



City of Racine

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

Meeting Minutes - Draft

City Plan Commission

Mayor Cory Mason
Mario Martinez
Christina Hefel
Marvin Austin
Alderman Jason Meekma
Trevor Jung
Sam Peete

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

4:30 PM

City Hall, Room 205

Call To Order

Mayor Mason called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: 5 - Cory Mason, Mario Martinez, Jason Meekma, Trevor Jung and Sam Peete

EXCUSED: 2 - Christina Hefel and Marvin Austin

Approval of Minutes for the March 27, 2019 Meeting

A motion was made by Alder Jung, seconded by Commissioner Martinez, to approve the minutes of the March 27th meeting. The motion **PASSED** by a Voice Vote.

Approval of Minutes for the April 10, 2019 Meeting

A motion was made by Alder Jung, seconded by Commissioner Martinez, to defer the minutes of the April 10th meeting. The motion **PASSED** by a Voice Vote.

Public Hearings

[0388-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) Request by Nathan Knutsen of Tooth Town Dentistry for Kids, seeking a conditional use permit to operate a dental office at 3801 Washington Avenue. (PC-19)

Recommendation of the City Plan Commission on 4-24-19: That, based on the required findings of fact, the request by Nathan Knutsen of Tooth Town Dentistry for Kids seeking a conditional use permit to operate a dental office at 3801 Washington Avenue be approved subject to conditions.

Fiscal Note: N/A

Attachments: [Public Hearing Notice](#)
[Review and Recommendation](#)
[Applicant Submittal](#)
[\(0388-19\) CU 3801 Washington Avenue](#)
[#0388-19 Resolution](#)

Associate Planner Jeff Hintz reviewed the request. He stated the request was at the previous City Plan Commission meeting and he briefly reviewed the zoning and the photos of the site and surrounding area. He stated the property is zoned R-4 General Residence.

Hintz explained staff worked with the applicant to lower the height of the sign to an overall height of 3 feet 10 inches and to reduce the square footage to 16 square feet. He stated if the sign were externally illuminated, the sign would be permitted, as submitted.

Hintz showed a rendering of what the monument sign would look like and stated it is setback on the site to preserve the yard. He stated the total square footage, height of the signage and the location of the signage complies with development standards. He stated in terms of the height, it could be taller however, they lowered it based on the discussions with staff and at the previous CPC meeting to make the sign be more pedestrian and neighborhood friendly in height. Hintz explained the possible actions of the Commission and stated the required findings of fact have not changed. He stated, based on the findings of fact, staff is recommending approval of the request subject to conditions. Hintz reviewed the proposed conditions of approval.

Mayor Mason asked which portion of the conditions referred to the illumination of the sign.

Hintz stated under condition b. 2. – That signage be illuminated through external means only and follow requirements of Sec. 114-1064 related to location and height...

Mayor Mason asked how the staff recommendations reflect the proposed changes to the sign.

Hintz stated condition a. states that the plans presented to the Commission be approved. He stated any changes to those plans would need to come back to the Commission and that the heights and locations presented are with the approval.

Alder Meekma asked why external illumination would be preferred over internal illumination.

Hintz stated internal illuminated signs are something you find in a commercial district, not necessarily a residential district. He stated the way the code is written, the request would refer to the lowest intensity commercial district which is an office district. He stated in that district an internal illuminated sign is not allowed, however, it is something that an exception could be granted through the conditional use process if the Commission would allow. However, he stated, an internally illuminated sign is not something that would be found in a residential district.

Alder Meekma asked if there were any examples of where an internally illuminated sign was allowed in a setting such as the requested.

Hintz stated that the request is not an electronic sign, however, the office zoning has allowed electronic message signs (EMS) that are internally illuminated. He stated an EMS would be a lot brighter than what is being requested.

Assistant Director Matt Sadowski stated there are church signs just down the street from the requested that have been approved for internally illuminated reader boards, however, he is not aware of any businesses that have been allowed internal illuminated signs in this type of zoning district.

In response to Alder Meekma, Sadowski stated the Family Dollar does have internal illumination, however, they are zoned B2 Community Shopping District.

The Public Hearing opened at 4:40 p.m.

Jon Klema, Michael's Signs, 3914 S. Memorial Drive and 8732 Blue Spruce Court, spoke in support of the request. He explained some of the changes that were made to the monument sign and the sign on the building. He stated the color of the sign is designed to simulate the building colors which are subdued beiges. He stated the ordinance calls for exterior illumination and he stated that internal illumination has been done for a variety of locations; he cited the VA Museum in Downtown Racine. He stated he believes that the ordinance called for that location to be externally illuminated and that was actually done with a routed internal illumination which is what is being requested for the proposed sign. He described the process of the internal illumination being requested and stated the only thing that will be illuminated would be the logo and the graphic, not the entire sign face.

