



City of Racine

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

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Planning Heritage and Design Commission

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

4:45 PM

Virtual

Call To Order

Mayor Mason called the meeting to 4:49 p.m.

PRESENT: 5 - Mason, Jones, Hefel, Peete and Jung

Approval of Minutes for the April 28, 2021 Meeting.

A motion was by Jung seconded by Jones to approve the minutes of the April 28th meeting. The motion **PASSED** by a Voice Vote.

[0399-21](#)

Subject: A request by Innovative Signs, representing Stephanie Shumanova, for review and approval of signage at 403 Main Street. (PHDC-21)

Attachments: [Recommendation](#)
[Design Review Checklist](#)
[Applicant Submittal](#)

Jeff Hintz, Associate Planner, introduced the request and the signage being requested and stated that the request meets the design guidelines and the zoning ordinance requirements. Hintz explained the possible actions of the commission and stated that staff is recommending approval subject to conditions a. – c. Hintz reviewed the conditions of approval.

A motion was made by Jung, seconded by Hefel, to recommend approval of the request subject to conditions a. – c. The motion **PASSED** by a Voice Vote.

5:00 Public Hearings

[0400-21](#)

Subject: Request by Elizabeth Brown, for consideration of a conditional use permit to operate a candy store at 1615 Grove Avenue, classified as a "retail use in an existing commercial building", in a residential district, as allowed by Sec. 114-293 of the Municipal Code. (PHDC-21)

Recommendation of the Planning, Heritage, and Design

Commission on 05-12-21: That the request by Elizabeth Brown for a conditional use permit to operate a candy store at 1615 Grove Avenue, classified as a "retail use in an existing commercial building" in a residential district as allowed by Sec. 114-293 of the Municipal Code be approved subject to conditions a. - h.

Fiscal Note: N/A

Attachments: [Review and Recommendation](#)
 [Public Hearing Notice](#)
 [Applicant Submittal](#)
 [#0400-21 Resolution](#)

Michelle Cook, Associate Planner, introduced the request and reviewed the location of the property, surrounding land uses and businesses, the public hearing notice map that was distributed to neighboring properties, the comprehensive land use designation for the site, and photos of the site and surrounding area. She stated that the property is a commercial property with a residential zoning (R3 – Limited General Residence) and the applicant is requesting to operate a candy store at the location. Cook reviewed the business summary for the request and the findings of fact required for approval of conditional use permits. Cook stated staff is recommending approval of the request subject to conditions a. – h. and reviewed the proposed conditions of approval.

Mayor Mason opened the public hearing at 5:01 p.m.

No one was present to speak.

Mayor Mason closed the public hearing at 5:02 p.m.

A motion was made by Hefel, seconded by Jones to recommend approval of the request subject to conditions a. – h. The motion PASSED by Voice Vote.

[0401-21](#)

Subject: Request by CCM-Porters LLC, authorized agent for Cardinal Capital Management Inc., for consideration of a conditional use permit to build and operate a mixed use development at 301 6th Street and 608 Wisconsin Avenue as allowed by Sec. 114-508 of the Municipal Code and for Design Review being located within the Downtown Design Review Area. (PHDC-21)

Recommendation of the Planning, Heritage, and Design

Commission on 05-20-21: That, based on the findings of fact, the request by CCM-Porters LLC, authorized agent for Cardinal Capital Management Inc., for consideration of a conditional use permit to build and operate a mixed use development at 301-6th Street and 608 Wisconsin Avenue as allowed by Sec. 114-508 of the Municipal Code be approved, subject to conditions a. - i.

Fiscal Note: N/A

Attachments: [Received Comments](#)
 [Revised Renderings](#)
 [Review and Recommendation](#)
 [Public Hearing Notice](#)
 [Applicant Submittal](#)
 [#0401-21 Resolution](#)

Matthew Sadowski, Planning Manager, explained the presentation would be divided into two different parts – the zoning analysis and design analysis.

Hintz introduced the zoning portion of the request and reviewed the location of the property, surrounding land uses and businesses, the public hearing notice map that was distributed to neighboring properties, the comprehensive land use designation for the site, and photos of the site and surrounding area. He stated a new building requires approval of a conditional use permit in the Downtown area.

Hintz showed the rendering of the proposed building, the first floor plan, the proposed parking area, and explained where the retail use and office space would be on the proposed building. He stated on the third floor will be a terrace area and floors 3-7 would house dwelling units. Hintz showed the elevations for building and the site looking northwest, easterly, and how the property would be laid out. Hintz described the application and business summary for the project and asked if there were any questions regarding the zoning review of the property. Hintz stated Sadowski will present the design considerations for the site.

