

**MINUTES
CITY OF DARIEN
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
July 1, 2015**

PRESENT: Chairperson Beverly Meyer, Andrew Kelly, John Lind, John Laratta, Ray Mielkus, Ken Ritzert, Michael Griffith – Senior Planner, Elizabeth Lahey – Secretary

ABSENT: Pauline Oberland, Ron Kiefer, Lou Mallers

Chairperson Meyer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the City Hall – City Council Chambers, Darien, Illinois and declared a quorum present.

A. PZC 2015-06: 951 N. Frontage Road, WoodSpring Suites (formerly Value Place Hotel): petitioner seeks approval of the following:

- 1. to rezone subject property from OR&I Office, Research and Light Industry to B-3 General Business, Zoning Ordinance Section 5A-6-2.**
- 2. Special use for a hotel within the B-3 zoning district, Zoning Ordinance Section 5A-8-4-4.**
- 3. Variation to increase the maximum permitted building from 40 feet to 50 feet, Zoning Ordinance Section 5A-8-4-0/**
- 4. Variation to decrease the minimum required foundation landscaping width from 10 feet to 7 feet, Zoning Ordinance Section 5A-10-8(A).**
- 5. Variation to increase the maximum permitted free-standing sign height from 12 feet to 30 feet, Sign Code Section 4-3-10(B)(3).**
- 6. Variation to permit a pole sign, Sign Code Section 4-3-7(B)(1).**
- 7. Variation to permit an electronic message board sign, Sign Code Section 4-3-10(B)(3).**
- 8. Variation to permit wall signage on the east and west building facades which do not face either a public right-of-way or building frontage, Sign Code Section 4-3-10(B)(2).**

Mr. Michael Griffith, Senior Planner reported that this is a development proposal for an extended stay type hotel to rezone from Office to B-3 and a variation to increase the maximum permitted building from 40 feet to 50 feet, a variation to decrease the minimum required foundation landscaping from 10 feet to 7 feet, a variation to increase the maximum permitted free-standing sign height from 12 feet to 30 feet, a variation to permit a pole sign, a variation to permit an electronic message board sign and a variation to permit wall signage on the east and west building facades which do not face either the public right-of-way or building frontage.

Mr. Griffith reported that the B-3 zoning district requires special use approval. He reported that the building setbacks, parking setbacks, and lot coverage have been met. He further reported that the petitioner is complying with landscaping and lighting levels.

Mr. Griffith reported that the City Engineer looked at the stormwater and that he has a few comments but that the stormwater management is sufficient. He reported that the petitioner is working with County regarding the wetlands and that the County must certify plans comply with the Countywide Stormwater Management Ordinance.

Mr. Griffith reported that the driveway is within the State's jurisdiction and that the Department of Transportation is requesting that the driveway be relocated so it is opposite mystic Trace. Mr. Griffith reported that staff does not support this due to the wetlands in that portion of the property and that the petitioners traffic study supports this.

Mr. Drew Mitchell, petitioner, Holiday Properties stated that he and the City have been working on this plan for the last 18 months. He reported that the wetlands dictate certain things. He reported that there was a general support but that the name value place did not resonate. Mr. Mitchell reported that they tried to rebrand the hotel name and that this is the first one in the United States.

Mr. Mitchell discussed the building materials.

Chairperson Meyer stated that she did not see any handicapped spaces. She also questioned if the site is able to handle a 100 year storm.

Mr. Griffith reported that there are five spaces in the front of the building.

Mr. Mitchell reported that the site is capable of handling a 100 year storm.

Chairperson Meyer asked if there would be emergency stations in the parking lot.

Mr. Mitchell reported that they build a lot of hotels and they have never been asked to put stations in the parking lot but that they would be willing to look into it.

Commissioner Kelly questioned the difference between the WoodSprings Suites and WoodSprings Suites Signature.

Mr. Mitchell reported that Darien will have WoodSprings Suites.

Commissioner Kelly stated that all he saw on the website was a difference in cleaning days and exercise facility.

Commissioner Laratta questioned the timeframe from breaking ground to opening.

Mr. Mitchell reported if there are no major roadblocks that they are hopeful for permit in September and open within 7 months.

Commissioner Ritzert questioned the soil and if there is a good bedrock for support.

Mr. Mitchell reported that they conducted soil testing and there are no issues.

Commissioner Ritzert questioned the stormwater and the floodplain.

The civil engineer for the petitioner explained the drainage and reported that the water will drain to the creek.

Commissioner Ritzert questioned if there would be firewalls between the units. He also questioned the face brick.

The petitioner reported that there will be firewalls between the units. The petitioner provided a sample of the face brick to the PZC.

Commissioner Lind stated that he was concerned for the amount of stories and concrete block. He said he would like to see more face brick.

