

Village of Peoria Heights
Public Hearing
May 21, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Everyone stood for a moment of silence and the Pledge to the Flag.

Upon calling roll, the following Trustees were present: Sherryl Carter, Elizabeth Khazzam, Jeffrey Goett, Brandon Wisenburg, and Sarah DeVore. Trustee Diane Mariscal was absent. Others present included Mayor Michael Phelan, Village Administrator and Chief of Police Dustin Sutton, Clerk Stephanie Turner, and Village Counsel Mark Walton. Mayor Phelan noted that Trustee Mariscal had indicated she might not be able to make the meeting due to work commitments.

Clerk Turner swore in Trustee Sarah DeVore.

Mayor Phelan opened the Public Hearing regarding the objection by GLK Land Trust to the Peoria Heights Zoning Board Appeals site plan ruling to public comment. Peoria Heights Zoning Board of Appeals had approved GLK Land Trust's site plan with the stipulation that the exit from the drive-thru must be right turn only and that 3 parking spots along War Memorial Drive must be removed.

Ms. Janet Gruber of 3814 N Monroe Ave came forward and asked if she could be allowed to read two letters from neighbors into record.

After receiving permission to read the letters into record, Mr. Edward Phlint of 3814 N Monroe Ave came forward and read a letter from Ms. Stephanie Crawford of 905 E Division Ave. Ms. Crawford expressed concern that changes to the site would negatively impact the neighborhood by loss of green space and increased traffic in a residential area.

Ms. Lisa Trimble of 3808 N Monroe Ave came forward to read the letter of Ms. Jennifer O'Connor of 811 E Division Ave. Ms. O'Connor wrote to strongly encourage green space be left because of their positive impact on the environment and to make Peoria Heights more inviting along War Memorial Drive.

Ms. Janet Gruber of 3814 N Monroe Ave approached the podium to share her opinion with the Board of Trustees. She noted that she supported development and the project's goal, but she'd like to see smaller development in that area. She stated her concerns about safety risks at the intersection of Monroe and War Memorial, the loss of green space for the parking design, and the impact on the neighborhood with the increase in traffic. Ms. Gruber questioned if sending traffic from the drive-thru into the alley was allowed by IDOT and requested consideration of the impact of the presented plan and its impact on the neighborhood.

Mr. Dan Callahan, the owner of Greg Florist at 1015 E War Memorial Dr, asked the Board of Trustees to take into account the difficulty of creating green spaces in commercial zones. He expressed that that particular area served to soften some of the development on War Memorial Drive. He commiserated, as a business owner, the necessity of maximizing retail space, but thought it would be shortsighted to introduce parking instead of green space in that area.

Mr. Barry Roulette of 3823 N Monroe Ave stated opposition to any drive-thru restaurant on the site. Mr. Roulette shared his safety concerns for the children in the neighborhood. He expressed an appreciation that the drive-thru exited onto War Memorial Drive but noted that impatient people would reroute through the neighborhood. Mr. Roulette stated the parking design, and subsequent loss of green space, might create accident risk as the parking spots in question were very close to the drive-thru lane. He asked the Board of Trustees to keep potential hardships to the neighborhood at a minimum.

Ms. Trimble reapproached the podium to express her own opinions. She shared that she had a master's in urban planning with ten years of transportation experience. Ms. Trimble expressed concerns about traffic enforcement and infrastructure costs to the Village, drainage at the site, and traffic flow issues. She expressed concern about accidents and the need to upgrade sidewalks in the area. Ms. Trimble stated that the parking problem didn't need to be solved by the Village but rather by the developer. She questioned if a special use was required for the development and if the Administrator could request a traffic study of the area.

Mr. Rick Picl, the Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals, came forward and stated that there was no need for a special use permit for the development. Mr. Picl explained that Village ordinance was very clear regarding the definitions of a drive-in restaurant being an establishment for eating food inside the car, and that drive-thru restaurants were not addressed by Village code. Mr. Picl noted that the site plan that was approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals required thirty-two parking spaces and had forty-two after rejecting three proposed parking spots. The developer of the property had originally submitted a plan with forty-five spaces, and he was objecting because he wanted the additional three parking spaces approved by the Board of Trustees. Mr. Picl noted site plan met code, drainage issues had been addressed, and IDOT's input was not requested by the Village as that issue would be the developer's to address. He continued to explain that the proposed occupants of the retail space had much less traffic than a business like McDonald's which also had traffic exiting via an alley. He finished by telling the Board that the current McDonald's site plan set precedence in Peoria Heights for egress traffic from an alleyway.

Mayor Phelan called one last time for comments from the audience and hearing none closed public comments. He invited the developer of the property to approach the podium and explain his objection.

Mr. Gary Kempf shared that his company wanted the extra parking for employees and extra customers. He noted that the previous businesses had needed more parking than was on site, and he anticipated the need for parking would be even greater after redevelopment. Mr. Kempf spoke of the sales taxes that would be coming to the Village and said that the three spots in question would be solely for employees to eliminate the concerns about their closeness to the drive-thru. Trustee Wisenburg asked Mr. Kempf if the restriction to employees only would be posted at the spots. Mr. Kempf replied the signs would be a distraction and unnecessary as employees would be there earlier than customers. Trustees Wisenburg asked about the amount of green space that would be lost, and Mr. Kempf said it would be less than 600 ft of green space, and it wouldn't be noticeable. Trustee DeVore asked if the parking lot was being widened beyond its current footprint, and Mr. Kempf noted it would not.

Chief Sutton gave an update on the situation with IDOT and noted that they were in discussions with Mr. Kempf. He stated that if IDOT rejected the plan to route traffic from the drive-thru to the alley then the site plan would need to change.

After questions finished, Trustee Goett made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Wisenburg seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The Public Hearing closed at 6:11 p.m.

Michael Phelan, Mayor

Stephanie Turner, Village Clerk