

APPROVED 11/03/14

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
PLAN COMMISSION MEETING  
PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 6, 2014, 7:00 P.M.

Chairperson Urban called the October 6, 2014 meeting of the Plan Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Plan Commissioners and the public in the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Urban, Bassler, Cozzo, Matejczyk, Mr. Quirk, Mr. Rickard, Mr. Webster

**ABSENT:** Mrs. Rabatah, Mr. Waechtler (ex-officios Menninga, Davenport, Souter)

**STAFF:** Planning Manger Stan Popovich and Planners Kelley Chrisse and Patrick Ainsworth

**VISITORS:** Mr. Robert L. Vighi, 923 Curtiss St., Downers Grove; Ms. Marge Earl, 4720 Florence Ave., Downers Grove, Mr. Michael Rupert with Art Van Furniture, 6500 E. 14 Mile Road, Warren, Michigan; and Mr. Tim Nicholson, with SCI Direct, 1250 S. Pine Island Road, Plantation, Florida

**APPROVAL OF AUGUST 4, 2014 MINUTES**

**MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 4, 2014 MEETING WERE APPROVED ON MOTION BY MR. WEBSTER, SECONDED BY MR. COZZO. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 6-0-1 (Chairperson Urban abstained).**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

Chairperson Urban reviewed the protocol for the meeting and swore in those individuals that would be speaking on the following petition:

**FILE PC26-14:** A petition seeking approval of a Planned Development Amendment. The property is zoned B-3, General Services and Highway Business. The property is located on the south side of Butterfield Road approximately 390 feet west of Highland Avenue, commonly known as 1021 Butterfield Road, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 06-29-302-008). Michael Rupert, Petitioner; Archie A. Van Elslander Trust, Owner.

Planner Kelley Chrisse located the B-3 zoned site on the overhead and explained the request was for a 990 square foot sign package for a proposed furniture store (Art Van Furniture) which would occupy the attached retail building on lot 1 of the planned development. The Future Land Use Map identified the site as Office/Corporate Campus. Ms. Chrisse explained the challenges for accessing the site and the fact that there was a shared parking agreement between lots 1 and 2 and an agreement existed to use the NICOR leased property. Slides of the current elevations and parking

were noted. The applicant will be turning the property into its flagship store with two secondary businesses to be located within the same space. Proposed improvements will include an interior renovation, the expansion of the retail floor area by 19,000 square feet within the same building footprint. (Some of the covered parking will be converted to retail space.) Parking will be reconfigured with a reduction of 60 parking spaces. The main entrance will be located on Butterfield Road. A second entrance will be created on the west facade. Ms. Chrisse stated the changes she referenced can be approved administratively.

Ms. Chrisse presented renderings of the building's proposed elevations, along with the 350 square foot sign package for the north elevation (two signs total). The existing monument sign will be removed and not replaced. For the western elevation, the applicant is requesting 170 square feet of signage. The signage for the south elevation will be the same as the north elevation. The proposed signage where the common wall (east elevation) is located will be approximately 120 square feet in size.

Ms. Chrisse explained in more detail how the planned improvements still met the planned development requirements. However, she noted that three deviations were being requested: 1) the total signage being requested was 990 sq. feet versus 300 sq. feet allowed; 2) the request was asking to allow signage on the east facade where there is no frontage; and 3) the request was asking to allow two signs on the north, south, and west elevations, where only one sign is allowed.

Because of these minor modifications, staff determined a rezoning was not required and there would not be a PUD overlay on the zoning map should the amendment be approved. The proposal was consistent with the goals of the village's comprehensive plan. Because the site was challenging and not a prime retail area, Ms. Chrisse reported the petitioner and village entered into an economic incentive agreement (last year) and, as part of the agreement, the village would allow the petitioner adequate signage in order to make the site a viable retail location and spur future redevelopment within the corridor.

Staff recommended approval of the petition with the following two conditions: 1) the proposed planned development amendment shall conform to the sign drawings prepared by Art Van dated August 8, 2014; and 2) no additional wall or monument sign shall be permitted for this site that would result in an increase in overall sign area.

Questions raised included whether the sign above the common wall would be visible over the roof of the building to the east; was the Village convinced the signage would solve the issues that this site has; and if the small roadway signage was part of the proposal (it was not).