Sadowski explained the design considerations for the project. To begin the presentation, Sadowski reviewed some principles of design in a historic district. He explained that the building is being proposed in the Sixth Street Historic District which brackets a period from 1850 to 1930. Sadowski showed images of buildings that were built in historic districts in other cities and showed how the buildings were created to meet the time period. He showed images from Chicago, Milwaukee, and explained the use of tripartite design, visually organizing a façade by dividing it into three sections, and the infill projects that displayed architectural features that mimicked the buildings around it and try to compliment the history around it.

Sadowski showed the area for the proposed Porters Building project and the existing surrounding architecture. He showed the Sixth Street area looking west, Wisconsin Avenue looking south, and showed the arched windows and lentils in the buildings existing in the district. Sadowski showed images looking east on Seventh Street, looking south towards the Courthouse, and the north side of Sixth Street which showed the variation of the façade and architecture types. He showed detailing of the arch windows on the buildings in the district which provided some interest to the top of buildings.

Sadowski showed the north side of Sixth Street and the east side of the proposed development on Wisconsin Avenue and the variation of facades and the treatment of facades, the bay windows, and the detail of the upper level work of the buildings.

Sadowski showed the western side of the site (west side of College Avenue) and displayed the bottom, middle, top type of design. He explained another aspect of designing a building for this site that helps it to fit in are observing the site lines that are part of the area that would suggest a sensitivity to what already exists in the area.

He explained the graphics on the screen and stated to start with the site line that define the limits and the red line establishes the uniform vision line and height throughout Sixth Street. Sadowski showed the image with the proposed building superimposed to understand the vision lines and how they tie in to the new building. He showed the views as such – provided upper limit of the store front area in Sixth Street and the line above is defining the upper portion (bottom, middle, top) and its relation to the proposed building. He showed a superimposed image to show how the building fits in with the district and area. Sadowski stated what was seen in the prospective was an early design of the building and that the building has been added to help define the detail. Sadowski showed various views of the proposed building and explained the changes to the building that were done to provide complementation to the historic district. Sadowski showed the material samples – glass, metal panels, and stone veneer. He stated it will not be a heavily textured stone, but the smooth accents of the material is what would be used. Sadowski showed how the residential units would interact with the street façade. He stated the northern portion of the Wisconsin Avenue façade would not have a setback and stated the lentil line was added twice the size with the intention to help draw the eye to the street level to compliment the historic building heights. He stated the proposed design tries to add some interest to the bottom level to add detail to what is out there already. Finally, he explained, the cornice of the building has been embellished a bit more with the soldier course directly below the cast stone to give dimension to the façade and the cornice. Sadowski stated previous versions of the plan showed access to Sixth Street while the Downtown plan recommends not having access to Sixth Street because it enhances the pedestrian environment, however, it is engaging the street front without having a setback and helps activate the street fronts. He stated that details and accents that complement the district have been added to the building by the architect in a gesture to complement the structures around it.

Mason reminded the Commission that the project includes 141 units, seven stories, and an incredible amount of retail space. He asked for Commissioners' comment regarding the size, mass, etc. of the building. He stated that it is a midrise building and bigger than what has been done. He spoke about doing more density in Racine, but wants to get comment from the Commission on the size and the shape of the building.

Alder Jung stated that, in terms of the design and scale of the building, he respects the pedestrian flow. He explained that the design regarding allowing sunlight to get into the church was polite and looking to having a further discussion regarding the design.

Alder Jones agreed with Jung regarding density. One of her suggestions is to do more mixed use buildings and to build up since we cannot go out anymore since we are landlocked. She stated it was great to see we are getting a new building that will be more mixed use.

Hefel thinks the size is good and the population density is something that we have wanted for a long time. She agrees that the mixed use is great and that we are thinking about the comprehensive plan going forward. She stated the size and greenspace are great and that there will be parking. She stated now we have to talk more about how it will look and what maybe needs to be modified there.

Alder Peete thinks that the concerns and comments regarding the project have already been made.

Mayor Mason opened the public hearing at 5:44 p.m.

Jason Korb, Architect for the project, spoke regarding the project. He stated that Sadowski summarized the building nicely and they were present to answer any questions.

