



LAPORTE COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

Government Complex 5th Level
809 State Street, Suite 503 A
LaPorte, Indiana 46350-3391
(219) 326-6808 Ext. 2591, 2563, & 2221
Fax: (219) 362-5561

ANNEMARIE POLAN
Building Commissioner

LA PORTE COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES April 28th, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: JIM PRESSEL JAY WRIGHT
MATT BERNACCHI RITA BEATY KELLY
GLEN MINICH HAROLD PARKER
ANTHONY HENDRICKS

OTHERS PRESENT: Annemarie Polan, Recording Secretary, Doug Biege, Attorney, Dar Pavey, Secretary.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Anthony Hendricks called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Anthony Hendricks asked Dar Pavey for roll call.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Anthony Hendricks asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Jim Pressel made a motion to approve the agenda. Harold Parker seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Anthony Hendricks asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 24th, 2015. Jim Pressel made a motion to approve the minutes. Rita Beaty Kelly seconded.

Anthony Hendricks asked if there are any additions, provisions, deletions, or corrections.

All approved. Motion carried 7-0.

1. The undersigned, IU Health La Porte Hospital, Inc., (contingent purchaser) by counsel and Norman and Sandra Brinkman (the Petitions and owners) hereby respectfully submits to the Plan Commission of La Porte County a request to re-zone certain parcels of property near Michigan City, Indiana. The described property is presently zoned B1 and the Petitioner seeks to have the property rezoned to B2 (General Business District) so as to construct a facility which contains medical offices, a

Plan Commission 4-28-2015-1

rehabilitation center, and which offers general wellness services to the public. This property is located at 7007 West Johnson Road, Michigan City, Coolspring Twp., currently zoned B1 on 8.488 acres of vacant land, specifically Parcel No. 460512351022000046.

Attorney Biege said that notice is adequate.

Jim Kaminski said that he would like to spread a packet of materials regarding the petition, which he has provided to the commission. Attorney Kaminski said that he just wants to have it spread of record also.

Jim Kaminski said that he's the attorney for IU Health La Porte Hospital, Inc., which has filed this Petition to rezone actually two parcels of real estate located immediately east of the intersection of Johnson Road and West, 400 North. Attorney Kaminski said that the petition has been filed by IU Health La Porte Hospital as the owner of just over a four (4) acre parcel and the petitioners jointly filed with Mr. & Mrs. Norm Brinkman under a proposed contract where the Brinkman's would sell a parcel of about a little over eight (8) acres that immediately adjoins the current La Porte Hospital parcel. Attorney Kaminski said that they're actually joining in on the proposed petition.

Attorney Kaminski said that the land owned by La Porte Hospital at the intersection of Johnson Road and West, 400 North is currently zoned B1 (Business). Attorney Kaminski said that the land owned by the Brinkman's is zoned R1B (Residential). Attorney Kaminski said that the proposed petition ask for a rezoning of both parcels to B2 (Business).

Attorney Kaminski said that La Porte Hospital operates obviously an acute care hospital in downtown La Porte, but in its network of a health care affiliated system, it has a physician network which employees now between physicians and mid-level providers, almost one-hundred (100) professionals. Attorney Kaminski said that the hospital operates various out-patient facilities in a five (5) county area, including multiple facilities in La Porte County. Attorney Kaminski said that La Porte Hospital has seen this location for some time as an opportunity to frankly promote the expansion of health and wellness in our county.

Attorney Kaminski said that the vision for this site if it would be rezoned B2 is not just one of a medical office building where you go to see your doctor when your either ill, or you want to get your annual checkup to make sure that there isn't something you need to follow-up. Attorney Kaminski said that this proposed site of La Porte Hospital has a vision of multiple uses, all of which fit into the B2 zoning ordinance uses. Attorney Kaminski said that the proposals include a medical office facility to have physicians and mid-level providers, such as nurse practitioners, physical therapist, physicians assistance, providing services to the public.

Attorney Kaminski said that it also proposes a number of different services that are affiliated with health care provision to the public, such as a pharmacy, rehabilitation and physical therapy services; the rehab and physical therapy site and a portion of the facility could also be used as a general fitness facility for people in the community. Attorney Kaminski said that the site would also house the current VNA (Visiting Nurses Association) offices. Attorney Kaminski said that

the wellness component of therapy poles goes beyond just traditional medical health care. Attorney Kaminski said that the hospital sees a vision of a playground at the site; walking trails, conference center that will promote educational programs centering around wellness and then offering the space also to public groups for appropriate wellness, initiatives and conferences. Attorney Kaminski said that there will be a walking trail and restaurant catering to healthy foods; a vision of a café and a family play area. Attorney Kaminski said that the whole idea is to not just promote immediate addressing of illness and prevention of illness, but general wellness.