Mayor Mason stated that it would be easier to move forward with the external illumination versus deferring the request for another meeting. He stated the areas that Klema were referring to are in different zoning districts. He stated that this is an area that is zoned residential and that the preference would be for it not to look like it does between Ohio Street and Green Bay Road in terms of signage. Mayor Mason stated that the residential character of the corridor should be maintained and while he appreciates the effort that was made to try and downsize the sign, it is still a very bright and colorful color scheme that will stand out in the neighborhood. He understands that is the intent from a marketing perspective, but it has to be weighed with the residential character that we are trying to maintain. He stated he would like the zoning ordinances in this residential neighborhood to be maintained.

Rhonda Elquist, Idaho, spoke regarding the request. She stated when they first made the proposal they tried to follow all of the guidelines they were given in relation to the ordinance. She stated she would rather not have the request deferred again and they were unsure why it was deferred at the previous meeting. She stated she knows that Klema has been spending a lot of time making sure the sign complies with city codes and that the color of the sign their logo. She stated they have tried to comply with the ordinances and is hoping the Commission will approve the request.

Rob Bissegger, the current owner of the property, spoke regarding the request. He stated the office was built for the purpose of dentistry around 60 years ago and he purchased the practice from Dr. Ritz around 30 years ago. He stated Dr. Ritz practiced in the building for roughly 30 years. Bissegger stated that the building was purposely built for dentistry and that is what the building should be used for. He stated there are other dentist offices in Racine that have similar signage and that he was not necessarily into external marketing, however, today that does not seem to be the way of businesses. He sees it as a good purposeful use of the building versus having

another empty building in the city.

Marty Defatte, 519 Island Avenue, the realtor representing the buyer, spoke regarding the request. He stated that he thinks the building is a perfect place for a dentistry and he supports the request. He stated there are so many signs similar to the requested scattered all over the city and he hopes that the Council and Commission approves the sign. He stated the applicants have done what they can to comply.

Mayor Mason thanked Defatte for his commitment to the community.

The Public Hearing closed at 4:50 p.m.

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

[0453-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) Request by Audreyanna Simpson seeking a conditional use permit to operate an Esthetics Establishment and Spa, classified as a Beauty Shop at 1124 High Street (PC-19)

Recommendation of the City Plan Commission on 4-24-19: That, based on the Required Findings of Fact, the request by Audreyanna Simpson seeking a conditional use permit to operate an Esthetics Establishment and Spa, classified as a Beauty Shop, at 1124 High Street be approved subject to conditions.

Fiscal Note: N/A

Attachments: [Public Hearing Notice](#)
[Review and Recommendation](#)
[Applicant Submittal](#)
[\(0453-19\) CU 1124 High Street](#)
[#0453-19 Resolution](#)

Hintz introduced the request and reviewed the location, zoning of the subject and adjacent properties, surrounding land uses and businesses, the comprehensive land use designation for the property, the photos of the site and surrounding area, and the map that went out with the public hearing notice. He stated the building was in 1941 as a commercial building and was previously home to a dentist's office and other businesses. Hintz stated the tenant is a recipient of the City's Micro Loan for small businesses and that, similar to the previous request, the property is zoned residential, but was built for a commercial purposes. He stated through the conditional use process applicants are able to use commercial buildings zoned residential for commercial use.

Hintz explained that one of the conditions of approval addresses the signage on the property. He stated the temporary signage that is located on the cornice does not follow the signage requirements in regards to height; staff is recommending that the sign be removed. Hintz stated that the signage can be no taller than six feet off of the ground and the limit is one sign. He stated temporary signs are only permitted for 30 days.

Hintz explained that there is not a driveway or parking located on the site, however, there is a municipal lot within the 500 feet of the property that is located behind the Flat Iron Mall that would be considered allowed by the ordinance. He stated there is also on-street parking available.

Hintz showed the floor plan for the building which has an overall size of 30 feet by 20 feet. He stated that the business will be by appointment only and not like a retail establishment.

Hintz described the possible action of the Commission and reviewed the required findings of fact for approval of conditional use permits. He stated staff is recommending approval, subject to conditions. Hintz reviewed the proposed conditions of approval.

Alder Jung asked about the rubbish containers that are placed on the side of the building facing the neighboring property. He asked if there were something that was discussed between staff and the applicant on how to better meet the needs of the neighborhood with the garbage being visible.

