

MINUTES OF THE ZONING COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 10, 2016 - 3:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
City Hall and Court House
15 West Kellogg Boulevard

PRESENT: Edgerton, Makarios, Nelson, Reveal, Wencil, and McMahon
EXCUSED: Merrigan and Wickiser
STAFF: Tony Johnson, Cherie Englund, Allan Torstenson, and Peter Warner

The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Nelson.

The Lex (976 Concordia) - 16-091-649 - Change of nonconforming use from private club to restaurant, private club, and meeting space at 976 Concordia Ave, SE corner at Chatsworth.

Tony Johnson presented the staff report with a recommendation of approval with conditions for the change of nonconforming use permit. District 8 had made no recommendation. There were 17 letters in support and 1 letter in opposition.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reveal, Mr. Johnson said that they will probably need to renovate the kitchens to meet commercial standards.

In response to a question from Chair Nelson, Mr. Johnson said the storage container had been moved from parking space #1 to the grassy area.

Commissioner Wencil asked if the club and restaurant would operate at the same time, and if there will be outside seating.

Mr. Johnson said they would operate at different times to mitigate traffic impact. He was unsure about outside seating.

Commissioner Edgerton said he thinks club and restaurant traffic would be different. He asked about the 9 space legal nonconforming parking deficiency and using on-street parking to offset the parking deficiency.

Mr. Johnson said on-street parking is not counted towards the parking minimum except in T3-T4 districts, but he felt it was good to note the availability of on-street parking along the frontage of the property.

The applicant, Charles Carter, 1700 W. 90th St., Bloomington, said he is open for questions. In response to Commissioner Wencil's questions, he said the club and restaurant would not operate at the same time, the club does not currently have a liquor license but will consider applying for one in the future, and they have a patio for the smokers.

Commissioner Makarios asked about historic problems with a club at this location and about security if they acquire a liquor license.

Mr. Carter said they don't have the same clientele as the previous club, there have been no problems since he took ownership in 2012, and they utilize a private security company.

Commissioner Wencil asked what days of the week the restaurant will be open, and asked about the condition in the staff recommendation that food and beverages not be served after midnight.

Mr. Carter the restaurant would be open on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at first, they would expand this to other days if it works, and they would not serve food or beverages past midnight.

Mr. Johnson noted that if they obtain a liquor license and want to serve beverages later than midnight it would be considered a bar, which would be subject to different zoning requirements.

In response to a question from Chair Nelson, Mr. Carter said he would prefer not making operation of the club and restaurant at separate times a condition of the permit.

Kasara Edwards, 1700 W. 90th St., Bloomington, said they provide meeting space for neighborhood organizations and employment opportunities to local residents. They have been here since 2012, working with the neighborhood to preserve and incorporate some of the history of this historic Rondo business location, offer their patrons a nostalgic feel, and change the negative stigma of the previous club, which is why there are so many letters of support.

Jackie Cooper, 1929 Foxridge Rd., St. Paul, spoke in favor. She said she is a long time resident of the Rondo community, is on the club board, was Chair of the Rondo Ave. Inc. Board of Directors, and remembers the construction of the American Legion that her parents managed as a community gathering place for over 20 years.

No one spoke in opposition and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Reveal moved to approve the change of nonconforming use permit, with conditions as stated in the staff report. Commissioner Makarios seconded the motion.

Commissioner McMahon asked why the staff recommendation includes a condition that the restaurant comply with all applicable laws and licensing requirements, which is implicit. She asked why this is in some staff reports and not in others, and suggested that if such a condition is necessary the staff report should include findings that provide a basis for it.

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

Adopted Yeas - 6 Nays - 0 Abstained - 0

Drafted by:



Cherie Englund
Recording Secretary

Submitted by:



Tony Johnson
Zoning Section

Approved by:



Gaius Nelson
Chair