

Minutes
City of Monona
Plan Commission
Monday July 12, 2021

The meeting of the City of Monona Plan Commission was called to order (7:00 pm).

Present: Alder Nancy Moore (Chair), Alder Kristie Goforth, Mr. Chris Homburg, Ms. Susan Fox, Mr. Brian Holmquist, and Ms. Coreen Fallat

Absent: Mr. Robert Stein and Mr. Patrick DePula

Also Present: Doug Plowman, City Planner, Bill Cole, City Attorney, and Elisa Guerrero, City Planning Intern

Approval of Minutes

A motion by Ms. Fallat, seconded by Ms. Fox, to approve the minutes of June 28, 2021 carried with one correction.

Appearances

None

Unfinished Business

A. Public Hearing on Request by One City Schools for Approval of a Zoning Permit for a New Use at 1707 W. Broadway. (Case No. 2-010-2021)

Ms. Tammy McCullough of JLA Architects, representing One City Schools, gave a high-level overview of the project, including the interior floorplans, eventual playground construction, and minor exterior changes to the building.

Mr. David Stephan, from One City Schools, summarized the Traffic Impact Analysis, which found that traffic volume for the site with One City Schools would be similar to the volume when the site was a WPS office building (pre pandemic). During drop-off and pick-up times, cars would be directed to loop around the south end of WPS drive and turn right into the parking lot, to have a smooth flow of traffic and have sufficient queuing space. The plan to separate the WPS campus from One City Schools was proposed for security reasons, to minimize car traffic on site and reduce conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and bikers.

Ms. Vanessa Moran, Director of the Office of Educational Opportunity, which issued the charter for One City Schools, spoke in support of the One City Schools proposal. She commented that the curriculum has a strong student-centered approach and offers good educational opportunities for a student body with diverse backgrounds and needs.

Mr. Andrew McCready, from WPS, stated their support for the One City Schools proposal, and that separating the two parcels would be better for security and traffic, because multiple entrances and exits would make the traffic flow harder to control.

B. Consideration of Action on Request by One City Schools for Approval of a Zoning Permit for a New Use at 1707 W. Broadway. (Case No. 2-010-2021)

Mr. Plowman shared the staff report, commenting that site design and circulation had previously been topics of discussion for the project. He recommended the Commission discuss how to allow for easy u-turning on the southern end of WPS drive during drop-

off/pick-up, and whether exterior renovations like the playground addition would be approved under this zoning permit, or if they would require separate approval.

Mr. Homburg felt the proposed use was a good fit for the site, and that the proposed traffic flow would work well if the space on the southern end of WPS Drive was widened to better accommodate u-turns or include a traffic circle. For ease of pick-up and drop-off times, he felt the sidewalk extending around the parking lot from the parking structure to the main entrance would not be necessary. Mr. Homburg said that temporary directional signage would be important for drop-off and pick-up traffic until permanent wayfinding signage was installed. He asked how many bike racks would be placed on site and where they would be located, to which Mr. Stephan answered that they would decide the location and number of racks later, once they had a better idea of how many students biked to school each day. Mr. Homburg also asked how bike lanes would be configured on the road, and Mr. Stephan said they planned to maintain the current bike lanes.

Mr. Stephan said that the changes planned for phase two of their renovation, including the pedestrian sidewalk, the outdoor playground and any changes to the bike lanes could be considered as part of a second zoning permit for the site. Mr. Homburg asked how the division of street lighting would be handled, and Mr. McCready said that most of the lighting on the One City Schools lot was powered through the parking structure, and that WPS would maintain the same lighting level for any streetlights that were powered through the main WPS campus.

Ms. Fallat felt that even the reduced capacity of pre-k through 4th grade students would create lots of drop-off traffic and asked if the queuing space would be sufficient, to which Mr. Homburg said there was plenty of queuing space. She felt that the sidewalk around the parking lot would be a good addition. She agreed with Mr. Homburg about the need for a wider u-turn space and sufficient bike racks for students. Ms. Fallat also felt that a lighting plan would be important once the playground is installed, since a playground would need better lighting than a parking lot. Finally, she asked if the One City Schools team had talked with the Populance developers about how the Monona Garden Development could affect traffic flow, to which Mr. Stephan said they had one initial discussion, but no follow ups.

