



**City of Blue Island
Building & Zoning Department**

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MINUTES

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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

The Zoning Board of Appeals hearing was held remotely on Thursday, April 2, 2020 at 7:30 PM, as permitted by Executive Order 2020-07, which was signed by Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker on Monday, March 16, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

People participated remotely, by downloading the *Zoom Cloud Meetings App*, or by calling (312) 626-6799, and inserting Zoning Board Meeting Webinar ID: 577 472 511. (Online: <https://zoom.us/j/577472511>)

Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Clifford Griffin called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM on Thursday, April 2, 2020.

I. Roll Call

Present

Clifford Griffin
Eric Frausto
Michael Sinde
Jeffrey Atwell
Joseph Martin

Staff

Howard M. Coppari, Community Development Manager
Randy Heuser, City Clerk (*Zoom App setup and recording*)

General Public

None

Absent

Brandon Richardella
Vonda Hardy

II. Approval of Minutes

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) reviewed the minutes from Thursday, February 13, 2020, but they did not take a vote on the minutes because the minutes were not properly noticed in the ZBA Agenda for Thursday, April 2, 2020.

The Zoning Board of Appeals will review the minutes in the next scheduled meeting. The COVID-19 pandemic has “temporarily” disrupted regular municipal service.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Old Business

None

V. New Business

Special Use Application / Alverdis Alexander / 13842-13844 S. Harrison Avenue

Alverdis Alexander, the applicant, for a special use for an “Automobile Body and Fender Shop,” an “Automobile Repair Shop,” and a “Used Car Dealer” use in a General Industrial District (I-2) was withdrawn by the applicant because there was a disagreement on the term of the lease of the subject property.

Mr. Alexander emailed an “official” withdrawal of his special use application to Howard M. Coppari, the Community Development Manager, on Tuesday, April 2, 2020. Mr. Coppari read Mr. Alexander’s email into the record.

Special Use Application / Charles Commerford / 12401 Vincennes Road / Gene’s Drive-In Cleaners

Charles Commerford, the applicant and property/business owner, for a special use for a “Retail and Personal Service Establishment” in a Limited Industrial District (I-1) was heard by the Planning Commission as scheduled.

Zoning Board of Appeals Chair Clifford Griffin asked for Mr. Coppari to make a presentation on behalf of Charles Commerford, due to the fact that most of the Board members were on the *Zoom Cloud Meetings App* portal, while Mr. Commerford was calling in, and he was not aware on how the meeting was moving along.

Mr. Coppari explained his staff report in great details. He went through his staff report section by section.

Zoning Board Chair Griffin asked for Charles Commerford, the applicant, to speak about his special use and his existing business in more details.

Mr. Commerford mentioned that he was in business, *as Gene’s Drive-In Cleaners*, for forty-three (43) years, and he was forced to close his business in October of 2019 because of a family health problem. Mr. Commerford explained he wanted to sell his property to Jesus Lopez, *Lopez Tire Shop*, because he is a local Blue Island business owner who has been operating at his business for eighteen (18) years, and he was very popular within the city.

Mr. Commerford is trying to sell his business to a person who is invested in Blue Island, and he is taking a price reduction in selling his property to a local business owner. He mentioned this was the right thing to do.

Zoning Board Member Joseph Martin said that he had visited *Lopez Tire Shop* at 2407 York Street several times to repair or replace a flat tire. He understands the desire for Jesus Lopez to move out of his current location and to find another place in the city, which is more conducive to a tire repair shop.

Zoning Board Chair Griffin asked Mr. Commerford if had spoken to the existing business owners, which are abutting his property from the north and to the south. He also asked if these neighboring business owners expressed any comments or concerns to Mr. Commerford.

Mr. Commerford responded to Mr. Griffin’s question by saying that he spoke to the owner of *Bob’s Auto Body*, and he was fine with *Lopez Tire Shop* opening up. Mr. Commerford tried to reach out to *W & W Foreign Auto Parts*, but he had no luck with a response from this business owner.

Minutes for the Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing (Continue)

Zoning Board Michael Sinde asked about the iconic and historical pole sign that belongs to Charles Commerford. *What will happen with this lovely sign?* Mr. Sinde expressed that he would like to see the pole sign donated to the Blue Island Historical Society. He said this sign is a treasure, and it should not be lost at all.

Mr. Commerford responded that he has received a lot of inquiries in preserving his pole sign, and people have asked more about his sign after his property appeared on the hit TV show *Chicago Fire*. He commented that he witnessed an influx of more people driving up to his property to take photos of the iconic pole sign and the antiquated drive-in building. Mr. Commerford would like to preserve the sign as well, and donate it to the historical society.