James Wilbur, Olympia Board of Trustees President, spoke regarding the project. He stated they are the only existing building near the property and they have a keen interest in the development and those interests are broader as participants of the Downtown and as residents. He stated he is pleased with the selection of Cardinal Capital and they are one with a mission to improve the city. He thinks they share a lot of values and that they are a green sanctuary have attention to the development to get LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified. He stated they appreciate that Mayor Mason and Cardinal Capital have brought the project to them and given respect to their church. He stated that parking is always at a premium and that the church is reliant on street parking. He is hoping that the net parking is positive and does not interfere with their members' ability to park on Sundays. He stated the church has been in the building for 125 years and in Racine for 179 years. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak.

Sharon Mullen, 221 Sixth Street, spoke regarding the request. She also emailed her written statement which is attached to this item. Mullen stated she is in the next block and also across the street at 609 Wisconsin Avenue. She stated she is sorry, but will deviate from the other opinions. She stated the proposed building does not blend with the Sixth Street or with 2 or 3 story buildings – Italian, arts and crafts, style – to blend in with the others should repeat the structure. She stated the building is way too massive, tall and lacking sensitivity and detail. The windows are very disturbing, do not open, and would not be able to have air in them. She expressed that it was a cold and hard building and, compared to the architecture done in the turn of the century and in other cities, it does not blend at all. She described the different types of architecture done at the turn of century and stated that is what makes it interesting. She stated that the proposed building is too big and bulky and compared it to the Cabrini Green Development. Mullen stated she has a degree in art, studied architecture, a degree in landscape architecture, and studied the classics.

Renee Mullen, 221 Sixth Street, also spoke regarding the request – at first in the background and then by official comment. She spoke regarding the relationship with the other slides, as presented, and other cities did a much finer job than what was done. She explained that the development should and will hear discerning opinions. She stated that the building was massive and the detail is so meniscal and will always reflect 2021 and does not reflect any other time period.

Mullen asked permission to address what is a massive building and the 141 units which could compound when the rents come in and expressed her opinions regarding the proposed development. She stated there would be 300-500 people in a very small space. She explained that she understands the market, was given the rent amounts, and asked about low income housing. She stated she was told the apartments would be market rate. Mullen expressed her objection to market rate and asked what is stopping people from saying no to the rent amounts and just going to buy a house. Mullen also asked about the ownership for Cardinal Capital Management and stated most of their investment is in low income housing. She stated she found that WHEDA (Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Association) tax credits for units (10) in Milwaukee and Lincoln School Apartments, concerned that if this goes to low

income housing that there will be a question of if they will pay property taxes. Mullen stated she was concerned about the 12 retail spaces. She stated there are vacant Downtown businesses that they cannot rent out, Regency Mall is mainly empty, and strip malls are mainly empty. She stated if you go to google you will see planners are putting in residential because the retail business is not there. She stated we have been hit by a bad economy in that terms. She stated the problem with the massive structure and to keep it as it is without low income renters, 90 percent will be unoccupied. She stated if they do go to their usual low income rents and use tax credits such as WHEDA and others to do the building, then they go to HUD (Housing and Urban Development) for Section 8. She stated with 300-500 people you see the problems such as garbage – only picked up once a week – spraying for cockroaches which she stated HUD requires. She stated there will be a problem of cockroaches, rats, and mice because they will be so cramped in there; one acre is a very small space. She stated where they got their funding would depend on the type of renters that they get in there and stated her assumptions of the amount of problems it would cause. She said it should not be more than 20 units and that she is familiar with the real estate market, there is a shortage of properties for sale. She stated townhomes and condos and let the professional realtors come in with their buyers. She stated she has been here more than 30 years and has observed the businesses come and go, people will come downtown, but they come down to be entertained. They do not come to the businesses to buy anything, come to the event, to eat, to drink and then go home. She stated when it comes to the daytime businesses one of the problems is you have the \$20.00 tickets.

Mayor Mason asked to keep comments to the project and stated we try to keep comments to three minutes.

Mullen apologized and suggested looking at 7 mile fair and use the business model to vendors coming in and to look at Renaissance Fair. She ended by saying that it will not go and businesses will not be occupied if they do not have low income housing and if they do, it will create problems. She stated go to smaller things that you will sure to be successful.

R. Mullen, requested no one be offended by the comments and stated you are going to get discerning opinions.

Mayor Mason stated the reason we do public comment is to hear views and take that into consideration.

R. Mullen stated that the architecture you are in front of is intricate, gorgeous, timeliness, and that is not something that is dated. She stated she has been around the art world quite a bit. She stated she was a commissioned painter for a little while looks at something and transmits a feeling. She stated the building they see is massive and the colors do not jive with the area. She suggested lowering the scale of the building and put in detailing and varying it a bit. She stated they wanted things to be interesting and have unexpected visual aspects.