Alder Goforth agreed about the need for bike racks and said there seemed to be plenty of room for them near the main entrance. She supported the idea of a traffic circle to allow for u-turns on WPS drive, and did not think the sidewalk around the parking lot would be necessary.

Ms. Fox said she felt comfortable approving the zoning permit if One City Schools had to come back for approval of the playground, lighting changes, and changes to the road to accommodate u-turn traffic and bikes. Ms. Fox and Mr. Holmquist recommended fewer drop-off lanes than the three outlined in the proposal, to make the drop-off process smoother and safer. Mr. Holmquist did not think the sidewalk around the parking lot would be necessary.

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Alder Moore said that one of the difficulties with the proposal was that there did not seem to be a clear delineation of what aspects would be considered part of which 'phase' of the build out, whether that be the playground, sidewalk or otherwise.

A motion was made by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Mr. Holmquist, to approve a Zoning Permit for a new use and construction at 1707 W. Broadway, as proposed and according to Chapter 480-55 of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances with the following finding of fact and conditions of approval:

Finding of Fact:

1. The existing landscaping is found to be sufficient for the site and additional plantings are not required as part of this application.

Conditions of Approval:

1. All required state and local building permits shall be obtained.
2. A separate comprehensive signage plan shall be obtained from the Plan Commission for any new signage at this property.
3. A Knox box shall be installed on the south side of the building, with final location approval by the City's Fire Chief prior to granting of occupancy permits.
4. The applicant shall install a Bi-Directional Amplifier (BDA) inside the building. This shall be coordinated with the City's Fire Chief for approval prior to granting of occupancy permits.
5. Fire alarm systems and sprinklers shall be upgraded for the change in use from B (business) to E (educational) prior to granting of occupancy permits.
6. Erosion control and stormwater management permit applications shall be submitted to the City's consulting engineer for review and approval prior to the granting of building permits for any work that will trigger this review. The applicant should reference the review letter dated July 1, 2021 for further details.
7. If site lighting becomes a problem as determined by the Plan Commission, the applicant shall return to the Plan Commission with a photometric plan to address the challenges and changes may be required.
8. This does not include approval of the future site improvements such as the outdoor play area or rebuilding of the structure parking area.
9. Permits will be required for the conversion of the structured parking area to any other use.
10. The final plans for the change of direction at the south end of the drop-off loop shall be submitted to Plan Commission for approval by November 2021, with the work completed by the summer of 2022.

11. A paved emergency access to the WPS properties shall be maintained for both public and private use.
12. The final plan for the drop-off area modifications shall be submitted to the Plan Commission for review by November 2021, with completion by summer of 2022.
13. If queueing becomes an issue in the future, the Plan Commission may require future fixes.
14. The bike racks and locations shall be submitted to Plan Commission by November 2021, with installation by summer 2022.
15. Temporary wayfaring signage shall be approved before the opening of the school.

The motion carried unanimously.

C. Discussion and Possible Recommendation to City Council regarding the Declaration of Reciprocal Easements associated with CSM 10267 at 1707 W. Broadway. (Case No. 2-013-2021)

Ms. Megan Jackson, representing WPS, shared that WPS would like to close off access between the WPS and One City School parcels along WPS Drive, to provide better safety and security for both campuses, especially for students. They sought Plan Commission recommendation to remove the condition requiring a cross access agreement and replace it with an emergency access agreement that would allow emergency vehicles to cross between parcels in the case of an emergency. She said the conditions for the ring road and cross access were added to the original CSM to allow each parcel some access to public road frontage. Because the One City Schools parcel has access to Engel Street and Bridge Road, the connections between the parcels along WPS drive can be blocked without going against the intent of the original condition. She emphasized that WPS was committed to working with One City Schools in the future to determine the details of emergency vehicle access between parcels.

Mr. Jared Smith, representing One City Schools, said they were in favor of this change to the cross access easement, and reiterated that the two parties would work together to determine the details of emergency vehicle access between parcels. Leaving the ring road in its current state would create additional locations of potential pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle conflict, and therefore One City Schools felt that closing off those intersections to regular vehicle traffic would be safer for the school.

