

MINUTES OF THE ZONING COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 21, 2019 - 3:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
City Hall and Court House
15 West Kellogg Boulevard

PRESENT: DeJoy, Edgerton, Grill, Lindeke, Rangel Morales, and Reveal
EXCUSED: Baker and Ochs
STAFF: Kady Dadlez, Emma Siegworth, Samantha Langer, Allan Torstenson, and Peter Warner

The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Edgerton.

2525 W 7th Coffee Shop Drive-Thru - 19-097-759 - Conditional use permit for coffee shop drive-thru sales., 2525 7th St W, NE corner at Davern St.

Emma Siegworth presented the staff report with a recommendation of approval with a condition for the conditional use permit. She stated District 15 recommended approval with conditions, and there were no other letters in support or opposition.

In response to Commissioner Grill, Ms. Siegworth said there is a front door pedestrian entrance and a patio facing and accessed from the corner on West Seventh and Davern Streets.

In response to Commissioner Lindeke, Mr. Torstenson said there was a 40-acre zoning study in this area including a large area across 7th Street from this site. There was major rezoning in the area and discussion of rezoning Sibley Plaza to T2. Paster Properties had plans to possibly redevelop the site, but there was uncertainty as to whether it would happen or not. Paster Properties wanted to keep the current zoning as B2 until they had a final plan.

Mike Sturdivant, Paster Properties, 5320 W 23rd Street, Suite 205, St. Louis Park, MN, said he is available for any questions and representatives from Kimley-Horn are also present for questions.

Commissioner Lindeke said he thought that years ago there was a redevelopment proposal by Paster Properties for Sibley Plaza that included adding a mixed-use development at the site. When the 40-acre study was being done, it was decided not to rezone Sibley Plaza to T2 because Paster Properties wanted to keep it B2 for purposes of this redevelopment. He would like to know what happened to the mixed-use development plan.

Mr. Sturdivant said that they believed the current B2 zoning gave them greater flexibility for commercial uses. They explored a mixed-use development, but due to various factors, it was unfeasible. To build market-rate housing in that area was a challenge without significant subsidy, which at that time was not available, and they also had two large commercial anchor tenants pull out of the project.

In response to Commissioner Reveal, Mr. Sturdivant said that the balance of the site has been remodeled, and recently Aldi and Planet Fitness that have opened. There isn't any housing on the site.

In response to Commissioner Grill, Mr. Sturdivant said the decision of adding the drive-through to this location was made by Starbucks. They feel a drive-through would be critical to their business here.

Gary Martland, Vice Chairman of Highland District Park Community Development Committee, 1862 Montreal Avenue, Saint Paul, MN said he is present to voice their support for the project. They made announcements throughout the district and the large majority of the feedback was in support of the proposal. They feel that this will be a great draw to help revitalize the Sibley Plaza community. They have debated and vetted this at several meetings and they fully support Paster and this project with the condition that exiting traffic is encouraged to turn right toward the Maynard/West 7th Street exit through the use of paint, signage and curb.

Upon questions from the Commissioners regarding past discussions about pedestrian safety at this intersection, Mr. Martland said there were concerns about street lighting and time length of traffic signals. He doesn't anticipate a problem working with Paster on the issues they have raised. He said they also need to work with the City for added signage to have a limited time for a right-turn only in the morning.

Commissioner Grill asked why the District Council supports this Starbucks drive-through here and not the one proposed at Randolph and Hamline.

Mr. Martland said the two situations are different. The area in Sibley Plaza has a much larger space to accommodate the drive-through.

Kathy Carruth, Executive Director of Highland District Council, 1935 Bayard Avenue, Saint Paul, MN, said the District Council supports this proposal. She said the removal of curb cuts, two on West Seventh and two on Davern, will really improve pedestrian safety and the community agrees. She said that this proposal is much different than the one proposed at Randolph and Hamline. The Randolph and Hamline intersection has four schools located very close, and they had just worked very hard on a Safe Routes to School plan where sidewalks and bump-outs were added. There is a large difference to add a drive-through where there are four schools with kids walking and a shopping center where both the entrance and exit for the drive-through would be within the shopping center parking lot. The District Council felt that the two locations are very different.

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

Commissioner Anne DeJoy moved approval of the conditional use permit with condition. Commissioner Reveal seconded the motion.

Commissioner Lindeke said that he has mixed feelings about this proposal. When this area was going through a 40-acre study, he wanted to zone this all to T2 in the interest of making it a more pedestrian-friendly mixed-use environment. At the time, Paster said that B2 zoning was a better fit for the mixed-use development that they were planning, but only strip mall improvements have been made. He is concerned about pedestrian safety for everyone who lives near Sibley Plaza. Commissioner Lindeke said he is concerned about enforcement and

what steps the city can take in the event that there are unsafe conditions due to traffic congestion from the drive-through.

Commissioner Rangel Morales stated his concerns regarding traffic and pedestrian safety. He doesn't feel there is enough space to accommodate queuing for the drive-through.

Commissioner Grill said it seems odd put a drive-through in an area that is supposed to be pedestrian oriented. It is a lot of frontage to devote to something that is auto-oriented. She said the 2030 Comprehensive Plan promotes frequent transit service, vibrant business districts, and a range of housing choices. It is not promoting drive-throughs. She said the District Plan also supports doing things to make the area pedestrian-friendly, and this proposal doesn't seem to support that goal.

The motion to approve the conditional use permit failed by a vote of 3-3-0.

Commissioner Rangel Morales moved approval subject to an additional condition that if there are traffic or pedestrian issues in the future, the conditional use permit could come back before the Committee for consideration. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Commissioner Edgerton discussed adding a condition to address pedestrian or traffic congestion issues once the business is operating, so that if problems arise due to either of these issues, that would mean it is no longer in compliance with their approval, and would need to be brought back to the Zoning Committee for further review.

After discussion, Commissioner Reveal moved to lay over the conditional use permit to December 12, 2019, to allow staff time to research conditions that could be added to address how to monitor and mitigate pedestrian safety and traffic congestion issues that may arise in the future. Commissioner Lindeke seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of 5-1-0.

Adopted Yeas - 5 Nays - 1 (DeJoy) Abstained - 0

Drafted by:


Samantha Langer
Recording Secretary

Submitted by:


Emma Siegworth
City Planner

Approved by:


Dan Edgerton
Chair