

**PLAN COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION NOTES
OCTOBER 16, 2023**

I. Call To Order

The Plan Commission Study Session was called to order by President Tom Anderson at 6:00 P.M. at the Schererville Town Hall, 10 E. Joliet St.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited

B. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken with the following members present: President Tom Anderson, Vice-President William Jarvis, Secretary Gary Immig, Mr. Myles Long, Mr. Tom Kouros, and Mr. Chris Rak. Staff present: Director of Operations Andrew Hansen, Planning & Building Administrator Denise Sulek, and Recording Secretary Megan Schiltz. Absent were Board member Robert Kocon and Town Manager James Gorman. In the audience was Councilman Tom Schmitt.

II. Commission Business

A. Caribbean Pools/Parking Lot Addition

General Location: 28 E. U.S. 30 – Schererville Manor, Lot C, Block 3

Petitioner(s): Alisha Dostal/Frank Giberson – Caribbean Pools

Request: Modifications to the approved U.S. 30 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Plan (Secondary Approval granted on December 6, 2021)

Mrs. Alisha Dostal represent the Petitioners and stated that due to health reasons with Mr. Frank Giberson she is now the point of contact for the company. Mrs. Dostal apologized for applying for the permit 2 years ago when they were not ready to move forward with the project. Mrs. Dostal continued to say that the request for tonight is to either cancel and to reapply when they are ready; and they will remove the gravel and things as previously told. Mrs. Dostal asked if the cost is prohibitive could they make changes such as removing some of the asphalt to reduce the overall cost of the project. Mr. Anderson stated that this project was supposed to be completed in the spring of 2022. Mrs. Dostal replied that if she is following Mr. Giberson's notes correctly, she believes that they had applied for this permit right before the pandemic in 2020 and then came forward in 2021 to move forward in 2022; and unfortunately that is when he fell ill. Mrs. Dostal said she did not realize he had moved forward with these plans until Schererville Code Enforcer Sam Decero started reaching out in July of this year. Mr. Anderson asked if they want to take the stone out and put it back where it was until they are ready to do the work. Mrs. Dostal said that as she understands it, that seems like the only option due to the fact they have received a Public Nuisance Violation for parking worker cars on the property; adding she is unsure if it is an eyesore from Route 30, and that is the main issue with the cars being parked next to the building. Mr. Anderson responded that is the Ordinance and that they need to live up to the Ordinance.

Mr. Jarvis asked what they are going to do with all the vehicles. Mrs. Dostal stated that is another logistical problem that they have. Mrs. Dostal went on to say that they have absolutely outgrown the space which is one of the things that was not considered when Mr. Giberson originally approached the Plan Commission. Mrs. Dostal added that they purchased the property so that they could build and expand for office and retail space to something that would fit their 175 employees. Mrs. Dostal said her fear is that with moving forward with investing in the parking lot right now, it may take away from the funds that will be needed to build the larger building between the 2 lots. Mrs. Dostal continued to say that if they give up the access way on the side of 28 E Route 30, that will devalue the resale value if they decided to sell and relocate; adding there are 2 things going on to solve; the parking lot issue and the

outgrown building. Mrs. Dostal stated she doesn't know what the ramifications would be but asked if it is possible to leave this permit open for another 3 months, and would like to also look at electric charging stations. Mr. Anderson stated that the problem was that they had 2 years and have not done what they had promised they would do, and that the reason they are here tonight is to decide whether it gets paved or cleared out; adding it is very simple just put it back to how it was or pave it. Mrs. Dostal asked what the time frame is on when to have it done by. Mr. Anderson responded that it needs to be done immediately because it has been 2 years; otherwise, Code Enforcement will be giving tickets. Mr. Kouros wanted to clarify that the reason this project was not completed is because Mr. Giberson fell ill and could not complete it. Mrs. Dostal stated that was correct. Mr. Kouros then asked Mr. Anderson if an exception could be made due to the fact that Mr. Giberson fell ill. Mr. Anderson responded it has been 2 years. Mr. Jarvis stated that in his opinion, if the vehicles were moved off site it would improve immensely and with snow around the corner, you would not be able to see the gravel and that the biggest eyesore is them being on an unimproved surface. Mrs. Dostal stated that she would be willing to put up landscape in the front to make it more esthetically pleasing and could be done in just a couple weeks.

Mr. Immig asked if the vehicles are parked on the gravel now and you remove the gravel they would just be in mud. Mr. Anderson stated they cannot park there if parking is not up to code. Mr. Immig asked what the options would be if they parked there before and that is why the gravel is down. Mrs. Dostal said they put the gravel down to clear up the mud on the public access street. Mr. Jarvis stated that he believes if the vehicles were moved it would not be an eyesore. Mr. Anderson said the Board needs to come up with a consensus. Mr. Kouros stated that he thinks that given the circumstances and that winter is around the corner the permit should be extended until April and shouldn't be an issue. Mr. Anderson stated that they have had 2 years to do this, and that his suggestion is that if they go to April, that a ticket should be issued every day until the project has started. Mr. Hansen stated that this is a Study Session and the Board does not have to make a decision at this time. Ms. Sulek stated that the permit that was issued was for site improvements which included parking lot lights as well as the closing of the entrance of the residential drive and combining it into the existing drive for Caribbean. Ms. Sulek added that if that is going to change and they have no intentions of doing that, then they will need a revised site plan showing what they are proposing to do because the permit included all of that, and a revised plan must be before the Commission.

