

MINUTES OF THE ZONING COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 20, 2021 - 3:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Baker, DeJoy, Grill, Hood, Reilly, and Taghioff
EXCUSED: Rangel Morales and Syed
STAFF: Emma Siegworth, Samantha Langer, Allan Torstenson, and Peter Warner

The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Baker. He stated that the chair of the Planning Commission had determined that due to the COVID-19 pandemic it is neither practical nor prudent for the Zoning Committee to meet in person, and therefore the meeting was being conducted remotely, with all members of the Zoning Committee attending the meeting remotely. The public is also able to join the meeting remotely and can speak during the public hearing portion or submit comments by noon on the day before the meeting.

733 Grand Coulee Bank drive-thru - 21-256-450 - Conditional use permit for a bank drive-thru service lane, with modifications of standards for lane distance from residential property (60' minimum, 49' 11" proposed) and vehicular egress distance from residential property (60' minimum, 35.0' proposed) at 733 Grand Avenue, NE corner at Grotto.

Emma Siegworth presented the staff report with a recommendation of approval with conditions for the conditional use permit. She said District 16 submitted a letter recommending approval with conditions, and there were 11 letters in support, and 6 letters in opposition.

Russ Schramm, HTG Architects, 9300 Hennepin Town Road, Eden Prairie, said he is available for questions.

No one spoke in support or opposition. The public hearing was closed.

In response to Commissioner Taghioff, Ms. Siegworth said Public Works was unable to review the revised traffic and queuing analysis that was submitted. In their original review of the first draft of the analysis, they did question the need for two exit lanes. Public Works will be reviewing the revised analysis soon.

In response to Commissioner DeJoy, Ms. Siegworth said having four stacking spaces is a standard for drive-through sales and services and the project does provide four stacking spaces. They also provided a traffic and queuing analysis that reported that the queuing space provided is expected to be adequate, that there is some room in the parking lot for additional queuing if needed, and that there is little to no chance that the queuing would extend to a point that it would impact the public right of way.

In response to Commissioner Hood, Ms. Siegworth said that this parcel is part of the East Grand Overlay District, which has restrictions for height and building bulk. The proposed development meets these restrictions and the proposed drive-through service lane is a conditional use.

Commissioner Hood said he is frustratingly going to vote in favor of this application. The restrictions of the East Grand Overlay District allow for this type of development and this is likely what we will see at this location. He said that we need to be more proactive in zoning and it's

embarrassing that we are allowing to permit a drive-through on Grand Avenue. We need something better on Grand Avenue because it is a main street for Saint Paul.

Commissioner Grill said she agrees. This is a situation where their hands are tied. There have been a lot of drive-throughs that have come before the Committee and she doesn't think anyone is happy about seeing them. There have been times they have come up with legal and rational ways of fighting them, but this is one of the harder ones because of the East Grand Overlay District. This is a parcel that we could see something great along Grand Avenue, but it is restrained by the requirements.

Commissioner Reilly said he appreciates his colleagues' concerns about drive-throughs, and he understands that Grand Avenue is pedestrian friendly area. When we talk about drive-throughs being less desirable than walk-in establishments, we forget that there is an entire population of people who find it difficult to get out of their vehicles. In this scenario, we have a drive through that only has one lane versus up to five lanes like at other bank locations. It is an improvement upon the current situation for the neighborhood. This is purely a land use decision and they are meeting all the requirements. There is a lot more nuance to pedestrian friendly environments and who is able to access and take advantage of the community that we have in Saint Paul.

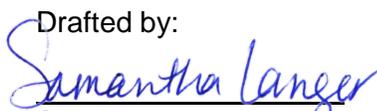
Commissioner Taghioff sympathizes with the comments made by Commissioner Hood and Commissioner Grill. He said that District 16 is currently working on revising its neighborhood plan and is looking at whether the East Grand Avenue Overlay is appropriate. There is a lot of recognition that times have changed and perhaps these things could serve us better if they were a little different that they are right now.

Commissioner Baker said this may not be the best and highest use of the site. He also agrees with Commissioner Reilly that there is a large population that would benefit from the drive-through.

Commissioner Reilly moved approval with conditions of the conditional use permit. Commissioner Hood seconded the motion.

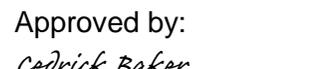
The motion passed by a vote of 6-0-0.

Adopted Yeas - 6 Nays - 0 Abstained - 0

Drafted by:

Samantha Langer
Recording Secretary

Submitted by:

Emma Siegworth (Jun 4, 2021 08:37 CDT)
Emma Siegworth
City Planner

Approved by:

Cedrick Baker (Jun 4, 2021 08:58 CDT)
Cedrick Baker
Chair

21-256-450 733 Grand minutes_ES

Final Audit Report

2021-06-04

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