



CITY OF TOPEKA  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
MINUTES

Monday, August 20, 2018

6:00PM – Municipal Building, 214 SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Council Chambers

**Members present:** Brian Armstrong, Marc Fried, Dennis Haugh, Wiley Kannarr, Corliss Lawson, Katrina Ringler, Matt Werner, Carole Jordan, Ariane Messina (9)

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Bill Fiander, Planning Director, Dan Warner, Planner III; Mike Hall, Planner III; Annie Driver, Planner II; John Neunuebel, Planner II; Kris Wagers, Administrative Officer; Mary Feighny, Legal

**Roll Call** – Chairperson Katrina Ringler called the meeting to order with eight members present for a quorum.

**Approval of Minutes from July 16, 2018**

**Motion** to approve; moved by Mr. Fried, **second** by Mr. Armstrong. **APPROVED** (7-0-2 with Ms. Messina and Ms. Jordan abstaining.)

**Declaration of conflict of interest/ex parte communications by members of the commission or staff –**

Ms. Lawson stated that she lives in a building owned by the applicant for PUD11/05C so she would be abstaining from voting on that case.

Ms. Ringler stated that her office (State Historical Society) is reviewing both projects being reviewed this evening, but she is not directly involved and are no financial implications.

**Public Hearings**

1. **Z18/04 by: Van Buren Street Development** requesting to amend the District Zoning Classification from “O&I-2” Office and Institutional District to “D-1” Downtown District to accommodate mixed use development, including 11 residential loft apartments and a future, undetermined commercial use on property located at 304-308 SW Van Buren

Upon Ms. Ringler’s calling for the case to be heard, Ms. Lawson left the room

Ms. Driver presented the staff report and staff recommendation for approval of the proposal, adding that the applicant was in attendance and available to answer questions.

Ms. Ringler declared the Public Hearing open and invited those who wished to speak to come forward.

Mark Burenheide of Van Buren Street Development came forward as the applicant. He explained that they’re planning 11 residential lofts in the old school, and the current zoning would require 2 parking places per unit. Six or seven of the planned units will be single bedroom units so 2 parking places will not

**APPROVED**

be needed. The requested re-zoning will allow for more flexibility on how the project can be approached. He added that there is parking along Van Buren Street and the on-site parking lot will have 18 parking places.

TJ Plumberg of 324 SW Van Buren came forward and introduced himself. Mr. Plumberg stated that he feels there is plenty of parking and asked regarding fencing of the parking lot. He asked for confirmation that the building is structurally sound and asked if exterior changes are planned. He stated that he has lived at his current residence since 1990 and noted that the property in question is used as a shortcut by many going to Let's Help or to the Mission. He stated that these people don't bother anyone; it's a very safe neighborhood and he's glad someone is doing something with the property.

Ms. Ringler invited the applicant to return to the podium to address questions raised by Mr. Plumberg. Mr. Burenheide explained that the building is indeed structurally sound with the windows and roof having been kept in good repair. He stated that there will be a fence with gates on the parking lot to the east of school, property that the applicant owns. Mr. Burenheide went on to say that the project is a historic preservation project and the exterior architecture will be retained. It's a tax credit project so the State Historic Society will be reviewing all plans for the project.

Ms. Ringler asked for a received confirmation from Mr. Burenheide that he is aware of the D-1 Design Guidelines.

With nobody else coming forward to speak, Ms. Ringler declared the Public Hearing Closed and invited

Mr. Haugh inquired regarding parking, stating that what is planned appears to be 1.6 spaces per unit. He wondered if, with potential future commercial use, there would be enough parking.

Mr. Fiander stated that current under-utilized parking is along Van Buren. Street parking was for the school that no longer exists and across the street is a Westar sub-station that takes the entire block and utilizes no parking. Planning staff does not believe parking will be an issue. The property is in a downtown area, similar to the situation of Jackson Street Lofts and mixed uses going on in that area.

Ms. Jordan stated that she passes by the property regularly and is glad to see that it is going to be put to use. She believes the proposed use works well with the Land Use & Growth Management Plan and adds to the neighborhood.

**Motion** by Mr. Kannarr to recommend APPROVAL to the Governing Body of the reclassification of the subject property from "O&I-2" Office and Institutional District to "D-1" Downtown District; **Second** by Ms. Jordan. **APPROVAL** (8-0-1 with Ms. Lawson abstaining)

Upon completion of the vote, Ms. Lawson returned to the room and took her seat.

- 2. PUD18/02 by: Pioneer Midtown Homes**, requesting to amend the Zoning District for the subject properties comprised of 3 parcels located generally at the southwest corner of SW Topeka Blvd. and SW 6th Ave. from C-4, D-1, and O&I-2 to PUD (Planned Unit Development) to provide for re-use of existing vacant building ("Casson Building") for senior apartments (23 units), along with construction of two new apartment buildings (8 units and 10 units).

Mr. Neunuebel presented the staff report and recommendation for approval of the proposal, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Mr. Fried noted that there's a significant variance from the normal parking requirement. Mr. Neunuebel confirmed and noted that with the exception of 1 unit, all will be 1-bedroom units.

Ms. Ringler declared the public hearing open and invited the owner or representative to come forward.

Mark Boyd of Schmidt, Beck & Boyd Engineering came forward representing the owner. Mr. Boyd noted

that the directions were wrong on the overhead containing the elevations; what was shown was an early version that has since been corrected.

With nobody else coming forward to speak, Ms. Ringler declared the public hearing closed.

Ms. Messina noted that she only saw one bike rack on the plans. Mr. Neunuebel explained that there is one rack per building. Mr. Hall stated requirements state that 5% of required parking is to be bike parking, so the plans exceed that.

Ms. Ringler noted that she's happy to see the building being re-used for in-fill.

**Motion** by Mr. Werner to approve the proposal, subject to conditions listed in the staff report; **second** by Ms. Lawson. **APPROVAL** (9-0-0)

## Discussion Items

### 1. **Building Design Standards - Review and discuss draft of the non-residential building design standards.**

Mr. Warner explained that staff plans to bring the Building Design Standards to the September Planning Meeting for a Public Hearing and possible action by the commission. He reviewed the proposed standards and showed overhead Powerpoint slides with examples of building types, etc.

Discussion included whether the design standards might also be applied to downtown and/or residential buildings. Mr. Warner confirmed that apartment complexes are handled as residential properties and noted that the commercial design guidelines do not transfer well to residential buildings. Mr. Fiander agreed that the particular guidelines currently under consideration for the most part do not lend themselves to residential.

Mr. Werner noted he appreciates the time and effort put into the guidelines and looks forward to implementing them.

### 2. **Screening and Landscape Requirements - Review and discuss proposed screening and landscape requirements.**

Mr. Hall presented proposed updates to the requirements and took questions. Discussion included whether adding requirements to landscaping might tend to hide the nicer buildings that the design standards are attempting to bring about. It was explained by staff that the landscaping/screening requirements allow for staff discretion and provide enough leeway to bring about improvements in appearance without hiding building details that are designed to be seen, complementing rather than competing with building design.

Commissioner Armstrong left at 7:25

### **B. Communications to the Commission**

Mr. Fiander shared that the Governing Body approved PUD18/01 (Frito Lay) and PUD06/01C (College Hill dog park). He also stated that the City sent a letter of support to Shawnee County Commission regarding the proposed Comprehensive Plan.

**With no further agenda items, meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.**