

PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Plan Commission met on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Doug Diny, Eric Lindman, Sarah Watson, Andrew Brueggeman, Lou Larson.

Staff Present: Brad Lenz, Andrew Lynch, Brooke Mueller.

Others Present: Nick Brenner, Chuck Ghidorzi, Scott Denzin, Mike Tomsyck, Jeff Delonay, Gabriel Lemke

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Mayor Doug Diny called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

Approve the meeting minutes for July 16 & August 20, 2024.

Motion by Andrew Brueggeman and seconded by Sarah Watson. *Motion approved unanimously.*

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion for rezoning 1 Menard Plaza from part of a Suburban Mixed-Use (SMU) Zoning District to a Light Industrial (LI) Zoning District to allow for self-storage units. (Menard, Inc)

Mayor Diny opened the public hearing.

Nick Brenner, Menards Representative spoke about their zoning change request in order to build climate controlled and non-climate-controlled storage units at the location of the original Menards building located at 1 Menard Plaza. He stated that the location has been vacant for 20 years and there hasn't been very much interest in the property in that time. Nick also stated that Menards purchased the other parcel in this location to make the entire piece more marketable as well as adding an additional driveway to increase access to the parcel to increase interest. Typically, other retailers want to be located near Menards stores but this property isn't getting any attention. The storage units would include a multi-level facility so the top level would be accessible from 28th Ave with the lower level would have access from Stewart Ave. There would also be landscaping and a retention pond.

He acknowledged concern about the visual of the storage units but stated that the main view, from Stewart Ave, the unit's roofs would barely be visible from the street due to the lower elevation. Nick also stated that he also wished that building these units didn't come with having to rezone the property to a Light Industrial Zone. He understands that Light Industrial Zoning is not ideal, especially in an area surrounded by other Suburban Mixed-Use Zoning; but it is a state-wise requirement for the building of storage units. Menards would also place a self-imposed restriction on the company itself to ensure that the property would only be used for self-storage and no other Light Industrial facility. It was also stated that Menards has received requests for storage units in the area and these units would also increase job opportunities.

Chuck Ghidorzi supplied a letter to the committee members prior to the meeting stating his extreme opposition for the rezone. He also attended the meeting to ensure his voice be heard. Mr. Ghidorzi stated that he has lived in the community since 1970 and has been developing properties on the West side since 1975. He believes that this "Gateway to the Community" should continue to leave a positive impression but worries that changing the zoning and allowing for over 100 metal storage units will hurt this impression. It was also stated that the businesses and medical community in that area have spent millions of dollars over the years to make this gateway something special. He recommends that Menards continues to hold on to this property, which is very common for developers to do. Mr. Ghidorzi also mentioned that maybe Menards would want to add fill to the area to increase the visibility to potential future developers.

Mayor Diny closed the public hearing.

Discussion and possible action for rezoning 1 Menard Plaza from part of a Suburban Mixed-Use (SMU) Zoning District to a Light Industrial (LI) Zoning District to allow for self-storage units. (Menard, Inc)

Andrew Lynch briefly went over his staff review of the rezoning request. He stated that the requested zoning is not in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan which maps the parcel as Suburban Commercial. Mr. Lynch also stated that the plan for storage units would not be compatible with the existing neighborhood, which consists of a gas station, two medical office buildings, a new bank, office buildings, small retail stores, a sit-down restaurant, a fast-food restaurant, and a large box retailer. He does not recommendation the rezoning from Suburban Mixed-Use to Light Industrial due to the non-conformance with the Comprehensive Plan as well as the inconsistency with the surrounding SMU parcels.

Lou Larson stated that he does not agree with the zoning change either. He would rather see something more neighborhood friendly.

Andrew Brueggeman asked if the parcel has to be re-zoned to Light Industrial to which Mr. Lynch confirmed that regulations state that storage units can only be located in Light Industrial zoning districts. Andrew also asked if we can work with the developer to make something work for that area, maybe working with them to develop something else in that area. Andrew Lynch stated that a developer would first have to already be “in the game” in order to work with them. Brad Lenz mentioned that maybe adding a TIF district would be an option; he also mentioned that a PUD wouldn’t be an appropriate designation either.

