City of Blue Island
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MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION

CITY HALL EAST ANNEX BUILDING
2434 VERMONT STREET
BLUE ISLAND, IL 60406

Commissioner Chairman Mark Patoska called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

I. Roll Call

Present
Arthur J. Weir
Erich Wennberg
Toni Ebeling
Ron Bloom
Jason Berry
Mark Patoska

Staff
Howard M. Coppari, Development Manager
Mark Miller, Special Project Coordinator
Liz Flores, Administrative Assistance

Absent
Eric Polcaster

II. Approval of Minutes

Vote on the motion as follows: **NO PRIOR MINUTES WERE APPROVED**

AYES	0
NAYS	0
ABSTAIN	0
ABSENT	0

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Old Business

None

V. New Business

Special Use: 12757 Western Avenue, Blue Island, IL 60406, Jermaine Walker

A special use was applied for a banquet hall at the Olde Masonic Hall within the C1: Central Area Commercial Zone.

Coppari: The staff report talks about Mr. Jermaine Walker requesting a special use for the space. The property is zoned as C1 and is a little outside the UTOD. Request will fall into R1 which makes reference to #11 Private Clubs or Lodges. Application is limited to the main ballroom area with access to stairs and bathrooms. Kitchen will not be used. The commission can ask questions about entity, use and what have you. Zoning code definition for a lodge is a meeting place for food and meals to be served on premise which applicant will be providing. Banquet hall used for training, workshops, private events, graduations and other similar events. There have been a couple building complaints and police report filed previously. It is up to the commission to approve/disapprove the special use. Space was reviewed and has a grand total of 4,970 sq. ft.

Walker: Signed the lease in Sept/Oct of 2016. Building owner said he would take care of repairs. Has been trying to apply for a business license. There have been some issues with changes in Blue Island staff which is why it has not been completed. They have been using the facility for friends/family events in the meantime. Says the activity from the police reports were not associated with them. Intended use is an event space for graduations, training, receptions, baby shower and other things of that nature. Mr. Walker is associated with the lodge.

Wennberg: Asked if the applicant applied for the Illinois food handler license. The Illinois food code states that with lodges that ownership, management or staff must have a food handler's license. A food sanitation manager also needs to be on the premises. Zoning code states that leasing of private club or lodge space is limited to members and their guests. Example: A Mason cannot rent to a non-mason. Mr. Berry mentions that there is no clarity around the meaning of "guest". Mr. Berry gives an example that with the Eagles he could rent their basement before being a member.

Berry: Explains that R2 and R3 were deleted in the 90's and got rolled into R1. He also explained to Mr. Bloom that that the zoning code applies to the use of the property in this particular case.

Bloom: Asked that if this particular case of use is specific to the individual or if going forward if approved if anyone can come in and do the same thing. Mr. Berry explains that in the code that after 6 months the property can lose its special use. Example: The owner shuts down for 8 months and then sells to someone that wants to use the space in the same way as the previous owner, the new owner would have to try to reestablish that with the city. Mr. Walker explains that's what happened in his case. It was used as an event space but wasn't used for a few years which is why he is applying for that use again.

Berry: Mentions that in this case the commission is making the recommendation to the Zoning Court of Appeals. In this instance he feels Mr. Walker has the right to move forward to the ZBA. He mentions to Mr. Coppari that some of the things we've discussed is if the zoning code needs to be amended and that's something the ZBA could do. At the time we thought it was UTOD but looks like the same challenges apply to C1. Should a banquet hall be added to C1 to make it simpler?

Coppari: There is nothing in the ordinance that says banquet hall as a title. This is hedging on something that is already here, the building was established. Unfortunately, his predecessor categorized it under a special use. Mr. Berry says he understand that and just wants to make sure we aren't pushing through junk and can give the opportunity to clean the code up.

Wennberg: Explains to Mr. Walker that we want to make sure he does not have any more hiccups moving forward. We want to make sure this process is complete and can move on.

Coppari: Mentions there are 12 parking spaces on site and there is a municipal lot one property over and that the main use of this property will be weekends when there is less businesses open and weeknights. He doesn't believe parking will be a major issue. Says parking is calculated by the number of seats. Example: Every 4 seats is 1 parking spot.

