

**JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
October 5, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of Blue Island was called to order at 7:06 p.m. on October 5, 2023.

ROLL CALL

Roll call indicates the following:

Present:	5	Jason Berry, David Brown, David Johnson, Samuel Jones, Michael Sinde
Absent	1	A.J. Weir
Present Also:		Howard Coppari, Community Development Mgr. Ryan Morton, City Attorney Applicants and other members of the public

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ron Bloom asked that notices and information for public hearings be made more visible on the City's website.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Minutes of June 1, June 29, and August 3, 2023 PZBA Meetings.

Motion by Berry, second by Sinde, to approve the minutes of the June 1, June 29, and August 3, 2023 meetings of the Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ayes:	5	Berry, Brown, Johnson, Jones, Sinde
Nays:	0	

There being five affirmative votes, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Special Use for a "building trades/contractor's office" in the UTOD District. [Mendoza's Rehab & Remodeling, 2240 Grove Street]

Chairman Johnson opened the public hearing at 7:09 p.m. Attorney Morton swore in those who would testify.

Carlos Mendoza, the owner of Mendoza's Rehab & Remodeling, testified in support of his application. He has owned the business since 2016 and is looking to move into an office with an attached garage. There would be no outdoor storage, but there would be parking available for the nearby restaurant.

Coppari explained that the UTOD allows flexibility regarding setbacks, so there are no variances being requested. Staff had no suggested conditions.

There were no public comments. Chairman Johnson closed the public hearing at 7:17 p.m.

Motion by Brown, seconded by Berry, to approve the Findings of Fact and recommend approval of the special use permit for a “building trades/contractor’s office” as presented.

Ayes: 5 Berry, Brown, Johnson, Jones, Sinde

Nays: 0

There being five affirmative votes, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

2. Special Use for a “planned unit development” (“PUD) in the UTOD. [Veterans Services, LLC and Lockwood Development Partners, LLC, 12935 S. Gregory Street]

Chairman Johnson opened the public hearing at 7:18 p.m.

Nicholas Standiford, attorney for the applicant, testified in support of the application along with Dan McNulty, Pavel Petro, Steve Corcoran, and Steve Gregory. Attorney Morton swore them all in. The proposed PUD is to redevelop the former Metro South Hospital into a senior-focused living community. Standiford presented an overview of the PUD, which will include senior housing, urgent care, adult daycare, a limited-service hotel (for guests of residents), a grocer, and other medical, office, and commercial uses.

McNulty detailed past commercial-to-residential conversions his firm has handled. He also discussed their current efforts to keep the property secure as it sits vacant. Standiford presented the site plan, which does not build on any of the existing parking lots or the park that is currently used by the City. The pavilion is not owned by the applicant, thus it is not part of this PUD. The neighboring apartment building’s easement for parking spaces will be maintained. Building A is the hospital, while Building B is the powerhouse.

Standiford stated that no contracts have been signed with users in the building. The PUD will allow the applicant to find those commercial tenants, as well as another entity to run the senior housing portion of the PUD. He detailed the housing portion: there will be 214 units, most of which will be 300 square foot studio apartments (13 will be twice that size). Rents are projected to start just under \$2,000 per month. There will be amenities available on site, such as a cafeteria, but that is an extra expense. Petro explained that these numbers were based on a market study that was conducted, while Standiford explained that the numbers are necessary for the project to be profitable.

Corcoran detailed his parking study, which showed that existing parking is more than sufficient to meet the needs of this development, which will be less intense than the prior 24/7 hospital occupant. Gregory discussed landscaping and how additional greenery would be added to the site.

The PZBA asked several questions of the applicant. Sinde asked how unit sizes were determined; Pavel explained it was based on the existing hospital layout, with minimal tearing down of walls. Efficiency was a consideration. Berry asked if that could be changed to increase the size of the rooms, perhaps by taking away from commercial carve-outs to keep the number of rooms but with more space. Pavel stated that they would look into it. McNulty found a similar conversion in Aurora has rooms of about 475 square feet. Johnson expressed concerns over the non-housing portions of the PUD, which will be a lot of space to fill. He also suggested that it would be good to build on the parking lot to offer business opportunities and remove excessive parking. Brown asked for details on the other users, and Standiford offered some general options. The PZBA also addressed the applicant’s security plan, powering the complex, and façade changes (there will be none).