Motion by Sarah Watson and seconded by Andrew Brueggeman. *Motion opposed unanimously.*

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion for rezoning 406 Winton St from part of a Heavy Industrial (HI) Zoning District to an Urban Mixed-Use (UMU) Zoning District to allow for indoor sales and service. (MCP 2023)

Mayor Diny opened the public hearing.

Scott Denzin, owner of MCP 2023 spoke stating that he owns this property and it has an office building which has been a resale shop for many years but must not be rezoned to include a store front. He mentioned that they would also work on improving the look of the building.

Mayor Diny closed the public hearing.

Discussion and possible action for rezoning 406 Winton St from part of a Heavy Industrial (HI) Zoning District to an Urban Mixed-Use (UMU) Zoning District to allow for indoor sales and service. (MCP 2023)

Motion by Andrew Brueggeman and seconded by Sarah Watson. *Motion approved unanimously.*

Discussion and possible action on Conditional use for 260 S 17th Ave to allow for an instant oil change service facility, in a SMU, Suburban Mixed-Use Zoning District (Valvoline LLC)

Andrew Lynch spoke briefly about this action, stating that the plan is in harmony with the Comprehensive Plan and that he recommends approving this conditional-use permit.

Motion by Andrew Brueggeman and seconded by Lou Larson. *Motion approved unanimously.*

Discussion and possible action on landmarking the former DAUV (540 S. 3rd Avenue)

Brad Lenz spoke about this property stating that it’s the former German Workman’s Hall and the Historical Committee recommends landmarking. Brad also stated that preserving historical assets is in the public interest and is also written in the ordinance. It is recommended to landmark this property. It also stated that Emmerich & Associates is opposed to landmarking this property due to the fact that they are currently in negotiations to sell the property and they believe that this may interfere with the sale.

Motion by Andrew Brueggeman and seconded by Lou Larson. *Motion opposed by 3 and approved by 2.*

Discussion and possible action for the Specific Implementation Plan for 1327, 1331, 1333, 1337, 1341, 1355, 1361, 1363, 1371 S 8th Ave and 706 Flieth St. also known as 8th Ave Workforce Housing (Kolbe & Kolbe)

Brad stated that the multi-family development was previously approved by Plan Commission and Common Council with the general plans. Kolbe & Kolbe is now seeking approval of the Specific Implementation Plan to complete their zoning approval. Staff recommends approval stating that City Engineering will need to review a stormwater management plan, a lighting plan should be submitted, building materials will need to be Class III and not Class IV, a sidewalk along 8th Ave should be added, and that only 1 crosswalk across 8th Ave is necessary.

Lou Larson stated that he likes the idea of this plan and wonders if Kolbe & Kolbe should be charged with including a sidewalk or if this is something that the city should look at providing? Brad Lenz noted that it would make more sense to have walkways that connect to a common area (such as a sidewalk). In the winter, the cross walks and walkways between the buildings wouldn't be easily accessible due to snow buildup.

Mike Tomsyck from Kolbe & Kolbe stated that there are already a few crosswalks that were actually put in place by Kolbe & Kolbe, not the city, that have been used for over 20 years without incident. He also pointed out that the sidewalk would only lead to areas that don't have sidewalks. It was also noted that the majority of people living in that neighborhood (that doesn't currently have sidewalks) don't want sidewalks installed. He requested that the Plan Commission does not include the requirement for the sidewalk.

The landscaping requirement was also discussed, Mike pointed out that there already is low-level landscaping included in the plan. They can include more mature landscaping in that area if necessary. He stated that he knows how to prevent light spillage from the parking lots to neighbors as they have been doing it for many years. The plan includes 47 trees and 329 shrubs. Gabriel Lemke (architectural designer) added that the design shows the buildings at angles versus parallel with the street and that is to allow for more parking. Mike also pointed out that it will give better aesthetics when driving down the street to see corners of buildings and landscaping versus just seeing down the side of a building.

Brad agreed that the project could move forward minus his requested updates to the current plan except for the provision that the building materials should be Class III and not Class IV, to which Mike Tomsyck stated that they are planning for Class III building materials.

Motion by Lou Larson and seconded by Andrew Brueggeman. *Motion approved unanimously.*

Next Meeting Date

Next scheduled meeting is October 15, 2024.

Adjournment

Motion by Andrew Brueggeman and seconded by Sarah Watson. *Motion approved unanimously.* Meeting adjourned at 5:52pm

The Plan Commission is next scheduled to meet at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 15, 2024.