Mr. Plowman shared the staff report, explaining that City Council had requested further Plan Commission discussion of condition number 3 of the CSM to clarify their recommendation, before the second read of the CSM at the Council meeting on July 19.

Mr. Homburg said that the ring road and cross access easement were originally created to allow for better circulation across lots in the event that WPS decided to sell individual lots in the future. Mr. Homburg said that maintaining cross-access for all vehicles, not just emergency vehicles, in an emergency would be very important. He felt it would be best to use some kind of bollard or other road blocking device that could be easily taken down in case of an emergency to quickly evacuate all people and cars from the One City Schools lot. He said that the Police and Fire Chiefs should approve whatever road-blocking barrier is put into place.

Ms. Fox said she was comfortable with the proposed change to the CSM, removing the cross access agreement, if City staff or the Police and Fire departments could approve the kinds of barriers installed in the street. Mr. Holmquist agreed with allowing cross-access for all vehicles in case of an emergency and said Police and Fire departments should have input on what barriers are installed.

Alder Moore asked how cars on the WPS campus would turn around on WPS Drive once the ring road was closed off at the One City Schools parcel and Mr. McCready said WPS could address that in a specific plan for closing off the road. She also asked if the original cross-access easement could simply be left in place and the two parties reach an agreement separately about closing off the roads, but Mr. Homburg clarified that closing off the road would violate the conditions of the original agreement, requiring a new access agreement.

A motion by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Ms. Fox, was made to amend the Plan Commission's original recommendation to Monona City Council to approval of a 3-Lot Certified Survey Map (CSM) to modify Lots 1 and 2 of CSM 15671 and Lot 3 of CSM 10267 at 1707 W. Broadway, to change Condition 3 and add Condition 4:

3. The applicant shall maintain paved emergency access between the properties for use by emergency responders and school occupants in the case of an emergency.
4. City Staff shall approve the final design of the emergency access barricade or bollards.

A friendly amendment to the motion was made by Mr. Holmquist, accepted by the maker and seconder of the motion, to change Condition 3 to read as follows:

3. The applicant shall maintain paved emergency access between the properties for use by emergency responders and occupants of the current Lot 2 of CSM 15671 in the case of an emergency.

The motion carried unanimously.

The amended recommendation reads as follows:

Plan Commission recommend that the Monona City Council approve a 3-Lot Certified Survey Map (CSM) to modify Lots 1 and 2 of CSM 15671 and Lot 3 of CSM 10267 at 1707 W. Broadway, as proposed, according to Section 473-4(b) of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances and Section 236.34 of the Wisconsin Statutes with the following conditions:

1. City Council review and approval is required prior to the recording of the CSM.
2. Final staff approval of the CSM is required, including the edits in the review letter dated June 9th from Vierbicher, the City's engineering consultant.
3. The applicant shall maintain paved emergency access between the properties for use by emergency responders and occupants of the current Lot 2 of CSM 15671 in the case of an emergency.
4. City Staff shall approve the final design of the emergency access barricade or bollards.

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New Business

None

Reports of Staff and Commission Members

A. Staff Report Regarding Status of Development Project Proposals.

1. Economic Development Update

Mr. Plowman reported that The Neutral Project development would likely come back before the Commission in September or October for another prehearing conference.

2. Potential Upcoming Plan Commission Items

Items for the next meeting would include zoning and signage permits for Menards, a zoning permit for a new car sales business, and a signage permit for another business.

3. Upcoming Meetings: July 26, 2021, August 9, 2021

B. Plan Commission Requests for Information from City Staff.

At Mr. Holmquist's request, Mr. Plowman reported that several trees along the median of Monona Drive had been removed because they were in poor condition and would be replaced during the tree-planting period in either the spring or fall by the City's Department of Public Works.

Adjournment

A motion by Ms. Fox, seconded by Alder Goforth, to adjourn carried. (9:03pm)

Respectfully submitted by:

Elisa Guerrero, City Planning Intern