



Department of Planning and Development

6801 Delmar Boulevard, University City, Missouri 63130, Phone: (314) 505-8500, Fax: (314) 862-3168

PLAN COMMISSION MEETING

Via Video Conference

5:30 pm; Thursday, March 31, 2022

The Plan Commission held a special session via video conference on Thursday, March 31, 2022. The meeting commenced at 5:30 pm and concluded at approximately 6:50 pm.

1. Roll Call

Present

Margaret Holly
Mark Harvey (*joined at 6:24*)
Ellen Hartz
Charles Gascon
Patricia McQueen

Absent

Al Fleischer Jr.
Victoria Gonzalez

Staff Present

John Wagner, Acting Director of Planning and Development
John Mulligan, City Attorney

Councilmembers Present

Jeff Hales, Ward I – Council Liaison

Call to Order – (5:30 pm.) Chairwoman Holly called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes – None

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments for non-agenda items from the public

4. Old Business

- a. Development Plan & Blight Study 353 Review/Recommendation.
Applicant: Charles Deutsch and Company
Request: Study and Recommendation of 100% Tax Abatement for 5 Years
Address: 8630 Delmar Blvd
(VOTE REQUIRED)

Chairwoman Holly introduced the agenda item

She said it was necessary to make a 510.040 determination again due to changes in parts of the property included in the project. Tax figures have been changed. She noted that two votes were necessary for this item: one vote was necessary to recommend blight and one vote was necessary to recommend tax abatement.

Staff report was given by Dr. Wagner and Mr. Mulligan. Legal definitions were read.

Mr. Gascon asked what the definition of "area" is for this project.

Mr. Mulligan clarified that it is only the land to be re-developed.

Gerald Greiman, counsel for Applicant, spoke about the changes that have occurred since blight was determined by the commission in August 2020.

Mark Spykerman, special counsel for University City, was available for comments.

Public comments:

William Ash, 8690 W. Kingsbury. Refer to audio recording for details.

Mr. Gascon asked whether there have been maintenance efforts by the property owner since they owned the properties. They responded that normal maintenance had occurred outdoors but none of the properties were updated. They stated that the structures were obsolescent.

Mr. Gascon stated that neglect is not the same thing as blight. He referred to point number 0.6 in their memo about litter and abandoned vehicles. He said that this was neglect rather than blight. Mr. Greimen said that there were no abandoned cars seen on the property at this time.

Mr. Gascon questioned them about economic liability versus economic viability. They answered that they could not invest in these properties due to lack of money for redevelopment. Therefore, the properties were not economically viable.

Mr. Gascon asked them about the economic liabilities in the social liabilities that the developer sales today. They answered that the property values have declined therefore they are not generating tax revenue. The rents are not high enough to maintain the properties and therefore they continue to deteriorate.

Ms. Hartz moved that the blight be approved.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Hales noted exterior violations that occurs with absentee landlords. This is a big problem. He questioned what would happen next if this project does not go forward. Mr. Wagner agreed that exterior violations were the most noticeable violations. Mr. Hales also questioned what has changed materially since the original blight consideration.

Ms. Holly noted that a new state law has changed the definition of blight. The bar was lowered. An 'and' was replaced with an 'or'. Therefore, a new plan and a new definition have

been in place since the last blight determination. She also stated that there are new members of the Commission, and they were weighing in with fresh eyes.

Mr. Mulligan stated that city code 510.04 blighted area is not equal to the state code. The Applicant's analysis meets state code. Their process has been explained with regard to blight determination. He stated that the city Council did not ever put on their agenda to approve the April 2020 blight recommendation. He also stated that the applicant was requesting tax abatement that was the maximum allowed under state law.

There was a discussion about the state versus the city definitions of blight.

Ms. Holly asked if there was more discussion. Hearing none, she closed the discussion and called for a vote.

Vote on blight determination:

Yes 3
No 2

The measure passed

Applicant Request for tax abatement of 100% for 5 years.
(Vote Required)

Ms. Holly asked for a motion to approve tax abatement of 100% for five years.

Ms. Hartz so moved.

Ms Holly asked for discussion.

Mr. Gascon noted that the current property did not generate a reasonable tax revenue for the city. Therefore, it was a liability that would be put back on the city if the property remains undervalued.

Mr. Harvey commented about taxes being generated by future development.

Ms. Holly made comments and observations about this package that was presented to support this application. She called for a vote.

Vote on Tax Abatement:

Yes 1
No 4

The measure did not pass.

5. **New Business**
 - a. None
6. **Other Business**
 - a. None

7. Reports

- a. Council Liaison Report – None
- b. Committee reports - None

8. Adjournment

Chairwoman Holly adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:50 pm.