

MINUTES
AUSTIN CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2009
5:30 P.M.
AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tony Bennett, Kathy Stutzman, Jodi Krueger, Lonnie Skalicky, Jeff Bednar and Lynn Spainhower

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Mino, Suzanne McCarthy, Shawn Martin and Lonnie Skalicky

OTHERS PRESENT: Steven Lang, Craig Byram, Council Member Dick Pacholl and public.

Commission Member Skalicky made a motion to approve the January 13, 2009 Planning Commission Minutes as written, seconded by Commission Member Stutzman. Motion passed unanimously.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING: To consider a request from Craig Jackel and Jane Knutson of 1006 24th Ave SW for a conditional-use permit for the proposed development of a twinhome on the property located at 607 6th Ave NW. This requested action is pursuant to City Code Sections 11.30, Subd.3 and 11.56 for this property located in a "R-1" Single Family Residence District.

Steven Lang reviewed the request stating there is currently one house and a garage on two lots. Any motion for or against the request should refer to Section 11.56 and the staff report. Letters were sent out to adjacent homeowners and two calls were received that approved of the request as it would improve the neighborhood. Mr. Lang showed graphics of the lot and proposed twin homes.

Commission Member Stutzman asked what the square footage of the twin homes would be and what the landscape plan would consist of.

Mr. Lang said the petitioner should be able to answer that question.

Commission Member Bednar asked if the twin homes would meet the required setbacks.

Mr. Lang said the lot is 90' wide and the proposed twin homes are 80' so yes that would meet the requirement of five feet on each side.

Commission Member Bednar said it looks like the garage at 611 is very close to the property line, will there be enough space between buildings.

Commission Member Skalicky asked if the resident at 611 was contacted.

Mr. Lang said yes all adjacent property owner received letter but he does not know which neighbors spoke with Craig stating approval.

Diane Lavallie, 609 5th St NW asked if there would be any fencing installed and if the buildings would meet the five foot setbacks.

Craig Perkins, 611 5th Ave NW asked if this is a one time deal or if more twin homes are planned.

Craig Jackel, 1006 24th Ave SW said the current home and garage will be demolished. The twin home plan is a conceptual plan and once the conditional use permit is approved plans for the actual twin homes will be drawn up. The goal is to get the twin homes down to 76' – 78' wide so there would be more room between properties and stay within the required setbacks. Mr. Jackel then showed pictures of existing twin homes in the neighborhood at 606-608 6th Ave NW and 508-510 6th Ave NW.

Commission Member Skalicky asked if there would be a basement and if the twin homes would have to be pre-sold. Will the twin homes be part of an association? Who will maintain the sidewalks and yards?

Mr. Jackel said the twin homes would be slab on grade unless a buyer wanted a basement. One twin home will have to be pre-sold to start building. The twin homes would be individually owned with that homeowner responsible for all maintenance.

Commission Member Spainhower asked if the current house has a basement and if that would be filled in.

Mr. Jackel said yes the basement would be filled in and meet city regulations with boring samples.

Commission Member Spainhower asked if the footprint of the proposed twin home would be much like the conceptual plan but narrower to meet setback requirements and the existing garage would be torn down.

Mr. Jackel said that is correct. Also fencing is not planned, that would be up to the individuals who purchase the twin homes.

Commission Member Spainhower asked if the large tree would remain.

Mr. Jackel said that three trees have already been removed.

Commission Member Skalicky asked if there would be any additional units built.

Mr. Jackel said this is the only property purchased.

Commission Member Stutzman asked how the square footage of the proposed twin homes compare to the staff requirements.

Mr. Jackel said the proposed twin homes would be 1250 sq. ft. to 1350 sq. ft. Not to big as to stay in harmony with the area.

Commission Member Stutzman asked about a landscaping plan.

Mr. Jackel said he would have to talk to Craig Hoium about the landscaping plan.

Mr. Perkins asked if this project would affect any future street projects in the neighborhood.

Mr. Lang said this project would have no bearing on future street development. As of now nothing in this area is on the five year improvement plan.

Mrs. Lavallie said she approves of the proposed project as it would be an improvement to the neighborhood.

Commission Member Skalicky made a motion to approve this request as long as it meets the 7 points in Section 11.30, seconded by Commission Member Bednar. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lang said there is a 15 day appeal period on this motion.

