

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
PLAN COMMISSION

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Stacy Winfield, Commissioner

Regular Meeting Minutes
(Via Zoom Videoconference)
Monday, November 16, 2020 @ 4:30 p.m.

Reported for Fissinger & Associates
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 4:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Present in Chambers: Val Gomez, William Allen.
Present Via Zoom: Lilia Ramos, Douglass Sloss,
Stacy Winfield.

MR. GOMEZ: We do have five members. We do have a quorum. Unless some other members contact us, we'll continue with the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting of Monday,
November 2, 2020

Comments/Questions: None

Motion to approve November 2, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes made by Douglass Sloss. Second by William Allen.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

NEW BUSINESS:

CITY PLANNER'S REPORT:

1 MR. GOMEZ: We'll move on to New Business and the City
2 Planner's Report. First item on our agenda we have BP
3 Station Addition at 819 East Chicago Avenue.

4 MR. MORRISROE: We have Architect Les Dreischerf who is
5 here who sent us the modifications to that gas station that
6 were in the packet.

7 He met with us, the Tech Review Committee last
8 Wednesday. The Tech Review Committee approved the project.

9 There was some outstanding questions of the Fire
10 Department. However none of those were thought to be such as
11 to hold off. They will be approved, the Fire Department
12 recommendations, before we get the clearance from the State
13 which we're still waiting on this project.

14 I'd like to introduce Architect Les Dreischerf who
15 has appeared before us before usually regarding improvements
16 to St. Catherine's Hospital.

17 Les, if you would.

18 MR. DREISCHERF: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My name
19 is Les Dreischerf, Design Alliance Architects. Got an
20 architectural practice in Hammond. It will be 40 years old
21 next year.

22 MR. GOMEZ: Congratulations.

23 MR. DREISCHERF: Thanks. Happy to here today. I am
24 representing the owners for BP Gas Station, Chicago and
25 Kennedy avenue. They would like to make two improvements to
the station.

Existing building is 866 square feet. And they
need more space. Would like to do two additions. One is an
addition to the north and one is an addition to the south.

The north addition is a new cooler addition. And
what we're planning to do is having a prefabricated cooler
built. But the exterior of the cooler will be concrete block
and brick so it will match the existing building.

So we'll basically build that shell. And then
we'll build the cooler within the shell.

The south addition is a new office and storage room
for the building along with a new handicap bathroom.

ORIGINAL

1 The original building was built we believe in 1983
2 according to all the records. So it has a handicap bathroom.
3 But it's the old standard for handicap bathrooms. So what
4 they would like to do is go ahead and build a brand new one
5 that will be our current standards.

6 So that addition also will be concrete block and
7 brick exterior veneer. So again it will match the building.

8 What those two additions will allow them to do then
9 is remove the existing cooler on the interior of the building
10 and create more space on the interior for general convenience
11 store sales.

12 They will also relocate the cashier's area more
13 towards the south end of the building since we'll have
14 removed the existing cooler. So the cashiers will be placed
15 where the existing cooler is.

16 So they're going to do additional interior upgrades
17 to do finishes on the interior.

18 In addition to that they're going to place two
19 small windows, one on the east side and one on the west side
20 measuring roughly 3 foot 4 wide by 3 foot or so high.

21 What that will do is give them a good line of sight
22 from the cashier areas to the pumps which is very important
23 from a public safety standpoint. That way the cashiers can
24 control and see what's going on. And then in an emergency
25 they can shut the pumps off.

 But there will be no other improvements to the
exterior other than that.

 The intent is then once the additions are done that
they would remove the existing storage container that they
have on the west side of the property.

 So if you have any questions, I'd be happy to
answer them.

MR. GOMEZ: Are they still going to be open while
they're doing this?

MR. DRIESCHERF: The intent is to still be open. We do
need to relocate the gas meter, the electric meter which are
on the south side of the building. So we'll have to
coordinate and phase that with NIPSCO.

1 So there could be a short time for a service outage
2 which would cause them to close for that period of time.

3 MR. GOMEZ: Any another questions or comments from the
4 Commissioners?

5 MR. SLOSS: What's the total cost of the project?

6 MR. DREISCHERF: We believe it will be somewhere around
7 \$150,000.

8 We're currently sending the plans out for bid. So
9 we won't know until we get the project cost back in.

10 We have sent the plans downstate. So we've
11 received a State Filing Number. It's in Plan Review now. We
12 expect to have a Plan Release in the next two weeks or so.

13 MR. GOMEZ: What is the timeframe to complete this
14 project?

15 MR. DREISCHERF: We would like to go ahead and start as
16 soon as possible. We would like to try to get the
17 foundations in before winter sets in. So we would go
18 throughout the winter.

19 MR. GOMEZ: Mr. Morrisroe, you said Tech Review, there's
20 no issues with Tech Review?

21 MR. MORRISROE: The issues were addressed. For instance
22 I gave to Mr. Dreischerf some suggestions from the Water
23 Department just now. And he is also in touch with James
24 Portalatin about any other suggestions.

25 And as I say the Fire Department usually lags as
26 far as their formal approval. But in the past that
27 approval has been given before any permits are issued.

28 MR. GOMEZ: Any other questions or comments?

29 MS. WINFIELD: Yes, Mr. President. Mr. Morrisroe just
30 said what about the Fire Department? Is everything
31 up-to-date with the Fire Department?

