



MEETING MINUTES
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

7:00 PM

Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Council Chambers

Members Present: Mary Beth Berns, Myrna Arevalo, Scott Gingold, Kiril Mirintchev, Violetta Cullen, Mary McAuley

Members Absent: Lisa Dziekan

Staff Present: Melissa Klotz

Presiding Member: Mary Beth Berns

Declaration of Quorum

With a quorum present, Chair Berns called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

Ms. Cullen motioned to approve the meeting minutes of March 19, 2019, which were seconded by Mr. Gingold and approved 5-0 with one abstention.

Old Business

New Business

619 Howard St.

19ZMJV-0021

Thomas Ahleman, architect, applies for a Special Use permit for a Banquet Hall Facility in the B3 Business District (Zoning Code Section 6-9-4-3). The Zoning Board of Appeals makes a recommendation to City Council, the determining body for this case.

Thomas Ahleman, architect, and Mohamed Eldibany, property owner, explained the proposal:

- The facility will primarily function as a Banquet Hall for weddings, corporate functions, fundraisers, art exhibits, concerts, etc.
- Seated events will be for 470 people at the most.

Ms. McAuley asked if standing room only events will be for 1,000 people as mentioned in the documents, and the applicant explained the capacity is based on the building code, but events will not have that many people.

The applicants continued:

- The exterior of the building will be modified to reduce noise as requested by DAPR.
- There are over 400 parking spaces in the Gateway parking garage nearby.
- Mostly evening hours of operation are anticipated, but full hours will range from 8am -11pm weekdays and 9am – midnight on weekends (with cleanup by 12:30am).

- Deliveries will occur within the parking lot most of the time, but may occasionally occur via the alley.
- Unsure of how many large events will be held, but most will be smaller events.
- Some storefront windows will remain, but others will be replaced with smaller energy efficient windows.
- Peckish Pig will manage the events and will often times cater the events.

Mr. Gingold asked if the applicant agrees to the conditions listed in the staff memo, including the use of off-site parking and valet, and the applicant agreed.

Ryan Kettlecamp, 1126 Brummel St., stated his family supports the project and is happy to see this project move forward and do good things for the neighborhood just like Peckish Pig and the theater.

Matt Rodgers, 133 Clyde Ave., stated this is a greatly needed use in Evanston, and that he previously had trouble finding event space for over 200 people. There are lots of non-profit Evanston-based groups that regularly host events in Chicago because there are no options in Evanston. The event space will not impact neighborhood parking. There is nearby public transportation, and many people will use Uber. The building has been vacant for a long time. The existing storefront is in poor condition so it is better to replace the facade as proposed by the applicant. If a delivery truck is in the alley, other vehicles will not be blocked in because they can exit in the other direction down the alley.

Chair Berns asked how valet or Uber drop offs will be handled, and the applicant explained shuttle drop offs will occur within the parking lot, not on the street.

The applicant explained the facility will have a full commercial kitchen that can be used for cooking or for warming. A liquor license will be obtained.

Deliberation:

Mr. Gingold commended the summary stated by Matt Rodgers and agreed the proposal will help continue to revitalize Howard St. ZBA Members agreed.

Mr. Mirintchev suggested the site plan be slightly modified to have more than one drop-off space, and suggested an awning be added near the parking area heading to the street for when there is inclement weather.

Standards:

1. Yes
2. Yes
3. Yes
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. Yes
7. Yes
8. Yes
9. Yes

Mr. Gingold motioned to recommend approval of the case with conditions:

1. Events that occur within the parking lot require DAPR approval.
2. The applicant shall provide written proof of off-site parking agreement for large events.
3. Valet service and the use of 525 Howard parking lot are required for events with 41-100 patrons and shuttle service is required for events with over 100 patrons.
4. Hours of operation shall not exceed 8am-11pm during the week and 9am-midnight on Fridays and Saturdays.
5. No employee parking on the street.
6. Substantial compliance with the documents and testimony on record including sound attenuating measures.

Ms. Cullen seconded the motion, which was unanimously recommended for approval.

Discussion

Ms. Klotz mentioned filing of both the City and County Ethics Statements are due soon.

The CAMP Preservation Training is April 26th and is available to ZBA Members as well as the public.

Chair Berns' term expires soon and as discussed previously, there is no interest in Chairmanship among current Board members. Therefore, at the next ZBA hearing there will be included a public notice to extend the Chair's term by 60 days during which time staff will explore a more permanent solution.

Adjourned 7:45pm.