

Plan Commission
February 28, 2018 Meeting Minutes
Approved 3-28-18

The Plan Commission held their regular meeting at the Heman Park Community Center located at 975 Pennsylvania Avenue, University City, Missouri on Wednesday, February 28, 2018. The meeting commenced at 6:30 pm.

1. Roll Call

Voting Members Present

Rosalind Williams (Chairperson)
Michael Miller
Peggy Holly
Ellen Hartz
Cynthia Head
Judith Gainer
Cirri Moran

Voting Members Absent

None

Non-Voting Council Liaison Present

Rod Jennings

Staff Present

Gregory Rose, City Manager
John Mulligan, City Attorney
Andrea Riganti, Director of Community Development
Andrew Stanislav, Planner & Zoning Administrator

2. Approval of Minutes

2.a. January 31, 2018 Plan Commission meeting

Prior to discussion of the minutes, Ms. Riganti asked the Plan Commission to consider a motion to move the public hearing portions of the agenda to coincide with their respective items under new business. A motion was made by Mr. Miller to move the public hearings under new business. The motion was seconded by Ms. Moran and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Miller to approve the January 31, 2018 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Moran. Ms. Williams requested that her comments specific to shared parking, the CUP recognized in the district itself, and garages as a principle use be added to the minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Miller to approve the January 31, 2018 meeting minutes with these additions. The motion was seconded by Ms. Moran and carried unanimously.

3. Hearings – None

4. Old Business – None

5. New Business

5.a. Conditional Use Permit – PC 18-03 – To allow the parking structure at 560 Trinity Avenue to accommodate off-site parking requirements for the adjacent and proposed COCA (Center of Creative Arts) expansion and renovation project

Ms. Riganti introduced the proposed Conditional Use Permit (CUP) by providing background and contextual information. She stated that a recent Text Amendment to the Zoning Code was approved on February 26, 2018 regarding off-site parking requirements, which requires a CUP for a parking structure of at least 200 parking spaces in order to accommodate the parking requirements of adjacent properties. Ms. Riganti also presented the findings of fact criteria for the Commission's review from Section 400.2720 of the Zoning Code and explained the proposed users of the garage's parking spaces.

Steve Condrin, representative of the applicant Washington University, provided a summary of the CUP request. Mr. Condrin thanked the Commission for their support thus far regarding their recommendation for approval of the Text Amendment at their January meeting. He explained to the Commission that the parking structure met the 200 space requirement in order to seek a CUP to accommodate off-site parking requirements for adjacent properties, and he also noted that the physical elements were previously approved through the Site Plan Review process and are not part of this application request. Mr. Condrin noted that COCA may provide more details during the succeeding agenda item.

Questions / Comments / Discussion by Plan Commission:

- There was discussion involving the existing and proposed seat capacity of COCA's performance space in relation to the parking requirement calculations. Ms. Riganti stated that the 128 parking spaces required were calculated based on the seat capacity as well as the other uses in the building. Ms. Holly also clarified the net increase in seat capacity, and the applicant for COCA's CUP stated that this information will be addressed during their presentation.
- Commission members inquired about the duration of the lease between COCA and Washington University. Mr. Condrin stated that the lease duration is up to 60 years total, consisting of a 30 year initial lease with a following 30 year renewal option. He further stated that the lease runs with the land, including any potential successors to COCA. In response to an inquiry beyond the 60 year lease, Mr. Condrin stated that it is too speculative to comment on considering the large timeframe.
- Enforcement of parking regulations was questioned in the area, specifically during scheduled events at 560 Music Center and COCA and how scheduling of these events would be handled. Mr. Condrin stated that COCA may be able to provide additional details, though Washington University and COCA possess an ongoing dialogue to share information regarding potential future events to avoid parking issues. He also noted that the lease agreement includes rules that can be enforced, and the university's parking and transportation team will be increased if necessary.
- It was questioned whether commercial parking structures were permitted in the "PA" District considering the use of this structure by an adjacent property to accommodate their parking requirements, specifically noted for the future redevelopment of the Delmar-Harvard building. Ms. Riganti stated that this CUP would allow the parking structure to accommodate off-site parking requirements and that all future parking structures meeting the requirements in the Zoning Code to do so will also require a CUP to be used for this purpose. Mr. Mulligan referenced the recent Text Amendment which references a lease, which is not the same as a commercial parking lot open to the public and is a narrow exception given the criteria established by the Text Amendment.

- Will there be a charge by patrons of COCA to use the parking structure? Mr. Condrin stated that there is a lease payment established by the agreement, and Jeff Ryan (applicant for the following agenda item) stated that COCA will not be charging users of their allocated parking spaces within the garage.
- Ms. Williams stated that the parking structure has gone from an accessory to the principle use which needs to be cleared up in the Code beyond the recent Text Amendment which requires a CUP.

