

Wheaton Planning and Zoning Board

I. Call To Order and Roll Call Vote

Chair Aranas called the Tuesday, April 26, 2022 Wheaton Planning and Zoning Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in-person and via zoom. Upon roll call, the following were:

Roll Call Vote

Present: Nicole Aranas
Chris Dabovich
Chris Derrick
Bob Gudmundson
Cecilia Horejs
Mark Plunkett
Dan Wanzung

Absent: None

City Staff Present: Tracy Jones, Staff Planner
Jim Kozik, Director of Planning and Economic
Development
Joe Tebrugge, Director of Engineering

Chair Aranas stated that Ms. Horejs had a potential conflict of interest on ZA #22-13, so she would recuse herself and leave the meeting after action was taken on the first new business item.

II. Approval of Minutes - April 12, 2022

The minutes were approved as presented.

III. Public Comment

There was none.

IV. New Business

ZA #22-12/ Special Use Permit/ 101, 103, and 105 W. Front Street and 106, 108, and 110 N. Main Street/ Brick and Mortar Group LLC

Pursuant to notice duly published on April 5, 2022 and letters mailed to neighboring property owners on April 4, 2022, Chair Aranas called to order the April 26, 2022 public hearing requesting a special use permit to allow a business and professional office (co-working space) to occupy the main floor of the existing commercial space located at 101, 103, and 105 W. Front Street and 106, 108, and 110 N. Main Street. The property is zoned C-2 Retail Core Business District.

Andrew Nast, Brick and Mortar LLC, 11 N. Northwest Highway, Suite 101, Park Ridge was sworn in. Mr. Nast stated that Brick and Mortar LLC is seeking a special use permit to allow a business and professional office (co-working space) to occupy the main floor of the existing commercial space located at 101, 103, and 105 W. Front Street and 106, 108, and 110 N. Main Street. He added that Brick and Mortar Group LLC has an existing co-working space located in downtown Park Ridge and they plan to mirror this location after that one.

Mr. Nast stated that there would be one employee at the building during regular hours, and the applicant anticipates 25 - 45 members/ guests visiting the location daily with an average visit lasting between 2 and 3 hours. In addition to the recurring member base of 25 - 45 members/ guests per day, the applicant sees an average of 50 new people per month coming by the space as either a new day pass member, meeting goer, or guest of a member.

Mr. Nast stated that they plan to offer three types of co-working memberships: Day passes, part-time recurring memberships, and unlimited recurring memberships plus meeting spaces by the hour. With companies permanently shifting approximately 30% of their workforce remote, the applicant believes that there is a huge number of white collar professionals who used to commute to work from the suburbs who need a location to work from, other than their homes.

Mr. Nast stated that while members have electronic access to the space 24/ 7, 98% of use happens between 7 am and 5 pm, with the busiest time being 10 am and 3 pm and approximately 70% of members patronize lunch spots as well as other retail shops within walking distance of their building. To keep members energized and productive throughout the day, beverages, snacks, and apparel are available for purchase in the "micro-grocer" located inside the space.

Mr. Nast stated that they hold various events/ meetings throughout the month. Most of these events/ meetings are small (10 - 20 people) and are held either on a weekday evening or on the weekend with the average event/ meeting lasting between 1 and 2 hours. The applicant states that they try to utilize local restaurants for catering these events/ meetings whenever possible.

Mr. Nast stated that they have submitted a preliminary floor plan of the main floor. The floor plan includes a vestibule, main co-working space, offices, phone booths, meeting room, café, courtyard, and bathrooms. There are existing apartments on the second floor of the building that the applicant plans to keep, but no floor plan of the second floor has been provided. He stated that they may build out the basement in the future to accommodate larger meetings. He added that they have also submitted a preliminary building elevation that eliminates the cedar shaker canopy that is currently on the exterior of the building and adds new black windows and a metal awning.

Mr. Nast stated that in addition to their Park Ridge location, they are currently under construction for a second location in Glen Ellyn at 411 N. Main Street, near the Blackberry Market. He added that they had to go through the special use process in Glen Ellyn too. He added that Glen Ellyn approved their special use request because of the daytime pedestrian traffic that their business would bring to downtown.