Attorney Kaminski said that services would include counseling and mental health in conjunction with local providers of that. Attorney Kaminski said that there are a number of different uses which lead to the hospital looking at this site and coming before the commission and asking for a B2 zoning classification for both of these parcels since these uses fit into that.

Attorney Kaminski said that as you may be aware, there is a potential affiliation change coming for La Porte Hospital. Attorney Kaminski said that their partner is aware of this potential partner and because of that, we're not able to say that we're going to start work tomorrow and this is the exact phasing of the project, but what they have provided you with is a detailed plan of what division is for this site and they would anticipate that it would start with medical offices, but quickly expand after that into the other services. Attorney Kaminski said that to the extent any of the development in construction would require of course any variances, they would come to the Zoning Board for that, but right now they want the comfort level of knowing that the Plan Commission and the County are on board with the concept of the B2 zoning that they set forth in their petition.

Attorney Kaminski said that when one looks within a mile of this intersection when you travel up and down Johnson Road, or even on Schultz road or 400, a lot of these uses already exists, but it's been done through an approach of a number of use variances through the Zoning Board. Attorney Kaminski said that you have restaurants, medical office buildings, a library, banking; you have commercial and retail enterprises, such as a communications firm and a storage facility. Attorney Kaminski said that it's all in that area.

Attorney Kaminski said that what they're asking the commission to do is offer a rezoning of this land because it's good planning; it promotes the variety of uses they're looking at and it would also then not need to do a number of use variances within this land that can cause sometimes issues with planning.

Attorney Kaminski said that to their knowledge, they have had as you can tell, an engineering firm did some pretty in-depth analysis of this site. Attorney Kaminski said that they know nothing within topography, or this parcel area itself, that would pose a problem to the environment. Attorney Kaminski said that it really is a consistent use with a lot of what is happening in that area, so it wouldn't be injurious to the public; it's orderly and responsible, and quite honestly, there is nothing more than just the simple mission of promoting the health of our county.

Attorney Kaminski said with that, they would ask for a favorable recommendation to the commission to allow for a zoning variance of these two parcels to B2. Attorney Kaminski said

that he does have representatives from IU Health La Porte Hospital, Brian Donnelly of the Chief Tragedy Officer and in charge of the physician network and Stacy Kellogg, Director/Manager of Communications. Attorney Kaminski said that if there are questions specific about the project, they're here to also help any questions you might have and to offer any further testimony on it.

Anthony Hendricks asked the board if they have any questions for Mr. Kaminski.

Harold Parker told attorney Kaminski that he really doesn't know if this project is going with the new partnership coming up in the hospital.

Attorney Kaminski said that he can't get into the details of what their negotiations have been with the new affiliate, but he can tell you that there was a detailed plan of different projects, not only with La Porte County, but the surrounding county areas showing future capital investments and construction, including this area. Attorney Kaminski said that was a part of what the proposed affiliate has looked at. Attorney Kaminski said that what he can't tell you is the details of when it might start, and what progression as we've set out.

Harold Parker said if it starts.

Attorney Kaminski said that it's a part of the division that they have agreed too.

Jim Pressel told attorney Kaminski that he did an excellent job preparing this.

Anthony Hendricks said that we will open the floor to any remonstrators for or against this project.

Glen Minich asked Annemarie Polan, Building if she received anything on this.

Annemarie Polan, Building Commissioner stated nothing.

Glen Minich said that it's adjoining quite a few individual property owners and he's surprised that we aren't getting any at all.

Annemarie Polan, Building Commissioner, said that we didn't get any.

Anthony Hendricks told attorney Kaminski that the whole corner of 400 and Johnson Road is zoned the same zoning.

Attorney Kaminski stated yes. Attorney Kaminski said that the current, what was the First National Bank of Valparaiso Branch that La Porte now owns and has been vacant is zoned B1, not B2. Attorney Kaminski said that the whole corner is zoned business and he's not sure if it's B1 or B2, but they're all business.

Glen Minich said that he believes that we're not far from the Swanson Center and he's not sure if we rezoned that.

Annemarie Polan, Building Commissioner, said that Swanson Center got a variance.

Jim Pressel asked that when we redrew the maps, isn't that one of the areas that were redrawn, or rezoned in that change.

Mitch Bishop, County Planner, said that last year the committee met and they finalized zoning. Mitch said that there are probably five-hundred separate parcels throughout the county and one of the areas we spent one night on was the intersection on Johnson Road and 400, because of all the use variances and speculation of future commercial development. Mitch said a lot of those were changed to B1. Mitch said that they choose B1 because of the commercial neighborhoods adjacent to this area. Mitch said that it hasn't been finalized yet, it has been done.

Anthony Hendricks said that the northwest corner of the Library is zoned R1, which is kind of strange, but he thinks that we fixed that.

Mitch Bishop said that has been fixed.

Anthony Hendricks asked if there are any other questions, or concerns from the board.