Walker: Mentions he was told they would have access to that municipal lot. He also mentions they will have max 150 people for events.

Berry: Mentions that the fire department also sets occupancy.

Weir: Asks if occupancy will be up to 150. Mr. Walker said the inspector came and did a pre-walkthrough and said 150. Mr. Weir then clarifies that based on 150 seats that there should be about 38 parking spaces available. Mr. Berry mentions parking isn't required in C1, but you still want to make sure you have ample parking.

Coppari: Mentions the terrain of the building's lot is not that good and there's a huge crevice where a couple cars might have to be pushed to the alley, but it looks like you can fit 12 cars. There is also proper enter/exit access as well connecting to the street.

Bloom: Asks for confirmation if this was a banquet hall before which it was. He also wanted to know if some of these issues were worked on then. Mr. Berry says he believes some of the same things would have been brought up, but it was a while ago and closed around 2002-03.

Ebeling: Asks for confirmation that there will be no liquor license. Mr. Walker confirms there will be no liquor license.

Patoska: Asks for confirmation that Mr. Walker will not be applying for a liquor license and that people will not be allowed to bring liquor on the site. Mr. Walker confirms that there will be no liquor license and no liquor allowed and that Blue Island does not allow for BYOB.

Bloom: Asks for confirmation that there will be security at each event. Mr. Walker states yes.

Patoska: Wanted to address the complaints by Korbakes that there was a lot of activity in the basement of the property and that the trash left would start attracting rodents. Then there's the complaint from June to the building department. There was also a complaint to the police department from September 2018 for an unauthorized party. Mr. Walker confirms those were not related to him and is not familiar with the person on the police complaint. He mentions that there is another space above his and that Charlie mentioned in a complaint is the building owner. Mr. Patoska also mentions a costume party from a while back and Mr. Walker mentions that was a friends/family party and was never told they could not use it for personal use. He then states he apologized to Liz Flores for using it since he was not aware they shouldn't.

Patoska: Asks Mr. Berry how a special use can be revoked. Mr. Berry says you would have to be in violation of a business license. Mr. Coppari says once the special use is granted it is granted and you would have to be in violation of a business license.

Berry: Asks for clarification on the business operations. Mr. Walker presents a business plan and says his friend who owns Beverly Woods will be helping him out with business planning. Berry mentions that most lodges rent out space to non-members and sometimes charge more when you're not a member. He says we have a clunky zoning code from 1971 that is in desperate need of updating on definitions and uses. He doesn't feel we can hold someone up because a zoning code isn't right and that there is a line with the intent for club or lodge. He says they should recommend to the ZBA that they consider amending the definition of the code instead of amending the use, possibly around the square footage of the space being rented.

Wennberg: In the business plan it states hours of operation will be Mon-Thurs 10am-10pm Fri-Sat 10am-1am Sun 11am-11pm. Mr. Walker states that they will not be doing business on Monday and that it needs to be changed in the business plan.

Patoska: Asks Mr. Berry if he'd like to make a motion to recommend to the ZBA for special use approval.

Berry: Makes motion to recommend approval of a club or lodge at 12757 S. Western with the additional recommendation that the ZBA consider amending the definition of club or lodge to include the operation of a banquet facility not to exceed 5,000 sq. ft. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chair Patoska. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the request for approval of special use to the ZBA.

VI. Commissioners Comments

Wennberg: I will be presenting a new business plan to the plan commission and expect to recuse myself during the session.

Patoska: As a plan commission going forward maybe we should have a study session in addition to any applicants talking about what our goals as a plan commission are and goals for the next year. Basically, where we left off six months ago. So, if we can, Mr. Coppari can coordinate with our schedules to talk about what his goals are for the building department and the plan commission and we can schedule a date next month and put together an agenda.

VII. Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Chair Patoska, the commission agreed to adjourn the meeting. Vote on the motion as follows:

AYES	6	Patoska, Weir, Wennberg, Berry, Ebeling, Bloom
NAYS	0	
ABSTAIN	0	
ABSENT	1	Polcaster

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.

These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of the proceedings.

10/18/18
Date

Mark W. Patoska
Mark Patoska, Chairman