Mr. Nast addressed the special use standards as required by the Wheaton Zoning Ordinance. He stated that the proposed special use permit would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, or general welfare of the neighboring property owners.

Mr. Dabovich questioned why they need the downtown retail location in the C-2 District on the main floor.

Mr. Nast stated that their concept only works in downtown retail areas, and they prefer the main floor space for accessibility and visibility purposes.

Mr. Gudmundson questioned the difference between their use and a typical office use.

Mr. Nast stated that a typical office use would have the same employees coming and going at the same times every weekday. He stated that their use would have different members coming and going at different times seven days a week and this would create more activity throughout the day than a typical office use. He added

that they encourage their members to frequent the existing retail businesses in the area and bring back coffee or lunch to their workspace.

Gabby Reczek, 428 S. West Street, Wheaton was sworn in. Ms. Reczek stated that she was a Wheaton resident, and she was concerned about the availability of public parking in downtown.

Eric Schlickman, 408 N. West Street, Wheaton was sworn in. Mr. Schlickman stated that he was a Wheaton resident, Wheaton business owner, and he had a background in architecture. He stated that the existing building needs a lot of work and is too large for most retail and restaurant users, which is why it has been on the market for some time. He added that he was a member of Team Up, another co-working space in downtown, and that there is a demand for this type of shared office space in downtown. He suggested that a café, open to the public, should be added to the floor plan.

Ron Almiron, 455 W. Front Street, Wheaton was sworn in. Mr. Almiron stated that this was a prime property in downtown and that the existing building should be converted into a boutique hotel, instead of a co-working space.

Allison Orr, 1110 Cherry Street, Wheaton was sworn in. Ms. Orr stated that she was a Wheaton resident and the Manager of the Downtown Wheaton Association (DWA). She stated that the DWA Board, which consists of downtown business owners, is aware of the request, but that the Board has not made a recommendation on the request. She added that she was unsure whether the DWA would make a recommendation at their next meeting or not.

Dominick Carbonari, 8755 W. Higgins Road, Chicago was sworn in. Mr. Carbonari stated that he is the listing broker for the building. He agreed with Mr. Schlickman that the existing building needs a lot of work and is too large for most retail and restaurant users, which is why it has been on the market for some time.

Ed Lowrie, 649 Childs Street, Wheaton was sworn in (via zoom). Mr. Lowrie questioned why one of the vacant office properties on Roosevelt Road wouldn't work for the proposed co-working space.

Mr. Nast stated that the downtown location was the key to make their concept work, so a location on Roosevelt Road would not work for them. He added that the café suggested by Mr. Schlickman and the boutique hotel suggested by Mr. Almiron were great ideas, but unfortunately, they did not fit their concept.

Mr. Derrick moved and then Mr. Wanzung seconded the motion to close the public hearing. On a voice vote, all voted aye.

Mr. Plunkett moved and then Mr. Derrick seconded the motion to waive their regular rules and vote tonight. On a voice vote, all voted aye.

Mr. Wanzung moved and then Ms. Horejs seconded the motion to recommend approval of ZA #22-12 requesting a special use permit to allow a business and professional office (co-working space) to occupy the main floor of the existing commercial space located at 101, 103, and 105 W. Front Street and 106, 108, and 110 N. Main Street as presented.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes: Nicole Aranas
Chris Derrick
Cecilia Horejs
Mark Plunkett

Dan Wanzung

Nays: Chris Dabovich
Bob Gudmundson

Absent: None

Motion Passed

While the two dissenting board members liked the co-working space concept, they both felt that the special use request contained limited retail attributes that would be consistent with Wheaton's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Wheaton's Downtown Strategic and Streetscape Plan, or the C-2 Retail Core Business District.

Ms. Horejs recused herself and left the meeting.