Remonstrator:

1. Jodie Walpole, 3802 N. Everly Drive. Ms. Walpole said that she has lived in the area about fifteen (15) years and she would really like to see the community grow and thrive. Ms. Walpole said that having a very young and busy family, she supports this project because she thinks that it will create a convenient place for families' like hers to seek the medical care that they need. Ms. Walpole said that it's really hard to create a balance existence with work, school and kids activities. Ms. Walpole said that having this village with its numerous resources close by will have a positive impact on their lives. Ms. Walpole said that this touches her personally because she has to drive to South Bend several times a month for her son to see a pediatric neurologist. Ms. Walpole said that this typically results in losing a day and a half pay. Ms. Walpole said that broadening our horizons and resources to accommodate all of our community with medical needs is vital. Ms. Walpole said that the thought of one day having those resources in your backyard strengthens her desire to remain there.

2. Norm Brinkman, 6944 W. Linda Lane, Michigan City. Ms. Brinkman said he's not only part of trying to sell this property to IU, but he also owns the Wolf Creek Subdivision, which runs right on the north side and full length of this property. Mr. Brinkman said that he bought this from First National Bank back in 2007 with the intent to expand at some future date the Wolf Creek Subdivision. Mr. Brinkman said that when he was approached by IU and saw what they planned to do with the property, he thought it would be far better use than another subdivision in that area. Mr. Brinkman said that he fully supports this as a neighbor to this property.

Anthony Hendricks asked the pleasure of the board.

Jim Pressel made a motion that we accept the petition and recommend to the Commissioners that that it be rezoned to a B2 Classification.

Jay Wright seconded.

Anthony Hendriks asked if there are any other questions.

Glen Minich said he has a question on traffic to Mitch Bishop. Mr. Minich said that we've been doing a lot of work with traffic on that intersection. Mr. Minich said that he thinks that there is a study going on currently.

Mitch Bishop, County Planner, said that he's not sure. Mitch said that he knows that the county received a NIRPC Grant for intersection improvement --- one point two million and he knows that the county funded the twenty (20%) percent local match. Mitch said that engineering has been done and it's going to be a traditional intersection improvement. Mitch said that at one time there was talk about a round-a-bout, but that didn't fly. Mitch said that as far as he knows that engineering has been done; he hasn't personally worked on that, it is our engineer. Mitch said that he's sure there was some kind of traffic count associated with that as well.

Glen Minich said that he just wanted to make sure that we were still at the point where we're moving forward this. Glen said that we're going to have a lot more traffic and right now at that intersection the left is a turn left and the right is straight forward. Glen said that there is still room to get to 400, but improvement sure would be good timing.

Mitch Bishop, County Planner, said that they're lighting that up as far as that intersection, so there shouldn't be no left turn conflicts after that work has been performed. Mitch said that he's not sure what the lighting is for that project, but he believes that it will be completed in 2017.

Anthony Hendricks said that there is a realignment being done for that intersection to make it safer, if they go with this plan, or any plan, if the rezone doesn't work, we have restrictions about driveways and intersection distances and presently there is a driveway for the bank that they're going to be removing and that will help that intersection out tremendously.

Mitch Bishop, County Planner said that the driveway separations depend upon the miles per hour of the road that the access will be located on.

Anthony Hendricks said that there are INDOT standards and it looks like if anything is done with this property, with that driveway closed out that would help out the safety of this intersection.

Anthony Hendricks asked if there are any other questions.

Anthony Hendricks asked the pleasure of the board.

Anthony Hendricks said that we've a motion and a second.
All approved. Motion carried 7-0.

Anthony Hendricks said if there is any old business.

Anthony Hendricks said that obviously we haven't had a meeting in the last two months about the changes that we're going to have with Doug Biege, our attorney, to guide us on what we would like to present.

Attorney Biege said that he drafted the changes suggested by the committee and since then it has been brought to his attention that the Building Commissioner's Office has a few sections of the book that we may want to address, or rewrite. Attorney Biege said that he wasn't aware that had a different set, so he wants to meet with Annemarie --- attorney Biege said that he thinks it's a matter ease of reading since we didn't draft the whole thing. Attorney Biege said he will get it to the committee for the committee's review to see how they feel about additional changes.

Anthony Hendricks asked if there is any other old business for the board.

Anthony Hendricks said that for the home viewers, they're still welcome if they have changes, request, or recommendations, they are still welcome to submit that to us, or Annemarie. Anthony said that we're all available if they have some questions or comments.

Anthony Hendricks asked if there is any new business.

Anthony Hendricks asked for a motion to adjourn.

Jim Pressel made a motion to adjourn. Matthew Bernacchi seconded.

All approved. Motion carried 7-0.

There being no further business before the Plan Commission this evening, meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.


ANTHONY HENDRICKS, President


ANNEMARIE POLAN, Rec. Secretary