Chairman Johnson opened up the floor for public comments. The following individuals (except one) were sworn in and testified as follows:

- Lynne Ingersoll – She asked how seniors will be able to afford this rent and discussed problems with proposed housing units.
- Jim Mitzhoffer – As a plumber who lives nearby, he wanted to know more details about the amenities in each room.
- John Morfoot – He asked about the management of the hotel and prices for rooms and whether they would be handicapped accessible.
- Joy Clutter – As a nurse who used to work at the hospital, she testified that the room sizes are like boxes. She urged the applicant to change the room sizes to make them comfortable and safe.
- Leticia Veyra – As a former hospital employee, she said the rooms are too small for people to live in. She also discussed the Cook County DPH building on Western and wondered how that would affect parking. She asked that pictures from the hospital stay there as historical pieces.
- Cathy Keener – She refused to swear an oath and alleged that it was improper for Attorney Morton to require people to be sworn in to give public comment. She did not have any comments on the application.
- Robert Rola – He asked for confirmation that the parking spaces would still be available for the neighboring apartment tenants and asked for the parking lot to be resurfaced.
- Henry O’Neal – He commented that he is looking forward to these uses coming to the property to make it viable. He asked how many jobs would be created and what the cost would be to the taxpayers.
- Marie Mindeman – She commented that this proposal presents a lot of hope for the community. She wanted to know more about any partnerships the applicant has pursued with community agencies to help with the adult daycare and other senior uses. She also expressed disappointment over the size and price of the rooms and worried that this would be like the St. Anthony’s eyesore again.
- Ron Bloom – He appreciated seeing the potential development, but also questioned the room size. He asked about security for the occupants. He also suggested the creation of a community committee to track progress on this PUD.
- Angela Byrne – She stated that she did not know anyone who could afford this price tag. She also asked about pets.

Standiford and the other applicant’s representatives responded to the testimony. They reiterated that market research supports this size and price point for the rooms. The studios would have a microwave, sink, and refrigerator. The goal of the community is to be social, so ideally people will not be spending much time in their rooms. Some of the units will be handicapped accessible. The applicant has been having meetings with potential community partners, because their intent is to have another organization run components of this PUD. The lease would have restrictions, which might include pets. The 27 parking spaces for the apartment building are safe and the parking lot will be improved.

In addition, Standiford added that he believes property values around the hospital will go up with this development. They will be looking for pharmacies and health clubs to fill those commercial spaces. Tenants would handle their own build outs. They are not looking for TIF assistance. The project would be financed through a combination of construction debt and private equity.

More public testimony was received:

- Marie Mindamen – She pointed out that it is not uncommon for an assisted living company to transition out of a facility agreement, so she questioned what guarantee there would be that the proper entities are running these units. Standiford clarified that this is not assisted living; it is independent living.
- Jim Mitzhoffer – He asked details about occupancy loads for each room and whether food allowances are included.
- Becky James – She asked about a comparison with the Copley development, since this PUD is not tiered.
- Leticia Veyra – She asked for clarification on what shipping dock would be used and explained that space is tight on one of them.

Having asked for additional testimony and no one coming forward, **Motion by Johnson, seconded by Berry, to close the public hearing portion of this meeting.**

Ayes: 5 Berry, Johnson, Jones, Sinde, Weir

Nays: 0

There being five affirmative votes, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Coppari explained the PUD process and detailed the documents he had reviewed from the applicant, which were included in the commissioners' packets. He went through the fee amenities, the details of what will be provided, and the proposed conditions in his report. Attorney Morton also detailed the PUD process, in terms of timing and any changes that could be made.

Commissioners had additional questions and comments for the applicant, noting that their action is just a recommendation to the City Council. Sinde stated that he is excited about this opportunity, but he is concerned about the size of the rooms, the safety plan, and affordability. Berry is also concerned about the room size, which is why he proposed less commercial space, but he stated that the price of the rooms is outside the PZBA's area. Johnson called this a "50-year decision" and said the PZBA needs to be careful now to make sure this is a successful development

The PZBA asked the applicant to gather additional information and provide it to the PZBA prior to its next meeting. That information includes:

- Options for flexibility in unit size/count;
- An economic plan;
- A safety plan; and
- A traffic/circulation plan.

Motion by Johnson, seconded by Sinde, to table consideration of this application until the November 2, 2023 PZBA meeting at 7:00 p.m. Morton clarified that the public hearing portion of this application is complete; the meeting on November 2 will simply be for further deliberation and recommendation from the PZBA.

Ayes: 5 Berry, Johnson, Jones, Sinde, Weir

Nays: 0

There being five affirmative votes, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURN

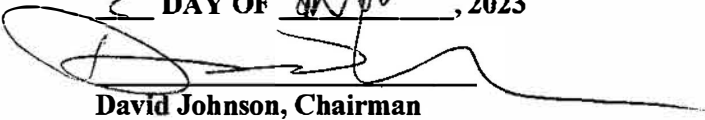
Motion by Brown, second by Sinde, to adjourn the meeting. A majority voted in favor by voice vote, and the Chairman declared the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

The next meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals is scheduled for November 2, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.



Ryan R. Morton, City Attorney

APPROVED BY ME THIS
2 DAY OF NOV, 2023



David Johnson, Chairman