ZA 22-13/ Rezoning and PUD/ Block bounded by Liberty Drive on the north, Hale Street on the east, Willow Avenue on the south, and Wheaton Avenue on the west (excluding 201 - 203 W. Willow Avenue, 213 S. Wheaton Avenue, 221 S. Wheaton Avenue, and 223 S. Wheaton Avenue)/ Willow Avenue Apartments, LLC

Pursuant to notice duly published on April 6, 2022 and letters mailed to neighboring property owners on April 5, 2022, Chair Aranas called to order the April 26, 2022 public hearing requesting rezoning to the C-4 CBD Perimeter Commercial District with a special use permit for a planned unit development to allow the construction and use of an apartment complex.

Phil Leutkehans, Leutkehans, Brady, Garner, and Armstrong, 105 Irving Park Road, Itasca was sworn in. Mr. Leutkehans stated that he was the attorney working on the project. He stated that the subject property is bounded by Liberty Drive on the north, Hale Street on the east, Willow Avenue on the south, and Wheaton Avenue on the west. The property is improved with four existing buildings: The former bank building at 211 S. Wheaton Avenue, the retail building at 204 W. Liberty Drive, the retail building at 208 S. Hale Street, and the single-family residence at 213 W. Willow Avenue. The property is currently zoned a mix of C-2 Retail Core Business District and C-4 CBD Perimeter Commercial District.

Mr. Leutkehans stated that they are requesting a rezoning to the C-4 CBD Perimeter Commercial District with a special use permit for a planned unit development to allow the construction and use of an apartment complex on the block bounded by Liberty Drive on the north, Hale Street on the east, Willow Avenue on the south, and Wheaton Avenue on the west (excluding 201 - 203 W. Willow Avenue, 213 S. Wheaton Avenue, 221 S. Wheaton Avenue, and 223 S. Wheaton Avenue), following the demolition of four existing buildings. He stated that the apartment complex is proposed with 306 units, 7-stories, 429 parking spaces, and 4,502 square feet of first-floor commercial (restaurant) space. The property is 2.34 acres (101,905 square feet) in size. Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval is required for any project over one (1) acre in size in the C-4 District.

Mr. Leutkehans stated that they are proposing a 7-story building with a height of 79.33 feet. The building height has been tempered by reducing the proposed building height of the building to two-stories where the building is adjacent to the four existing buildings. In addition, architectural detailing on the first and second floors around the perimeter of the structure would allow the building to read more as a 6-story building. While the proposal exceeds the base Zoning Ordinance height requirement of 4 stories or 50 feet, there are several newer buildings in the downtown area of similar heights. The Courthouse Square condominium and apartment buildings are 7-stories with a height of 70 feet, the Wheaton 121 apartment building is 6/ 7-stories with a height of 70 feet, and the First Trust building is 5-stories with a height of 82 feet.

Mr. Leutkehans stated that they are proposing a density of 130.76 units/ acre. While the proposal exceeds the base Zoning Ordinance density requirement of between 33.96 and 50.95 units/ acre, there are several newer buildings in the downtown area with similar densities. The Courthouse Square condominium and apartment buildings have a density of 124.5 units/ acre, and the Wheaton 121 apartment building has a density of 117.7 units/ acre.

Mr. Leutkehans stated that the subject property is a quadruple frontage lot, with streets on all sides. As previously stated, the applicant is proposing a building setback off Liberty Drive of 4.2 feet and a building setback off Willow Avenue of 0.0 feet in lieu of the required 5.0 feet. The building setbacks proposed off Hale Street and Wheaton Avenue are code compliant. He stated that these setbacks are consistent with several of the newer buildings in the downtown, especially the First Trust building. In the staff report, staff questioned whether the proposed parking spaces and/ or drive aisles in the parking garage could be reduced in size to shrink the foundation size of the building and provide a small setback along Willow Avenue, while still meeting the minimum required Level of Service (LOS) C in the garage. The applicant stated that this was not possible since they would lose a row of parking spaces.

Mr. Leutkehans stated that they have submitted a landscape plan that shows the three existing parkway trees to remain on Liberty Drive. In addition, the plan shows the installation of new trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, and groundcovers around the perimeter of the proposed apartment building, mostly in the parkway area. Planters are also proposed adjacent to the building on the Willow Avenue facade. In the staff report, staff recommended that the landscape plan be revised to eliminate new plantings in the parkway to maintain the new streetscape landscaping along Liberty Drive and Hale Street and the applicant is agreeable to this condition.