Sadowski spoke regarding the conversation with S. Mullen. Regarding the rents and financing, he stated he thought it was made clear that the rents were unknown and what was sent were other projects and past projects.

Mayor Mason stated the financing is not reviewed by PHDC and asked Cardinal Capital to comment about the market rate development.

Shelly Alvarado, Cardinal Capital Management, stated that the project would be full market rate and that there were no intention on applying for tax credits. She stated that the buildings that were referenced were managed by Cardinal and not owned by Cardinal.

Hintz read an email from Micah Waters into the record. He stated Waters was present to speak in addition to the email.

Hintz asked the members of the public to raise their hand if they would like to address the Commission.

Alder Jung posed a question to the architectural team for the project. He stated Mullen brought up the architectural history of the Sixth Street corridor and he would like to hear about the inspiration they received from Downtown Racine and how they planned the building to respect the historic tradition that was already there.

Korb stated the overall planning of the building started with the idea regarding the church being the only neighbor on the block. He stated regarding the rendering on Seventh Street, the first horizontal pulled was based on the ease line of the church. In terms of overwhelming the church its gable is taller than any part of the building that is near it. He stated they did shadow studies for December, March, June, and September and showed the windows in the sanctuary will be uncovered and the proposed building will not be blocking the sunlight. He stated that was the first thing that guided the massing. The second thing that guided was to have a building with a solid and generally larger stone format masonry base. He stated the design is required to have a certain amount a glazing and they will have that glazing on three of the four sides of the building. Korb explained more design features of the building. He stated moving up the use driven form of a bay window, but what was done is recessed the balconies that face street frontage – reads as smaller buildings with gaps. He stated as far as the windows are concerned, they are trying to pursue a very sustainable building and found the biggest commercially residentially window they could find. Korb confirmed that every window in the apartments do open. He stated the red brick is very honest and there are a couple of red brick buildings in the area. Looked at three or four color combinations and any façade that touches the street is either glass or masonry. He stated they worked with Staff and the last thing that they worked with the City on was beefing up the cornice. Korb explained there are things that can be done that do not break the bank that add shadow lines and interest. In terms of the building being modern he explained that they have gone out of their way to put in traditional details such as stone window heads, stone base, etc. many modern buildings do not have many of those details. He stated they looked at some of the buildings around the block and those traditionally masonry details; those details would not be seen in a modern building.

Alder Jones asked Sadowski if he could show the building across the street along with the current building so commissioners could see the color scheme. She asked about the footage distance and if that could be estimated.

Mayor Mason stated that the proposed building is seven stories.

Korb stated it is more stories than the surrounding buildings, however, when those buildings were built the floor over floor was higher. He explained even though a building is three stories, they are taller than a three story building built today.

Commissioner Hefel stated that the Red Cross building across the street has 14 feet high ceilings so that would be the equivalent of a modern 4.5 story building. Commissioner Hefel thanked the architects for the attention given to the church and asked if there were a way to add some organic elements. She stated the buildings are all straight lined.

Korb stated they have been working with the City for 18 months and explored a lot of options. He stated where they ultimately landed was trying to be in the spirit of the neighborhood and designed the building from the inside out. He stated particular attention was paid to the parts of the building that people can interact with and the parts of the building that the public can put their hands on. He stated the other elements were being used to soften the building. He explained the make-up of the building including the columns, bases, and weave in the stone. He stated the floor slabs of the building will be mass timber which is a new technology, the ceilings would be exposed wood. Korb spoke about the greenness of the building and stated they looked at many, many versions.

Mayor Mason stated the design of the building is falling a bit short for the type of neighborhood that it is in.

Alder Peete stated that, because of the bars on the windows, it looks more like an institution than a place that he would want to live. He stated a change in the windows would make it more aesthetically pleasing.

Korb responded that they can play with the way the windows are. He stated they are a part of the marketability of the building and getting the green design points. He stated the project will be using institutional grade (top of the line quality) windows that are put into multifamily buildings all across the country.

Alder Peete stated that he thinks it is the pattern of the windows that may be problematic to some eyes.

Korb stated that can definitely be looked at. He stated the lower areas at street level help attract tenants to the commercial spaces. He stated they can look at the pattern on the windows and lighten it up – the grid-like pattern is additional cost. Korb explained that the area above the ground floor is kept relatively flat and if this were to move ahead, they would come back to the Commission with a signage package and commercial tenant signage. Practical knowing the building would have a long life.