B. Town Square Shopping Center – Proposed: Exterior modifications for new tenants

General Location: 40-124 U.S. 41 – Town Square Shopping Center, Lot 1

Petitioner(s): Architect, Larry Hatfield – North Shore Design

Request: U.S. 41 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Plan Review

Architect Larry Hatfield from North Shore Design represented the petitioners. Mr. Hatfield stated that this is a vacant unit which was previously Bed Bath and Beyond, and they would like to convert that 1 unit into 3 separate tenants which will be Barnes & Noble, Buckle, and Victoria Secret. Mr. Hatfield continued that they will basically be redoing the façade and will be keeping in character as the other units, but will look a little nicer. Mr. Jarvis asked what they will be doing with the south building that will be to the left of Barnes & Noble, adding that they should put down a decorative façade along the front so it does not look so plain and some of the same trim so that it doesn't look like a garage. Mr. Hatfield said that perhaps they could have some sort of landscaping to lighten it up. Mr. Rak suggested that they could even just shift the Barnes & Noble entrance towards the south since they will be adding anyway. Mr. Hatfield stated that he is not opposed to that, but Barnes & Noble has their own tenant plan so it may not work. Mr. Anderson said it doesn't matter what they do, they will just need something to dress up that corner so it doesn't take away from the whole development. Mr. Hatfield said there will be a café located in Barnes & Noble and hasn't seen the layout plans, but it may even be inside that side. Mr. Anderson said just fix that up and everything else looks fine. Mr. Hatfield asked about the size of signage and if all that would need to be approved with the exterior. Mr. Anderson stated he doesn't have an issue with the signage provided. Mr. Hatfield stated he is not for sure using the size of the signage shown, but it would definitely be close to that.

C. Golden Corral Addition, Lot 2 – Proposed: Pickle Ball/Tennis Facility

General Location: 917-955 Eagle Ridge Dr. – Gold Corral Addition, Lot 2

Petitioner(s): Vision One Properties LLC – Richard Kortenhoven

Request: U.S. 41 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Plan Review

Mr. Richard Kortenhoven of 8271 Alexander St. represented the petitioners stating that the architect for this project, Mr. Andy Schnepf, was unable to make it to the meeting. Mr. Kortenhoven continued to say that they are proposing to put a pickle ball/tennis development at 917-955 Eagle Ridge Dr. on the east side of the road. Mr. Kortenhoven went on to say that this will be on vacant land that is mostly woods. Mr. Kortenhoven said that there will be 3 entrances for the building with one on the south east corner of Golden Corral, one that will be over the pipeline, and one entrance with a monument sign on Eagle Ridge Drive. Mr. Kortenhoven stated there will be plenty of signage that will be visible on U.S. 41 and a big benefit of this location is being that there is a bike path that goes right through; adding pickle ball and tennis are a form of physical fitness to stay fit and competitive. Mr. Kortenhoven then mentioned that this would be a steel frame building with brick and steel heating as well as a steel roof; there will be 2 full size tennis courts as well as 8 pickle ball courts.

Tennis instructor Mr. Darryl Sullivan stated that he has a lot of experience with training and coaching all age group with both tennis and pickle ball. Mr. Kortenhoven said that there will be locker rooms and a large lounge area with a nice entrance way; adding that there will be handicap access and a lot of parking spaces that exceeds the amount required. Mr. Anderson asked where the drainage is going to go. Mr. Kortenhoven stated that at the present time the drainage goes to the wetlands; adding they currently have a storm sewer located on the south west corner of Eagle Ridge Dr. and there are currently plans on putting in sidewalks all around that area. Mr. Kortenhoven went on to say they will have an Engineer draw up plans on where the storm drainage will go; continuing to say they currently have a sewer hook-up, water sanitary sewer and storm sewers all on location. Mr. Anderson said he likes the idea however every time he drives down Eagle Ridge Dr. it is wet. Mr. Kortenhoven said that it is the reason they put the new manhole in. Mr. Hansen added that the manhole will definitely help. Mr. Immig asked Mr. Hansen if the storm sewers were put in recently. Mr. Hansen stated that it was and that the sidewalks are currently being put in. Mr. Anderson asked if the landscaping will be right against the bike trail. Mr. Kortenhoven stated that is correct. Mr. Anderson then asked if there will be bicycle parking as well. Mr. Kortenhoven responded that it is not shown on the plans but thinks that is a good idea. Mr. Jarvis asked if there is a cross easement agreement with Golden Corral. Mr. Kortenhoven stated that they have. Mr. Jarvis then stated that the entrance way at Golden Corral and the next entrance way is awful close to each other. Mr. Anderson questioned if they have had engineering yet. Ms. Sulek stated that it has been platted and have an updated site plan to show the drainage. Mr. Hansen asked if he had spoken to the pipeline yet. Mr. Kortenhoven stated that they have. Mr. Immig asked what the hours will be considering there will be a bar inside. Mr. Kortenhoven stated that a lot of people will be going there after work so it will be later hours maybe even 11:00 P.M. on the weekends. Mr. Anderson asked if they have a liquor license. Mr. Kortenhoven said they do not have one yet. Mr. Immig stated his concern would be the bar area. Mr. Long asked if there will be memberships. Mr. Sullivan stated there will be. Mr. Anderson stated that his biggest concern would be the water.

III. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:52 P.M.