Ms. Williams requested staff's comments. Ms. Riganti stated that staff recommends approval with the conditions as established in attachment "A" of the staff report.

Public Hearing:

It was clarified that members of the public who wished to speak were concerned with the following agenda item and not this request for a CUP. The public hearing for this agenda item was officially closed.

A motion was made by Mr. Miller to recommend approval of the CUP subject to meeting the conditions as identified in attachment "A." The motion was seconded by Ms. Holly.

Mr. Miller clarified that the issue presently at hand with this agenda item was to allow the parking structure to accommodate the off-site parking requirements for an adjacent property as some of the issues discussed were provided for at last month's meeting pertaining to the Text Amendment.

Ms. Williams called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

Ms. Riganti stated that the next step was for this item to be considered by City Council and is planned to be scheduled for their meeting on March 12, 2018.

5.b. Conditional Use Permit – PC 18-04 – Modification of the minimum property line setback requirements to the east and south and to the building height requirements for the proposed COCA expansion and renovation project at 524 Trinity Avenue

Ms. Riganti introduced the proposed Conditional Use Permit (CUP) by providing background and contextual information. She explained that this agenda item has previously been considered and recommended for approval by the Historic Preservation Commission as well as the Traffic Commission with conditions. She also explained that the off-site parking requirements would be met by the preceding CUP agenda item recommended for approval this evening.

Applicant Jeff Ryan with Christner, Inc. provided an overview of the proposed project through a presentation. He described the relationship between the COCA expansion project and the 560 Trinity Avenue parking garage including access and parking requirements, the removal of the 10,000 square foot addition from 2004 and its relevance to the parking calculations, and the programmatic features of the overall project. He stated that the proposed addition is 45,000 square feet, which includes a new 460 seat theater in place of the former 425 seat theater, which is proposed for reuse as other studio space. Mr. Ryan further explained the setback reduction and height requests in the CUP in context of the neighborhood and local historic district. He stated that the setback reduction to the south would allow the proposed expansion to follow that of the existing non-conforming

building, and the setback reduction to the east would be enhanced with greater landscaping and is supported by the neighboring property owner (Epworth). He also noted that the height increase would be less than that of the existing building (54 feet) and is only for the fly of the theater located at the rear (south end) of the property. Mr. Ryan also explained the traffic impact analysis previously reviewed by the Traffic Commission, stating that overall activity increased 15 percent during peak hours with low impacts on the eight intersections analyzed.

Questions / Comments / Discussion by Plan Commission:

- It was asked that Mr. Ryan review the construction staging and parking plans. Mr. Ryan stated that the plan presented to the Traffic Commission was still the current plan and has not changed. He did not have his presentation slides to the Traffic Commission at this time. He stated that they would plan to eliminate parking on Trinity and explained to the Commission their plans for a temporary drop-off area for patrons of COCA. He further explained a detailed summary on the parking calculation, mentioning that the 24 spaces behind Epworth would still be utilized by some of COCA's staff in addition to the 128 spaces leased from the 560 Trinity Avenue garage.
- It was clarified that the parking requirements are based on the multiple types of uses within COCA as outlined earlier by Mr. Ryan and are not solely based on the number of seats in the theater. The use of the spaces behind Epworth was also clarified.
- What happens when the ADA dedicated parking spaces are filled? Mr. Ryan noted that the number of required ADA spaces per the parking requirements are met in the garage, although he did not know the number at this time.

Public Hearing:

Two members of the public who submitted speaker request forms stated that they did not have any comments at this time.

- 1) Tom Schulz, property owner of 510 Trinity Ave. – stated that he has no parking designated for his property except for on the street, and he passed out paper copies of his concerns to the Commission members. Mr. Schulz was concerned that the traffic flow to the south of COCA within the alley was not addressed as the alley is extremely dangerous and noted previous incidents in the past year involving trash pickup services damaging the garages along the alley. He further stated that the air conditioning and mechanical units at COCA are located near his property and the noise created by each unit is projected loudly and should be relocated or studied for screening purposes. Mr. Schulz questioned waste pickup during this construction period as he experienced five weeks without pick up during construction related to Washington University properties due to trucks blocking the alley. He noted that he is concerned with the off-street parking of the project although he does positively view the parking garage under construction and the lack of a cut through to the alley with the proposed expansion. Mr. Schulz further suggested signage for pedestrian safety along the west end of the alley near Trinity Avenue, and he stated that parking issues are exacerbated by the Washington University Danforth Campus construction, with the university not adhering to their own staff parking.

Mr. Ryan responded, stating that the dumpsters are to be relocated behind the new expansion away from the mentioned corner per the site plan. He further stated that while the mechanical units are not proposed to be moved, they are near the end of

their useful life and will be replaced with new units which have fewer decibels. He also stated that they can look into reducing the sound in the alley.

