive aisle coming through the property, a concrete pad for parking, asphalt drive, a parking area along the west side of the building, and then the building itself for the storage of materials and recyclables.

Sadowski stated the proposed addition would be used for general public drop-off. He stated the business would still have heavier contractors coming in off of Holborn Street. Sadowski showed a view of the building as proposed, he stated that it would be an accessory structure that would be a little less than 15 feet in height and have steel on three sides and a masonry wall facing 17th Street. He stated the amount of masonry on any building would have to be at least 30 percent so they would have to

increase the amount of masonry about 10 percent. He stated it would involve on the east and west sides of the building adding a return coming into the two facades just to increase, give it a more substantial look from the street and to meet the 30 percent minimum. Sadowski explained the materials that are being proposed. He stated split faced block in a taupe sand color and smoothed face block. Sadowski explained the possible actions of the Commission. He stated the applicant has requested deferral, but still would like to speak to the Commission about the proposal. He stated the potential deferral dates are July 10, July 24, August 14, or August 28. Sadowski reviewed the required findings of fact for approval of conditional use permits and stated that all of the conditions proposed by staff were created to address some the issues found when going through the findings of fact. He stated based on the required findings of fact, staff is recommending approval of the request subject to conditions. Sadowski reviewed the proposed conditions of approval. He stated the applicant has some concerns about the screening and landscaping requirements as proposed in the conditions. He stated the old buildings that were on Seventeenth Street still have foundations and present which lends difficulty for the applicant in regards to the addition of a fence.

Alder Meekma opened the public hearing at 4:59 p.m.

Damon Hassell, 1339 Seventeenth St, Racine, WI, the applicant spoke regarding the request. He stated he will be asking for a deferral because of the way it stands right now, this project is to clean up the current operations and make it a better place to bring in scrap metal and promote recycling in the community and to start doing other items that are not recycled in the community e.g. plastics, cardboard. He stated it is a \$1 million investment. He stated some of the bigger issues that he has are regarding the pile heights. He stated he wants to try to limit the heights of the piles, however, there are things that happen out of their control. He gave the example of if a new big development were built in the city and in that process a lot of buildings were torn down. He asked if the Commission would want the stuff that was torn down to go to a place where it would be recycled or to a landfill. He stated they were receiving 200 tons a day from the Water Street project alone. He explained their crane was down so they were also down for a few days and were unable to ship out materials. He stated currently piles are approaching 25 feet and sometimes he has nowhere else to go but up because the steel mill where the material gets sold to is shut down for a short term, for about two weeks. He stated he cannot go back to the largest employers within the city and tell them to stop producing because of limitations on the height of piles. He also stated there is a section where they are being referred to as rubbish and trash storage. He stated they are the furthest thing from rubbish and trash storage. He stated they never have and never will buy or except trash. Mr. Hassell stated that he is ok with the issue of 175 feet from Racine Street on the north side of the property. He stated they are not going to go back that far and they do not want to impede on their neighbors in that area. He stated there are barriers currently there that have vegetation. However, the 50 foot requirement from 17th Street is where some of the scrap is located now. He stated he still does not understand the screening requirements. He stated metal does not blow around. He stated he understands if the image is what is being attempted to be blocked, however, the cost of putting up a 10 foot solid fence is more than the building. He stated the building alone is \$457,000.00 and the fence would cost \$463,000.00. He explained in 2017 he had an amendment to start buying junk cars where they put up a chain-link fence. He stated the chain-link fence is not the perfect fence, however, it allows wind to travel through it. Mr. Hassell stated they keep the slats on hand so that when they get graffiti they can be replaced right away; it is a lot easier to replace the slats versus tearing down a whole structure of fence to cover up the graffiti. He stated he is looking to improve the business and provide a cleaner and

safer operation for people and to improve the aesthetics. He stated they want to tear down the building that is across the street and turn that into green space. He stated right now the building across the street blighted and should have been torn down 20 years ago. He explained that they cannot hamstring their business. He stated that if they were not there, every major producer (e.g. InSinkErator, Twin Disc) would not have a place in the area for their scrap to go which would put a burden on area businesses.

Alder Jung thanked Mr. Hassell for the work that he and his company does and expressed the importance of the service that they provide. He stated we wanted to make sure that we are meeting the needs of his company and the neighborhood. He asked the applicant about his concerns about item d. – the nine foot limit and then the proximity to the right of way and what he felt was doable.

Mr. Hassell responded that nine feet is doable, however, the three day period is not. He stated because one of his bigger steel mills is down for two weeks, that pile is going to go up. He stated Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulations require that he keeps piles in a certain area where it can drain into their drainage pit. He stated 30 days would be a reasonable timeframe. He stated that would be a worst case scenario that something would be there for 30 days.

Commissioner Martinez asked regarding the fence. He asked how to compromise regarding the high expense of the fence.

Mr. Hassell stated that the reason the fencing is so expensive is because along 17th Street there used to be numerous buildings and an overhead 300 ton crane structure. He stated there are foundations along that side that are more than eight feet deep and 16 feet wide. He stated the structure for the fence would have to be dug into the foundations and the cost to remove them would be astronomical.

Commissioner Martinez asked if the requirement were primarily because of the visibility through the fencing slats.

Sadowski stated yes, he stated when they came in to expand operations to allow automobiles to be placed on the site and staff thought that the solution would be the privacy slats to block the view. He stated it does not block the view so staff is looking for something that blocks the view. Whether its metal or wood, staff is just requiring something more substantial than privacy slats to block the view from Racine Street. He stated that only the north and Racine Street frontage would require the additional fencing.

