

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES - CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

Tuesday, June 2, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
REMOTE MEETING

Chair Maggi called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Pat Simon
Tony Scales
Joan Robertson
Jonathan Weber
Elizabeth Niemioja
Annette Maggi
Brett Kramer
Armando Lissarrague
Dennis Wippermann

Commissioners Absent:

Others Present: Allan Hunting, City Planner
Heather Botten, Associate Planner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the May 19, 2020 Planning Commission meeting were approved as submitted.

GREG HUNDER – CASE NO. 20-07V

Reading of Notice

Commissioner Simon read the public hearing notice to consider the request for a variance to allow a detached accessory building 1,152 square feet in size whereas 1,000 square feet is the maximum size allowed, for the property located at 3527 – 69th Street. 5 notices were mailed.

Presentation of Request

Heather Botten, Associate Planner, explained the request as detailed in the report. She advised that the applicant is proposing to construct a 1,152-square foot accessory building whereas the maximum allowed in the R-1C district is 1,000 gross square feet. The applicant is requesting a variance to allow the larger structure. The house on the property was built in 1965 and does not have an attached garage. The existing 576 square foot detached garage is in disrepair and will be demolished and replaced with the new structure. The City Council has reviewed and modified the allowed size of accessory structures over the years. They have increased the size on larger lots but held the size in the urban areas to control the massing of structures. Since this could set a precedent for other accessory building size variances, and due to lack of a practical difficulty, staff recommends denial of the request. Staff did not hear from any of the surrounding property owners.

Commissioner Kramer asked if the applicant would be allowed to build a 1,000 square foot additional structure if they had an attached garage and complied with impervious surface and setback requirements.

Ms. Botten replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Robertson asked if the corner lot to the west referenced by the applicant was considerably larger than the applicant's lot.

Ms. Botten replied that it was 10,855 square feet.

Commissioner Scales asked what the maximum allowed size was of an attached garage.

Ms. Botten replied that the City does not regulate the size of attached structures so long as they comply with impervious surface and setback requirements.

Commissioner Weber asked what the overall size was of the garage footprint.

Ms. Botten replied 1,152 square feet.

Opening of Public Hearing

Greg Hunder, 3527 – 69th Street E, advised he was available to answer any questions.

Chair Maggi asked the applicant if he read and understood the staff report.

Mr. Hunder replied in the affirmative. He believed a practical difficulty was being able to utilize his property more efficiently, noting that the small area in back of the garage would be basically unusable for anything except outdoor storage if the variance was not approved. The proposed addition would allow him to store unsightly sports and lawn equipment inside rather than being an eyesore for neighbors. He advised that his neighbors were in favor of his request.

Commissioner Weber asked the applicant for clarification of a statement in his narrative that the structure would be 1,152 square feet *including* the garage overhang.

Mr. Hunder replied that was an error; it should state *excluding* the garage overhang.

Commissioner Simon asked when the garage was built.

Mr. Hunder replied 1965, the same time as the house.

Commissioner Simon asked whose boat was being stored in the outdoor rocky area.

Mr. Hunder replied it was his.

Chair Maggi closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Discussion

Chair Maggi spoke to the point that City Council has reviewed this particular issue numerous times and chose not to increase the structure allowance on this lot size and noted that commissioners were challenged to find a practical difficulty for this request.

Commissioner Robertson understood City Council's previously mentioned concern about the aesthetics of clustering large buildings on small lots, and was concerned about the aesthetics of putting the requested building in the middle of the neighboring yards that were open spaces that flowed together well.

Commissioner Scales stated this was a reasonable request and that this house not having an attached garage could be used as the practical difficulty. If the applicant had an attached garage it could be as large as he wanted and in addition, he could put up a 1,000 square foot detached structure as long as it met the other requirements.

Commissioner Niemioja stated perhaps the solution was to build an attached garage, and she was

hesitant to use the lack of an attached garage as a practical difficulty.

Commissioner Scales stated houses were built differently in 1965 than they are now.

Commissioner Niemioja agreed, but stated people know the existing conditions when they purchase the lot. She could not support the request due to lack of a practical difficulty. She also felt the proposed building size would not aesthetically fit with the neighborhood.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Motion by Commissioner Robertson, second by Commissioner Wippermann, to deny the request for a variance to allow a detached accessory building 1,152 square feet in size whereas 1,000 square feet is the maximum size allowed, for the property located at 3527 – 69th Street, based on the lack of a practical difficulty and an awareness that any increase in size on that lot would change the aesthetics.

Motion carried (6/3 – Weber, Scales, Kramer). This item goes to the City Council on June 22, 2020.

Commissioner Scales stated it would be helpful to get direction from City Council regarding perhaps reviewing accessory structure size since variances are frequently being requested.

KIMLEY-HORN & ASSOCIATES – CASE NO. 20-13ZPV

Reading of Notice

Commissioner Simon read the public hearing notice to consider a rezoning from PUD, Planned Unit Development to B-3, General Business, a variance from the minimum lot width requirements, and a major site plan approval for the construction of a 5,100 square foot automotive repair center, for the property located at Outlot B Robert Curve. 31 notices were mailed.

Presentation of Request

Heather Botten, Associate Planner, explained the request as detailed in the report. She advised that the applicant is proposing an automotive repair center on Diffley Court behind Casey's General Store. They are requesting a rezoning from PUD to B-3, General Business, site plan approval for the new building, and a variance from minimum lot width requirements for the creation of a new lot. The proposed development will require a preliminary and final plat of Outlot B, which will be submitted at a later date. Approval of this request would be contingent upon plat approval. Staff feels a rezoning to B-3 would be appropriate and would be consistent with the comprehensive plan. In general, the site plans meet the City's standards, but there are some refinements that must be met before final approval and they are included in the conditions of approval. When looking at the variance, due to the location of the parcel on a cul-de-sac, a lot width variance would be required just at the entrance point. The property itself is not physically large enough to comply with minimum width requirements while allowing for maximum development of the outlot. Staff recommends approval of the requests with the conditions listed in the report. Staff did not hear from any of the surrounding property owners.

Opening of Public Hearing

Christian Jones, Kimley-Horn & Associates, advised he was available to answer any questions.

Chair Maggi asked the applicant if he read and understood the report.

Mr. Jones replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Wippermann asked if Christian Brothers Automotive had locations in other cities.

Mr. Jones replied in the affirmative, stating they had locations nationwide.

Commissioner Wippermann asked if this facility was an increase or a relocation from another city.

Mr. Jones replied it was an increase.

Chair Maggi closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Weber stated he supported the request and drove by their Lakeville location, which was immaculate.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Motion by Commissioner Weber, second by Commissioner Lissarrague, to approve the request for a rezoning from PUD, Planned Unit Development to B-3, General Business, a variance from the minimum lot width requirements, and a major site plan approval for the construction of a 5,100 square foot automotive repair center, for the property located at Outlot B Robert Curve, with the practical difficulty and conditions as listed in the report.

Motion carried (9/0). This item goes to the City Council on June 22, 2020.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Fox
Recording Secretary