SIGN APPEAL: To consider a sign appeal request from Bruce Turner, 1200 North Main Street and Walt Baldus, 11th Ave NE for the placement of an additional 8 ft. x 3.5 ft. illuminated sign panel onto the existing off-premise sign located at 1200 North Main Street. Said action is pursuant to City Code Sections 11.01, Subd. 31 and 4.50, Schedule 6 for this property located in this "B-2" Community Business District.

Mr. Lang reviewed the request showing a graphic of the proposed sign and location. The non-conforming issues relating to this sign are under Section 4.50, C, 1 and 2. There is another sign within 750 feet to the north by Kuehne Motors and there is a residential district to the west within 500 feet.

Commission Member Skalicky asked if the proposed sign would be directly under the existing Good Year sign.

Mr. Lang said yes and showed a photo.

Commission Member Skalicky asked if the neighbors have been notified of this.

Mr. Lang said he believes so.

Commission Member Skalicky asked if there were any objections from residents.

Mr. Lang said Craig did not notify him of any.

Commission Member Bednar asked if this would be an electronic sign that has a rotating message.

Mr. Lang said yes.

Commission Member Krueger asked if there would be an illuminated sign, electronic sign and non-illuminated sign all on the same structure.

Mr. Lang said the petitioner could answer that question.

Walter Baldus, 2000 11th Ave SW owns the strip mall property next to Good Year. The sign we are talking about is currently on a trailer that has been moved around town advertising different events.

Commission Member Krueger asked if the Good Year sign is currently illuminated.

Mr. Baldus said no, it is not illuminated.

Commission Member Spainhower asked if the sign is to be permanently installed.

Mr. Baldus said yes, we would like to have it installed by fall.

Commission Member Bednar asked if this is a two sided sign.

Mr. Baldus said it is a single sided sign.

Commission Member Bednar asked which direction the sign would face.

Mr. Baldus said it would face south.

Commission Member Skalicky asked who is responsible for the sign maintenance.

Mr. Baldus said Bruce Turner is allowing them to install the sign on his structure and Walt will be responsible to maintain the sign he is installing.

Commission Member Skalicky asked about if the Savory Skillet sign would come down since they are out of business.

Mr. Baldus said Savory Skillet is still in business and are currently doing catering during the winter and are expecting to open the restaurant portion again in May.

Commission Member Stutzman said she lives in the neighborhood and did not get a letter. Would the petitioner be willing to have a time limit for when the sign would be shut off?

Mr. Baldus said he is planning on running the sign from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm. The sign costs money to run so having it off at night when people are not around only makes sense.

Mr. Lang said regarding the question earlier about letters going out to neighboring properties. I do not believe letters go out on sign appeals.

Dick Pacholl, 815 10th Ave SW said this sign is very similar to the sign Austin Medical Center has on the point.

Mr. Baldus said it is similar but his sign would have more colors.

Commission Member Bednar said he is concerned with the sign distracting drivers as there is not stop sign on the corner.

Commission Member Stutzman said she lives in the area and believes the sign would improve the look of the existing signs.

Tim Camerer of Precision Signs said there have been studies done that signs such as this that are posted on highways have not increased accidents. They may even decrease as they make drivers wake up.

Commission Member Spainhower asked the height of the sign.

Mr. Lang referred to the photo.

Commission Member Bennett made a recommendation to the council to approve the requested sign appeal, seconded by Commission Member Stutzman. Motion passed with five ayes and one nay. The nay being Commission Member Bednar.

SIGN APPEAL: To consider a sign appeal request from Precision Signs, 209 South Main Street for the placement of facia wall signs on the west and east exterior walls of the building located at 1309 18th Ave NW. This sign appeal request is pursuant to City Code Section 4.50, Subd. 12 for this property located in the "B-2" Community Business District.

Mr. Lang reviewed the request showing graphics of the proposed signs. There are three signs, the north facing sign is in conformance, the east and west facing signs are non-conforming.

Commission Member Skalicky asked if there are other signs in the area that face a non-public right-of-way.

Mr. Lang said he is uncertain.

Tim Camerer of Precision Signs said Arby's and Games People Play have signs that face a non public right-of-way. Mr. Camerer showed color photos of the proposed signage and stated they would only be decals on facia and how it would be a benefit for the business as they would not have a free standing sign.

Commission Member Skalicky asked if there would be any lighting on the signs.

Mr. Camerer said not to his knowledge. Only the northern facing sign would be illuminated.

Commission Member Skalicky made a motion to recommend approval of this sign request as it will not effect traffic in a negative way, seconded by Commission Member Krueger. Motion passed unanimously.

Commission Member Bennett made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 6:19 P.M., seconded by Commission Member Bednar. Motion passed unanimously.