Hefel asked if all of the glass at street level is clear to allow for interaction with what is happening in the spaces.

Korb stated that was absolutely correct. He explained the second floor is cloudy because the second floor is dedicated to tenant parking. He explained that they are over parking the building; tenants paying rent demand covered parking and tenant parking above occupied space is easier to maintain. He explained the entire balance of the building will be clear glass.

Mayor Mason asked about a corridor perspective on Sixth and Seventh Streets.

Sadowski stated that clear glass meets the Downtown Area Design Guidelines.

Korb stated that people may be reacting to the fact that it is busy, he stated the easiest for them is to make it (the design) simpler.

Mason asked Korb to speak regarding the recessed lighting on the building.

Korb explained the brick that comes down the window head and sill of the ground floor come and take a little "bite" and the stone sits proud of the brick and the lintel sits proud of the stone to create dark sky friendly decorative lighting. He explained the lighting is there to create an ambiance and work with the historic lights on the street. He stated a date stone in the corner is also added.

Hefel asked about the metal panels that form the big cross in the window sections.

Korb stated there is a solid material that is not brick because above the second floor parking is a wood apartment building. He explained the vertical limitations of the system especially in an all brick building. He stated the opening cannot be longer than 12 feet wide; the larger of the window is about 12 feet wide and the opening of the brick is about 20 feet wide. The darker material is a different skin, but concealing behind it and allows to build in a typical fashion. It is not all brick because would become massively monolithic and overwhelming. He explained that they needed to build it in a way that is achievable and the building could bare the introduction of a third material.

Hefel hiding the seams of the headers that are holding up the big windows. She suggested taking out some of the horizontal lines and making more of a townhouse look that would balance better with the buildings across the street. She asked how does the metal age.

Korb explained that it is a kynar finish which is pretty much a forever finish unless you physically damage it – it is a baked on finish. He stated the balcony will be steel and aluminum that has a powder coated finish. He stated you do not want aluminum touching steel because of corrosion. In response to Hefel, all of the brown is the same color.

Hefel asked about the wire suspension façade and the material.

Korb explained that it is more aluminum infilled with glass with aluminum to tie back; it is an important feature for visitors to mark the entry of the building. There are a lot of awnings to the entrances to the apartment buildings and may also have additional lighting on the underside. The ordinance will tell how far they can overhang into the right-of-way (ROW).

Sadowski explained the ways that the ordinance treats the overhang.

Korb stated the door cannot swing 12 inches from the ROW and the entryway will have to be pushed in two (2) more feet.

In response to Peete's question about parking, Korb stated the parking is in the interior of the building and there are 36 retail parking spaces. Parking will be entered into and exited on Wisconsin Avenue. There is also basement parking for the tenants and a mezzanine parking level.

Jung asked about the traffic flow and the potential change of one-way to two-way traffic

on Wisconsin Avenue.

Korb responded that in a traffic study you would find that for retail, 36 parking spaces represent 0 movement of the needle. As far as residential parking is concerned, they find that people who dwell in multiunit buildings figure out their traffic patterns fast in order to meet their needs.

Jung stated that he was impressed about the conversation that was had about the detail and concerns of the project. He stated that it seems that we are 95 percent of the way there with acknowledgement that the architect makes suggested changes.

Mayor Mason suggested leaving the public hearing open and then can come back after progress has been made and revisit the design changes that have been made.

Korb suggested adding a redesign of the windows as a conditional of approval.

Mayor Mason explained that PHDC usually keeps the public hearing open and reconvenes when the details are received.

Mercedes Dzindzeleta, 607 Seventh Street, spoke regarding the request. She stated the people to the East will be shaded. She stated she was glad to see that the windows are there would like to see a little bit more color and shading on the building even to make it look like there is greenery going up the side of the panels and reflective of the different architectures that are here. She stated beautiful renderings were done by a former architect and it can be done in the shadowing of the brickwork to give project it from light to dark and to add movement to the building, but at the same time reflective of the old and new buildings. She stated maybe the same in the window frames, instead of ordering all black maybe get a variety of colors. She would like to see a rendering of a building that is alive rather than stuck and have something that has reflective and has movement. She stated this will be the closest thing to being the tallest building in Downtown that we can't go over.

Discussion after the motion:

In response to Hintz, Mason stated he wanted to allow for flexibility and possibility of a special meeting.

A motion was made by Jung, seconded by Jones, to defer the item and keep the Public Hearing open at a determined date to reconvene with the Architectural Team. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

End of Public Hearings

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.