Hintz stated the garbage can be placed further back on the property. He stated that if there were a dumpster on the property it would be treated differently, however, given that the houses in the area are doing something similar to contain rubbish, staff did not feel the need to include a condition related to screening trash. He stated the Commission can add that condition if they see fit.

Mayor Mason stated that the placement of rubbish containers on properties when it is not a trash day is something that the Public Works and Services Committee has begun to discuss.

The public hearing opened at 5:00 p.m.

Andy Capobianco, 4822 41st Street, Kenosha, WI, the property owner spoke in support of the request. He stated there is a driveway on the eastside of property that abuts the neighboring property that provides some off-street parking. He stated if the garbage cans are offensive to anyone they can be placed behind the building or further back on the property which would put the garbage cans right across from the residential neighbor on the corner. He stated the banner can also be removed. Capobianco stated that the applicant was unfortunately unable to make the meeting.

The public hearing closed at 5:03 p.m.

A motion was made by Alder Meekma, seconded by Alder Jung, to recommend approval of the request subject to conditions.

Discussion after the motion:

Mayor Mason informed the Commission that if they would like to include the placement of the garbage cans in the conditions of approval, now would be the time to do so.

Alder Jung asked if Public Works were taking up the issue, if that would be the better way to deal with on a city-wide level.

Mayor Mason stated that the action that would be taken would just be specific to the property for the request. He stated that it would be appropriate because there is a

conditional use permit being requested. He stated there is not yet a city-wide policy.

Hintz suggested adding language to the conditions that trash containers be kept at the rear of the building on the north façade, away from street view.

A motion was made by Alder Jung, seconded by Peete, to include add a condition h. that trash containers be kept at the rear of the building on the north façade out of sight of the street. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

A motion was made by Alder Meekma, seconded by Alder Jung, to recommend approval of the request as amended. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

[0454-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) Request by Dan Scholz of DDJC LLC seeking a conditional use permit to operate a mixed use development in a building of over 5,000 square feet at 1705 Douglas Avenue (PC-19)

Recommendation of the City Plan Commission on 4-24-19: That, based on the Required Findings of Fact. the request by Dan Scholz of DDJC LLC seeking a conditional use permit to operate a mixed use development at 1705 Douglas Avenue be approved subject to conditions.

Fiscal Note: N/A

Attachments: [Public Hearing Notice](#)
[Review and Recommendation](#)
[Applicant Submittal](#)
[\(0454-19\) CU 1705 Douglas Avenue](#)
[#0454-19 Resolution](#)

Hintz introduced the request and reviewed the location, zoning of the subject and adjacent properties, surrounding land uses and businesses, the comprehensive land use designation for the property, the photos of the site and surrounding area, and the map that went out with the public hearing notice. He stated the building occupies the entire lot. The surrounding zoning includes B-2 Community Shopping and Residential. He stated the rear of the property along Geneva Street would be where the automobiles would be stored and the recording studio would occupy the front portion of the building.

Hintz showed the proposed floor plan for the recording studio. He explained the request is for a microphone sound booth and a recording studio with other equipment. He stated the location would not be for recording of a band; the studio and sound booth are total 141 sq. ft.

Hintz showed the rear of the building. He stated there will not be any servicing of automobiles and they will only be stored until they are purchased. He stated that someone with a dealer's license will be purchasing vehicles at an auction and storing them at the location until they are able to be delivered.

Hintz stated the property does comply with the development standards. He stated, related to parking, it is an existing nonconforming building. He stated there is street parking available.

Hintz explained that he and staff took several phone calls, along with Alder Tracey Larrin who met with staff, regarding the development in the area to ensure that there were not going to be auto repair and that there would be some control on activities. Hintz reviewed the required findings of fact as it relates to the request. He stated that the lot is not equipped to park multiple cars as there is not available parking on the lot. He stated some of the parking may impede on the residential parking. He stated the use is not expected to be high traffic.

Hintz explained that the main thing with a recording studio is to keep outside noises out, so the studio will be highly soundproofed to keep those noises away from the recordings. He stated staff is recommending approval, subject to conditions. Hintz reviewed the conditions of approval.

Hintz stated a lot of the concerns that were heard from citizens that called in were related to security, not necessarily specific to the building, but to the neighborhood so there is a condition h. regarding the installation of security cameras to cover the northern portion of the building. He stated hours were not requested with the application, but staff reviewed other recording studios that were approved in the city and applied the hours of 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. to this request.

Alder Meekma asked if the recording studio had been in operation at the site or if it were a brand new request.