Commissioner Martinez asked if there were a chance to go by percentages of what is being viewed. He stated that it appears that 67 percent of what is present is viewable.

Mr. Hassell stated that the fence along 17th Street should have been an 8 foot fence. He stated he spoke to one of the contractors and they suggested the use of a chain link with slats and a black privacy screening behind to get 92 percent blockage. He stated wood would not be beneficial for the property.

Commissioner Peete asked if the solution that were just mentioned by Mr. Hassell feasible to him and if it would be at the same height level.

Mr. Hassell stated yes. He stated what they would plan to do is go to an eight foot height fence along Racine and 17th Streets. He stated his goal is to make the site more user friendly.

In response to Alder Jung, Sadowski stated July 10, July 24, August, 14, or August 28. He stated later dates would be possible.

Commissioner Hefel asked Mr. Hassell if more or less time were needed.

Mr. Hassell stated he does not need that much time if an agreement could be reached.

In response to Mr. Hassell, Sadowski stated he were sure staff could meet with him and come up with a solution prior to the July 10th meeting.

Alder Meekma closed the public hearing at 5:18 p.m.

Deferred

End of Public Hearings

[0765-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) Request by Tammy Korte of Arcvision Inc., agent for Mitra QSR, seeking a minor amendment to a conditional use permit for exterior renovations of the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant at 2090 Green Bay Road (PC-19).

Attachments: [Review and Recommendation](#)
[Applicant Submittal](#)

Hintz explained the request and explained the intents of minor amendments to conditional use permits. He stated the intent of the development is not being changed or altered with the request. Hintz reviewed the location, zoning of subject and adjacent properties, surrounding land uses and business, the comprehensive land use for the property, and photos of the site and surrounding area. He stated the general area is zoned B2 with I1, I2, and the Village of Mount Pleasant surrounding the property. Hintz described the project and stated the original plans did change a little bit based on suggestions from staff. Hintz stated the awnings will change, some of the upper portion of the building will be painted, and there will be some slight changes to signage. Hintz showed the front/south façade and the addition of an entrance door off of the street. Hintz explained the possible actions of the commission and the required findings of fact. He stated that based on the required findings of fact staff is recommending approval, subject to conditions. Hintz reviewed the conditions of approval.

A motion was made by Alder Jung, seconded by Commissioner Hefel, to approve the request subject to conditions a.-f. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

[0766-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) Zoning Ordinance analysis by SolSmart of Racine's solar development readiness (PC-19).

Attachments: [SolSmart Program Memo](#)
[SolSmart Ordinance Review](#)

Sadowski introduced the request. He stated this is an effort by the Mayor's Office to get the city up to speed on solar access (panels, etc.). He introduced Cara Pratt, Sustainability and Conservation Coordinator for the City of Racine.

Ms. Pratt presented the request. She stated SolSmart is a solar energy readiness national designation program recognizing cities, counties, and regional organizations that foster the development of mature solar markets. She stated that it is funded by the US Department of Energy, the Great Plains Institute, and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. She stated SolSmart awards points based on eight categories: Permitting; Planning & Zoning, Development; Inspection; Construction Codes; Solar Rights; Utility Engagement; Community Engagement; and Market Development & Finance. She stated depending on the number of points awarded, a certain designation is given; however, it is a sequence – bronze, silver, and gold.

Ms. Pratt stated that on January 10th of this year, Mayor Mason announced the city's commitment to SolSmart including the following goals: Increase our community solar installations and build on the robust success in our community of our local Southeast Wisconsin Solar Group Buy program; Expand and communicate solar finance options for residential or commercial properties in order to encourage access to capital for local solar development; and prepare options for installing solar energy systems on local government facilities including City Hall, the Library, and a proposed new Fire Station.

Ms. Pratt stated the City of Racine is aiming for a bronze designation at this time. She presented a memo recommending measures that would make solar panels and energy more explicit in zoning which includes: definitions; amending certain zoning ordinances to be more explicit about residential, business, and industrial districts, and specifically mentioning solar gardens and solar farms; and evaluating design standards in access corridors, planned developments, design districts, historic districts, etc. She stated in the next few months City staff will be working to review city ordinances as they relate to solar access.

Alder Jung asked about the steps other communities took, such as Sheboygan, Wisconsin Rapids, LaCrosse, to make sure they were as committed as possible to solar energy.

Ms. Pratt stated presenting the memo is one of the first steps. She stated the city is receiving points by presenting the memo to the Commission. She stated a lot of communities audit their ordinances to make sure that they are solar ready, and make sure that the website clearly communicates that residences are able to install solar panels.

Alder Jung stated this is a very exciting movement and is a tune to what the needs are to solar energy in terms of zoning is progressive. He stated that it also harkens back to the city's commitment to the Paris Climate Accord making sure the city is committed to using renewable resources and reducing the city's CO2 levels.

Commissioner Martinez asked the role of the Commission in the process.

Ms. Pratt stated that ordinances will be assessed to see if they need to be changed. She stated at this point she is just hoping to inform everyone about the program.

Sadowski stated at the time the purpose is to inform the Commission and alert them that ordinance changes will be coming forward. He stated in starting this process, staff found that our ordinance does not specifically talk about solar except for in a couple of places; however, the city is very receptive to it in practice. He stated 13 applications this year alone have been processed for solar. He stated the ordinance will be looked at to see how design standards may be adjusted to accommodate solar installations.

In response to Alder Jung, Ms. Pratt stated Milwaukee is a gold and other communities in northern Wisconsin hold a gold designation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Peete, seconded by Alder Jung, to recommend that city staff continue the work with SolSmart on evaluating the zoning ordinance and developing potential changes to advance the development of solar facilities within the City be they public or private. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.