Petitioner, Mr. Michael Rupert, director of store design for Art Van Furniture, 6500 E. 14 Mile Road, Warren, Michigan, stated that sight lines have been done on the east façade and the sign is being placed on that elevation because the building "is basically invisible" when traveling Highland Avenue and when coming off of Interstate 88. Mr. Rupert shared the history of Art Van, a family owned business of 55 years. He explained the thought process that went into purchasing the site as the Art Van's flagship store and believed the site would be successful.

Chairperson Urban invited the public to comment.

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Ms. Marge Earl, 4720 Florence Ave., Downers Grove was sworn in. She explained that if the commissioners were going to deviate from the sign ordinance, going about it in a PUD format was important as well as getting a purchaser who was going to redevelop the site entirely, which was what the village was looking for under its comprehensive plan. Ms. Earl was pleased to see the entire project move forward.

No further comments received. Public comment was closed. Petitioner had no closing statement.

Closing comments from the commissioners were that the sign ordinance was restrictive and special consideration had to be made for properties such as this particular case. Other commissioners, however, supported the current sign ordinance as is. Mr. Webster was pleased to see the purchaser investing in the village and receiving an incentive for it. The proposal was well done and provided a creative signage solution for the site. Chairperson Urban also supported the current sign ordinance and while, initially, the square footage of the signage being requested caught her eye, after looking at the challenges of the property, the improvements, and the scale of the signage to the building, the proposal made sense and was well presented.

**WITH RESPECT TO FILE PC 26-14, MR. MATEJCZYK MADE A MOTION THAT THE PLAN COMMISSION FORWARD A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING TWO CONDITIONS:**

- 1) **THE PROPOSED PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT SHALL CONFORM TO THE SIGN DRAWINGS PREPARED BY ART VAN DATED AUGUST 8, 2014; AND**
- 2) **NO ADDITIONAL WALL OR MONUMENT SIGN SHALL BE PERMITTED FOR THIS SITE THAT WOULD RESULT IN AN INCREASE IN OVERALL SIGN AREA.**

**SECONDED BY MR. RICKARD. ROLL CALL:**

**AYE: MR. MATEJZYK, MR. RICKARD, MR. BASSLER, MR. COZZO, MR. QUIRK,  
MR. WEBSTER, CHAIRPERSON URBAN**

**NAY: NONE**

**MOTION CARRIED: VOTE: 7-0**

**FILE PC 27-14:** A petition seeking approval of a Special Use to operate a funeral or mortuary service business. The property is zoned B-3, General Services and Highway Business. The property is located on the north side of Ogden Avenue approximately 250 feet west of Lee Avenue, commonly known as 1628 Ogden Avenue, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-06-302-004). Kirk D. Conners, Petitioner; Edward Y. Wong and Mei L. Wong, Owners.

Planner, Patrick Ainsworth reviewed the location of the site on the overhead noting that surrounding zoning was B-3 to the east, west and south; R-2 existed to the north. The one-story 5,000 square foot building is currently vacant. As part of the improvements for the site, the non-conforming pylon sign would be removed from the site. Parking and rear driveway were noted as well as the heavy vegetation against the existing fence. The existing fence would be maintained and the

vegetation reduced to a manageable level while still providing screening. Current and future floor plans were explained. Because the petitioner was applying for a funeral/mortuary service, Mr. Ainsworth read the village's code definition of same and explained why the petitioner had to seek a special use for the site. Additionally, he read off what would not take place at the location, i.e., the embalming, cremation, or delivery/transport of any human corpses, memorial services to families, customers of the deceased or any type of traditional funeral services as found in traditional funeral homes. Instead, the site would be used as a place where a person, whom has lost a loved one, would meet with a service representative to sign a contract for crematory services. The cremation would take place off-site by a third-party and the urns would then be delivered to a storage area at the proposed site and given to the customer who ordered the them.

Mr. Ainsworth presented more slides on the overhead, noting a total of 10 parking spaces will be provided with one as a handicap space plus an access aisle. A new landscape area will be added adjacent to the Ogden Avenue corridor (432 sq. feet); a new refuse enclosure will be added to the rear of the property, along with three (3) diagonal off-street parking spaces for employee parking. The remaining seven (7) spaces will be in front of the building. Per Mr. Ainsworth, staff had made the interpretation to use the parking requirement of three off-street spaces per 1,000 square feet of improved building area because the use was technically a business professional office. The zoning ordinance does state for services that relate to the death of humans, the petitioner has to go through a special use process. However, for the parking purposes interpretation, staff will be using the 3.3 spaces per 1,000 sq. feet, as compared to the code requiring 12 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet for a traditional funeral home or mortuary service.