Mr. Coppari replied that the iconic sign might be lost to the enforcement of the signage code. Basically, Blue Island is looking for older, nonconforming pole signs to be gradually removed and replaced with new conforming monument signs. Mr. Coppari also agreed that the Blue Island Historical Society should be the future home for the “*Americana Inspired*” sign, which expresses the love of the automobile and the drive-in culture.

Zoning Board Erik Frausto expressed that he has personally witnessed, on repeated occurrences, illegal tire dumping near Clark Street in Blue Island. He expressed out loud what efforts can be done to curb this terrible nuisance.

Mr. Frausto said he was not blaming Jesus Lopez at all for the plight of illegal tire dumping in the city, and he has used *Lopez Tire Shop* to change his flat tires many times. He acknowledged that Mr. Lopez is in good standing with the city for his professional service and his customer friendly attitude.

Board Member Sinde also chimed in with Mr. Frausto’s illegal tire dumping concern as well. He said this is a problem that needs to be addressed by the city.

Zoning Board Martin commented that Mr. Lopez has been in the city for eighteen (18) years, and he should be given a chance to move to a new location and expand his business.

Board Member Sinde also mentioned that Jesus Lopez is very professional as well.

Mr. Coppari interjected into the illegal tire dumping conversation, and said that Mr. Lopez will need to apply for a business license application, and he would ask for proper documentation on how Mr. Lopez disposes his used tires for record keeping with the Building Department.

Zoning Board Chair Griffin acknowledged that many Board Members were in agreement with approving the special use application, and he asked if someone can make a motion to accept the Planning Commission’s approval of the special use application.

Board Member Frausto made the motion, which was seconded by Board Member Martin. The vote on the motion in accepting the approval from the Planning Commission of the special use application as follows:

AYES	<u>5</u>	Griffin, Frausto, Sinde, Atwell, Martin
NAYS	<u>0</u>	
ABSTAIN	<u>0</u>	
ABSENT	<u>2</u>	Richardella, Hardy

Minutes for the Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing (Continue)

The Zoning Board of Appeals Members discussed about implementing a zoning condition on the special use, which was urged by Chair Griffin. Eventually, it was agreed by all Board Members that much needed site improvements should be done when Jesus Lopez takes over the property from Charles Commerford. Mr. Griffin asked for Mr. Coppari to prepare a zoning condition that captures the main essence expressed by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The new zoning condition contains the following language:

“When the new applicant, Jesus Lopez, applies for a new business license application, the new applicant will improve upon the current site conditions in repairing and/or replacing the existing shared asphalt parking lot and drive lane by sealcoating and painting new striped parking stalls; by erecting new parking bumpers and/or bollards, if needed; by designating a new pedestrian walkway area in asphalt or concrete in flatwork, by installing a new catch basin to capture stormwater, by planting new onsite landscaping; by erecting new light poles to illuminate the parking lot; and by improving and repairing any building and building canopy deficiencies.”

Board Member Sinde made the motion, which was seconded by Board Member Frausto. The vote on the motion in accepting a zoning condition as of part of the special use application as follows:

AYES	<u>5</u>	Griffin, Frausto, Sinde, Atwell, Martin
NAYS	<u>0</u>	
ABSTAIN	<u>0</u>	
ABSENT	<u>2</u>	Richardella, Hardy

Mr. Coppari spoke about the standards for approving the special use application, which he offered to read verbatim, but Zoning Board Chair Griffin said that was not needed, and everyone was aware of the standards from his staff report.

Board Member Sinde made the motion, which was seconded by Board Member Martin. The vote on the motion in approving the special use application with a zoning condition, as shown above, as follows:

AYES	<u>5</u>	Griffin, Frausto, Sinde, Atwell, Martin
NAYS	<u>0</u>	
ABSTAIN	<u>0</u>	
ABSENT	<u>2</u>	Richardella, Hardy

Chair Griffin congratulated Mr. Commerford on the approval of his special use application, and he suggested that he follows up with Mr. Coppari on the rest of approval process.

VI. Commissioners Comments

None

VII. Adjournment

Minutes for the Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing (Continue)

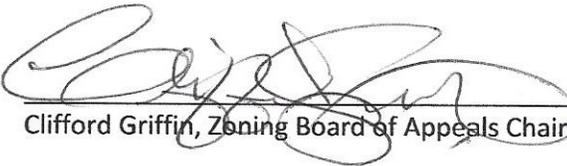
Board Member Martin made the motion, which was seconded by Board Member Frausto. The vote on the motion for adjourning for the evening as follows:

AYES	<u>5</u>	Griffin, Frausto, Sinde, Atwell, Martin
NAYS	<u>0</u>	
ABSTAIN	<u>0</u>	
ABSENT	<u>2</u>	Richardella, Hardy

The Zoning Board of Appeals adjourned the meeting at 8:11 PM. These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of the proceeding.

05-07-20

Date



Clifford Griffin, Zoning Board of Appeals Chair