Mr. Mitchell reported that with staff they have incorporated more brick into the plan. He stated that this development is a vast improvement to what is there.

Commissioner Laratta questioned where the tornado shelter is since the hotel sits on a slab.

Mr. Mitchell reported that he was not aware but that there is a plan for weather emergencies.

Commissioner Ritzert questioned the HVAC system.

Mr. Mitchell reported that each unit has its own HVAC.

Commissioner Lind suggested changing the location of the brick material and taking some of the brick on Frontage Road and moving it to the I-55 side.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he understood and that this is the front door to the City of Darien. He stated it is something that they can look at but entirely brick is not economical for the business. He further stated that the building is beautiful and will be visually appealing.

Carolyn Vena, Secretary Violet Farms Townhomes stated that they are concerned about the signage. She reported that the City of Downers Grove just went through a change of lowering their signs. She asked which direction the message board will face.

The petitioner reported that the message board will be at the bottom of the sign and will not flash along I-55. He also reported that there are significant trees in the wetland area.

Ms. Vena stated that they had issues with the location of the driveway and moving it closer to the east.

Mr. Griffith reported that staff supports the location of the driveway but that IDOT felt it should be moved and that it was a safety issue.

Commissioner Lind suggested that the petitioner look at the sign location because of the billboard.

Ms. Vena stated that the association would also like the building to be 40 feet instead of 50 feet.

Chairperson Meyer opened the meeting to anyone wishing to present public comment.

Mr. Richard Creitz, Treasurer Violet Farms Townhomes stated that they residents like having it dark and a view that is not a skyscraper. He stated that they would like more trees and landscaping and that there is no need for adding signage to the side of the building.

Mr. Kurt Drescher, owner of the property to the east stated that he is in Dupage County and that the development for the property is good but that he is not comfortable with a hotel living next to him. He stated that the closest B-3 District is the mall of Home Depot and the other side of town and not in the neighborhood. He stated that this is a big stretch. Mr. Drescher stated that the size of the building stands out. He further stated that he is concerned with safety and theft in the area and that there are no plans for security cameras outside.

Mr. Drescher stated that there will be 6 full time employees and the parking spaces are planned for five. He also questioned the storm sewer and drainage.

There was much discussion regarding the drainage, storm sewers and storm water management.

Judy Greiman reported that the street and ditch area is owned by the State. She stated that she is flooded because of the storage business.

Mr. Griffith reported that the petitioner is providing stormwater management.

There was no one else wishing to present public comment and Chairperson Meyer closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Ritzert expressed concern for the building 20 or 30 years from now.

Chairperson Meyer stated his concerns are all unknowns.

Commissioner Lind suggested a revision of the materials adding more masonry and return with revised plans.

Commissioner Kelly stated that he tried to come in with an open mind and he has not been convinced that the reward outweighs the risk. He stated that he had an issue with the exterior building materials and the element of people staying in the hotel.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he will shoot for 60% brick level.

Commissioner Laratta made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Mielkus that based upon the submitted petition and the information presented, the request associated with PZC 2015-06 is in conformance with the standards of the Darien City Code and move that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend approval of the petition subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Address comments noted in letter dated June 23, 2015 from Dan Lynch, PE, Christopher Burke Engineering, Ltd.**
- 2. Parking landscape islands to be full of plant material, final inspection to verify.**
- 3. All exterior lighting to be directed in a way to avoid causing glare onto adjacent properties. The need for light shields to be verified during final inspection.**
- 4. The petitioner agreed to provide a minimum of 55% up to 60% brick on the entire building with an emphasis on I-55.**

Upon roll call vote, **THE MOTION CARRIED** by a vote of 7-1. Commissioner Mallers and Commissioner Mielkus were not present.

AYES: Kelly, Kiefer, Lind, Laratta, Mielkus, Meyer, Ritzert

NAYS: None

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

OLD BUSINESS/PLANNER'S REPORT

None.

MINUTES

Commissioner Lind made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Kelly to waive the reading of the May 20, 2015 Meeting Minutes.

Upon voice vote, **THE MOTION CARRIED** unanimously. Commissioner Kiefer, Commissioner Oberland, and Commissioner Mallers were not present.

Commissioner Ritzert made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Laratta to approve the May 20, 2015 Meeting Minutes.

Upon voice vote, **THE MOTION CARRIED** unanimously. Commissioner Kiefer, Commissioner Oberland, and Commissioner Mallers were not present.

NEXT MEETING

Mr. Griffith announced that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Kiefer made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Laratta. Upon voice vote, **THE MOTION CARRIED** unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

APPROVED:

Michael Griffith
Senior Planner

Beverly Meyer
Chairman