Hintz stated that there was not an occupancy permit for the studio, so it is the understanding of staff that it may have been in operation. Staff is unaware to what extent the studio has been operating – whether they have been in full operation or just doing work at the property.

Alder Meekma stated that looking at the floor plan there is a large area in the front of the recording studio and asked what was the intent was for the space.

Hintz stated during discussions with the proprietor of the studio, while that space was not directly discussed, it is the assumption of staff that it would be used as a creative space for recording artists.

Alder Meekma asked if noise from the potential residences on the second floor would interfere with sound issues.

Hintz stated it is possible it could cause interference, however, that is something that the owner of the building would weigh.

Alder Meekma stated he also spoke to Alder Larrin about the request regarding some of the residents in the area's concerns. He stated a lot of the concerns will be addressed through the conditions that were placed on the request and he is hoping that the operation will be successful.

In response to Mayor Mason, Hintz stated the applicant is the owner of the building, however, the tenants that will be using the space are not related to the applicant. He stated the owner has taken it upon himself to apply on their behalf.

Hintz clarified that there will be music at the recording studio, just not in the form of a live band.

Mayor Mason asked if there were any discussion regarding volume and sound pollution.

Hintz stated that the residents that he spoke with were not concerned with the noise, rather the activities that may take place around the building.

Alder Meekma asked regarding the parking. He clarified the lot behind the property is not associated with the building.

Hintz stated that it is associated with the thrift store to the north of the property.

In response to Alder Meekma, Hintz stated there is not any parking available on Douglas Avenue due to the left turn lane. He confirmed that anyone using the facility will have to park and walk to the site.

The public hearing opened at 5:24 p.m.

Marco Celeste, 128 67th Drive, Union Grove, WI, spoke regarding the request. He stated he is one of the people who called and also spoke with the Alderman of the District. He stated he owns a property across the street from the rear of the requested property at 1709 Geneva Street and he has concerns with the building, proposal and the parking situation. He stated he heard there is not an occupancy permit at the building, however, there is a fair amount of activity going on at the property. He stated some of the things that were discussed were police calls to the area, he stated there might be some grey area as to what is being cited when police were called to the area. He stated regarding the parking situation, he understands the public lot is available behind Flat Iron Mall, however, the parking on Geneva Street is fairly tight as there are houses and duplexes and most people do not have a driveway. He expressed concern with the transport of vehicles onto the site, he asked if it will be by semi-truck, etc. He stated he found it interesting that the owner was the applicant and not the tenants using the space. He stated it should be known who is going to be running the businesses.

In response to Mayor Mason, Sadowski stated it is typically the applicant who applies for the permit and then the owner co-signs the application.

Dan Scholz, W6050 Graystone Court, Appleton, WI, one of the owners of the property, spoke regarding the request. He stated there will not be a semi-truck transporting vehicles to the site. He explained that the tenant for the site has a dealer's license and will be buying vehicles for \$500-\$600 and will sell them for \$300-\$600 profit. There will be no work done to the vehicles and they will be coming in one at a time and selling one at a time.

Commissioner Peete asked how many cars can be parked at the facility at one time.

Scholz stated, depending on the size of the vehicle, anywhere from four to six.

In response to Mayor Mason Hintz stated that we are not limiting the vehicles to one at a time, there is no definite number in the limitation of vehicles, however all vehicles must be parked inside.

Alder Jung asked the dynamic between having the property owner versus the applicant applying for the conditional use permit and asked the owner to explain the relationship with his application.

Scholz stated it was his first time applying.

Mayor Mason asked Scholz to discuss the tenant for the building and the activity seen up until this point.

Scholz stated that the tenant for the recording studio has been in the building for more than three years. He stated he received a letter from the City about two months ago stating there was not an occupancy permit for the studio. He stated he was unaware of the rules and they are trying to bring the building up to compliance. He stated since the letter was received, no recording has been done at the site and there has been a lot of work done trying to clean up the property including some interior remodeling.

Mayor Mason if there were two different tenants

Scholz stated yes, there are two different units and tenants. And there is no internal access from one portion of the building to the other.

The public hearing closed at 5:34 p.m.

Discussion after the motion:

Hintz suggested adding a condition o. that no 18-wheeled vehicles be used to drop off or pick up vehicles even though the current owner does not plan to, conditional use permits are transferrable and it something the Commission may want to consider adding.

A motion was made by Alder Jung, seconded by Alder Meekma to amend the conditions adding condition o. that no 18-wheeled vehicles be used to drop-off or pickup vehicles. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

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

End of Public Hearings

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.