Robert Muller, BKV Group, 209 South LaSalle Street, Chicago was sworn in. Mr. Muller stated that he was the architect working on the project. He stated that the building is designed with a two-story concrete podium to house the private parking garage. Five floors of residential units are proposed to be constructed on top of the podium with a third floor amenity deck/ pool in the center of the building and two other open air amenity areas. The exterior of the building would feature a combination of facebrick, fiber cement board, fiber cement panels, metal panels, PVC windows and an aluminum storefront, with an aluminum railing system and metal coping and trim. While color elevations have been provided, exact exterior colors have not been determined to date. All the residential units would have private balconies facing either the street or the amenity deck/ pool. He added that the AC units will be mounted on the roof and would be fully screened by the building parapet.

Mr. Muller stated that the floor plans were provided for the entire building identifying the proposed unit mix of 53 studios, 142 one-bedrooms, 102 two-bedrooms, and 9 three-bedroom townhomes. The townhomes would have street access as well as interior access to the apartment building. The 4,502 square foot first floor commercial (restaurant) space is proposed at the northeast corner of the building. The applicant is proposing to include the following building amenities: A lobby, mail room, trash/ recycling room, and bike storage area on the first floor, and an amenity deck/ pool, amenity space, co-working space, dog deck, dog lounge, and roof deck on the third floor.

Kelly Conolly, Sam Schwartz, 233 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago was sworn in. Ms. Conolly stated that she was the traffic consultant working on the project. She stated that parking garage entrances are proposed on both Willow and Wheaton Avenues and a proposed loading dock entrance is on Hale Street. She stated that they completed a traffic study, and the existing Level of Service (LOS) would stay the same with the development. She added that when completing the traffic study, they increased the traffic count numbers by 35% for a covid adjustment.

Ms. Conolly stated that for residential buildings within the Downtown Parking Overlay District, the Zoning Ordinance requires .78 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area. Based on approximately 322,000 square feet of residential and common space (not including interior parking or mechanical areas), 251 parking

spaces are required. The applicant is proposing to construct 429 parking spaces or provide a parking ratio of 1.4 parking spaces per unit. The Courthouse Square condominium building has a parking ratio of 1.38 parking spaces per unit, the Courthouse Square apartment buildings have a parking ratio of 1.36 parking space per unit, and the Wheaton 121 apartment building has parking ratio of 1.36 parking spaces per unit. She added that 10 guest spaces would be designated in the garage and the first floor commercial (restaurant) user has not requested any garage parking, so parking for their use would be on the street.

Aaron Bruder, CAGE Civil Engineering, 3110 Woodcreek Drive, Downers Grove was sworn in. Mr. Bruder stated that he was the engineer working on the project. He stated that the proposed apartment complex would be constructed relatively close to four existing buildings: 201 - 203 W. Willow Avenue located at the southeast corner of the building, and 213 S. Wheaton Avenue, 221 S. Wheaton Avenue, and 223 S. Wheaton Avenue located at the southwest corner of the building. He stated that they do construction projects next to adjacent building all the time and they don't foresee any issues. He stated that most of the building will have a shallow foundation at just below the frostline, between 4 and 5 feet, with the deepest part of the foundation being for the detention vault. He added that the existing sanitary and storm sewer main in the public alley would be eliminated.

Ron Almiron, 455 W. Front Street, Wheaton was sworn in. Mr. Almiron stated that we do not need another expensive apartment building in downtown. He added that the developer should build a condominium building instead of an apartment building.

Mr. Dabovich moved and then Mr. Derrick seconded the motion to continue the public hearing until the Board's next regular meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. On a voice vote, all voted aye.

V. Miscellaneous

There was none.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Dabovich moved and then Mr. Derrick seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 p.m. On a voice vote, all voted aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy L. Jones, AICP
Staff Planner