- 2) Janet Pierson, property owner of 6803 Kingsbury Blvd. – stated that she owns property at the opposite end of the block from Mr. Schulz. She stated that the noise caused by these mechanical units is disturbing and carries across the hard surfaces in the area causing issue beyond just those in proximity to the units.

Mr. Ryan stated that they will be sensitive to this issue when replacing the units to try to resolve the noise concerns. He also explained a few items related to traffic construction and parking previously discussed at Traffic Commission.

Ms. Moran also stated that as she understood, the elimination of parking along Trinity would not impact the street south of alley toward Kingsbury, providing parking for the tenants of Mr. Schulz's property. Ms. Holly noted that attachment "A" of the staff report requires a detailed traffic control and parking plan to be reviewed by the City as part of the permit approval process with staff involving the concerns from this meeting.

Ms. Riganti confirmed that the construction traffic and control parking plan will be reviewed by the departments of Public Works and Parks and Community Development which would be developed in consultation and shared with the neighbors. She also stated that the concerns not directly relating to this application or its conditions will be handled separately between the City and Washington University upon review of Mr. Schulz's handouts and comments. The public hearing for this agenda item was officially closed.

Ms. Riganti stated that staff finds the CUP request to be acceptable noting Mr. Ryan's presentation materials with thorough information on its neighborhood context, the site plan requirements have been met, and the off-site parking requirements have been met with COCA's agreement with Washington University. Ms. Riganti further noted the conditions of approval and made note of the performance standards set forth in the Zoning Code pertaining to noise.

Based on previous review by the Historic Preservation Commission and Traffic Commission, a motion was made by Mr. Miller to recommend approval of the CUP along with its conditions as identified in attachment "A." The motion was seconded by Ms. Holly.

Some Commission members noted that the agenda packet materials, including the Historic Preservation Commission minutes, were helpful in preparation of this meeting as it helped provide answers prior to this meeting.

Ms. Williams questioned the east elevation in relation to blocking light to the adjacent building. Mr. Ryan explained the height of the roof is only at its maximum near the south end of the property to accommodate the theater space, which abuts the parking lot portion of the adjacent property. The height of the building is roughly 35 feet toward on the northern end near Washington Avenue.

Ms. Williams questioned how the parking lot behind Epworth would be accessed and whether it would be reserved for staff. Mr. Ryan stated that the parking lot would be

accessed off of the alley, similarly to the other parking lots along the alley. He stated that he believes it would be reserved for staff as to keep patrons from using the alley.

Ms. Williams called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

Ms. Riganti stated that the next step was for this item to be considered by City Council and is planned to be scheduled for their meeting on March 12, 2018.

Ms. Moran stated that based on the comments of Mr. Schulz and her own personal experience, she wished to reiterate what was said at the last Plan Commission meeting for City Manager Mr. Rose that there is a dire need for a comprehensive parking and traffic study for this quadrant of the City which includes the Loop and neighboring areas. She stated that there are more intensive uses in this area compared to approximately ten to 20 years ago which are impacting the neighborhoods, specifically noting parking related to Washington University, nearby churches and their accessory uses, and the location of polling places. She further stated that this study has been requested since the Loop Trolley project.

6. Other Business

6.a. Annual Report for calendar years 2016 – 2017. *Informational Only – No Vote Required*

Ms. Riganti stated that this agenda item was for informational purposes only, and Mr. Stanislav distributed the annual report to the Commission members.

6.b. Public Comments

- 1) Janet Pierson, property owner of 6803 Kingsbury Blvd. – stated that she was in support of Ms. Moran's comments regarding a parking and traffic study for this area of the City. She stated that this study is urgently needed since these neighborhoods have become default parking for nearby institutions, especially for those churches that do not have adequate parking for their accessory uses.

Mr. Rose stated that the City is currently going through the budget for the next fiscal year and work plan which was perfecting timing to consider this study to propose to the Mayor and City Council. He stated that this would be a good project to involve the Traffic Commission as well as this Commission. He stated that these comments have been heard and he will have a better idea as to the timing of this project at a later date.

7. Reports

7.a. Code Review Committee Report – None

7.b. Comprehensive Plan Committee Report – None

7.c. Council Liaison Report – None

7.d. Department Report

Ms. Riganti stated that there was no report, but that it was remiss to not introduce the City Manager, Ms. Rose at the start of the meeting and welcomed him to this meeting. Mr. Rose thanked Ms. Riganti and stated that he looks forward to providing support and value to these meetings in the future.

Ms. Williams stated that the Plan Commission would benefit from a type of orientation, especially for the newer members, to look at the major issues that are not currently addressed by the Zoning Code and to better identify the role of the Commission. She proposed a work session or training prior to the next Plan Commission meeting. The Commission members agreed that they would benefit from this type of activity.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.