Detailed parking calculations followed, noting the petitioner has satisfied them. Also noted was the fact that the petitioner was increasing green space. Mr. Ainsworth reported that staff was trying to get the site as close to compliance as possible. He recommended that the Plan Commission forward a positive recommendation to Village Council.

Petitioner, Mr. Tim Nicholson, president and chief operating officer with SCI Direct, 1250 S. Pine Island Road, Plantation, Florida shared the background of Neptune Society. Neptune Society is a division of SCI Direct, which is one of four divisions of Service Corp. International. He explained the proposal is basically a sales service center for families. His company is licensed under the State's pre-meet cemetery sales license and there will be three full-time employees with three to four part-time sales people. He anticipates no more than two customer groups in the office at one time. The business (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) will not be open on the weekends unless by special request. He believed the proposal was a desirable business because there was none in the area presently.

Questions followed as to whether this was a regular type of special use being requested as well as how the business can ship cremated remains, i.e., the U.S. postal service.

Chairperson Urban invited the public to comment.

Mr. Gerald Higgins, 1541 Snowberry Court, Downers Grove, is a neighbor and stated he was present to get more information about the proposal. He believed the proposal would be an improvement to what was there currently.

Mr. Nicholson had no closing statement. Public comment was closed.

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Mr. Cozzo stated the standards for the special use appeared to have been met and there was no reason to not approve the proposal. Chairperson Urban also agreed the proposal fit in very well with the service office-type use.

**WITH RESPECT TO FILE PC 27-14, MR. WEBSTER MADE A MOTION THAT THE PLAN COMMISSION FORWARD A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL, INCLUDING STAFF'S CONDITIONS LISTED BELOW:**

- 1) THE SPECIAL USE SHALL SUBSTANTIALLY CONFORM TO THE STAFF REPORT AND DRAWINGS PREPARED BY NEPTUNE SOCIETY, DATED SEPTEMBER 11, 2014 AND HAEGER ENGINEERING, DATED SEPTEMBER 2, 2014, EXCEPT AS SUCH PLANS MAY BE MODIFIED TO CONFORM TO THE VILLAGE CODES AND ORDINANCES;**
- 2) THE FOLLOWING USES ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED: A) EMBALMING OF HUMAN CORPSES; B) CREMATION OF HUMAN CORPSES; C) DELIVERY OF HUMAN CORPSES AND/OR TRANSPORT OF HUMAN CORPSES FROM THE SUBJECT PROPERTY TO LOCAL CEMETERIES/CREMATORIES; D) MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR THE FAMILIES OF DECEASED; E) ANY TYPE OF TRADITIONAL FUNERAL SERVICE, WHETHER CREMATED OR FULLY BODY DECEASED.**
- 3) THE PETITIONER MAY HAVE ONLY CREMATED REMAINS (ASHES) ON SITE FOR CUSTOMER PICK-UP;**
- 4) THE BUILDING SHALL HAVE FIRE SUPPRESSION AND DETECTION SYSTEMS IN A MANNER SUITABLE TO THE FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU CHIEF.**
- 5) THE LANDSCAPED OPEN SPACE SHALL BE MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLY WITH THE CURRENT DOWNERS GROVE ZONING ORDINANCE;**
- 6) SCREENING ALONG THE NORTH PROPERTY LINE SHALL BE MAINTAINED.**

**SECONDED BY MR. COZZO. ROLL CALL:**

**AYE: MRS. WEBSTER, MR. COZZO, MR. BASSLER, MR. MATEJCZYK,  
MR. RICKARD, CHAIRPERSON URBAN**

**NAY: NONE**

**ABSTAIN: MR. QUIRK**

**MOTION CARRIED: VOTE: 6-0-1**

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Popovich reported that the November agenda will contain two items. Mr. Bassler was also welcomed to the Plan Commission.

**THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:54 P.M. ON MOTION BY MR. WEBSTER, SECONDED BY MR. QUIRK. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 7-0.**

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/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt  
Celeste K. Weilandt  
(As transcribed by MP-3 audio)