32 MR. MORRISROE: Everything is up-to-date with the Fire
33 Department. Mr. Carpenter was on the conference call. He
34 had no objections at the time. He still had to see some of
35 the prints. And no permits will be issued until he has given
36 his final approval.

1 MS. WINFIELD: How long will that take for him to give
his final approval? Because once again --

2 MR. MORRISROE: If the permit were to be given tomorrow,
3 he would have it finished. As it is as you have heard from
Mr. Dreischerf the approval from downstate is expected in
4 about two weeks.

5 MS. WINFIELD: Okay. We keep running into this same
issue with the Fire Department. I don't know. Well, the
6 Chief is not here to answer the questions. But we keep
running into this same issue.

7 MR. GOMEZ: I know. I've spoken to him on it too,
8 Stacy. I believe it's because Damen is the only one who is
doing inspections at this time. I don't know if they can
9 resolve that. But I agree with you it seems like they're
always falling behind on the Fire side.

10 MS. WINFIELD: I think if we keep passing it on every
11 time and we never get an update to when the inspection has
happened. All we know is we're passing it. But we're not
12 getting update when the inspection actually happens or if it
did happen.

13 MR. GOMEZ: Mr. Morrisroe, can we have Damen send us his
14 reports? Is he sending in the reports to us?

15 MR. MORRISROE: He is not sending written reports. He
is giving approval to us and to the Building Department.

16 MR. GOMEZ: I think we're going to have to speak to him
17 and tell him every time we pass something we not only need
him to give us a verbal but we need something in writing to
18 follow.

19 MR. MORRISROE: We will ask him for that.

20 MR. GOMEZ: Okay. Are there any other questions or
comments?

21 Now we're asking for approval of the Construction
22 Plan?

23 MR. MORRISROE: That's correct. That's the plan that we
have before us.

24 MR. GOMEZ: I just wanted to make sure.
25

1 Comments/questions: None.

2 Motion to approve BP Station Additions, 819 East Chicago
3 Avenue made by William Allen. Second by Lilia Ramos.

4 Roll Call: "All in Favor": Val Gomez, Lilia Ramos, Douglass
5 Sloss, William Allen Abstain: Stacy Winfield
6 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

7 MR. MORRISROE: I would ask Miss Winfield if she would
8 reconsider. If she abstains, we do not have a quorum. And
9 this project will have to come back before the Plan
10 Commission.

11 MS. WINFIELD: Well, my problem is that we constantly or
12 constantly this is happening every project.

13 Mr. President, I know you have and the other
14 Members, I know you have constantly heard me question and say
15 something about this.

16 I am not understanding that every single project
17 there is an issue with the Fire Department. I understand
18 that Mr. Carpenter is the only person. But we don't get
19 updates of when it's approved or not.

20 I really don't want to vote on something. I didn't
21 want to vote no. But I don't want to vote on it because this
22 is constantly happening every single project that's going on.
23 And if we continue to do this, it's going to continue to
24 happen.

25 So I'm not understanding the timeframe that they
need. Why is it taking so long for this to happen when we
know these projects are happening in advance.

MR. GOMEZ: I understand. And I'm a little frustrated
too because Damen is aware of it.

He gives us a verbal. But I don't understand why
it takes so long to get the written one.

MS. WINFIELD: Even if it's a verbal if he would be at
this meeting to give us the verbal. Telling Mr. Portalatin
that he has given a verbal is not talking to the
Commissioners.

So that's my problem with trying to approve this.
I mean I don't know how many cases we've had, projects that

1 this has happened.

2 Can we table it? I don't know. Is it going take
3 too long to table it to the next meeting?

4 MR. MORRISROE: We would prefer not to table it. And
5 then he hopes to begin construction as soon as possible as
6 soon as he has received the approvals from the State.

7 We have a meeting in December. I'm sure at least
8 the first meeting. But I would ask if you want to condition
9 it upon receipt, that this will be effective upon receipt of
10 written approval from the Fire Department, I have no problem
11 with that. And I will make sure that those get to you.

12 I assume that I can have those by Wednesday. And
13 if not by Wednesday, for sure by Friday.

14 MS. RAMOS: Mr. President.

15 MR. GOMEZ: Yes.

16 MS. RAMOS: This is Lilia. Then we have to reconvene at
17 another meeting to finalize this?

18 MR. MORRISROE: No. Well, then if we don't have a
19 quorum, we could have a special meeting. However most likely
20 it would be simply passed over until the next meeting which
21 is in early December.

22 I would hope we would not have to have a special
23 meeting simply because I failed to get paper from the Fire
24 Department.

25 MR. SLOSS: If we go with that contingency, would the
motion have to be done over?

MR. MORRISROE: I believe that motion could be done over
and should be done over.

MR. GOMEZ: So, Stacy, if we make the new motion with
the new condition, would you be agreeable?

MR. MORRISROE: That it would not be effective until you
receive the written concurrence of the Fire Department.

MS. WINFIELD: Yes, I would. And we receive it in an
e-mail, yes, I would. I would agree.

1 MR. GOMEZ: Okay. I would like to make a motion we
2 approve the BP Station Additions at 819 East Chicago Avenue
3 with the conditions that we receive from the Fire Department
4 by Wednesday in an e-mail form from their Inspection
5 Department that they approve of the plan and that it is sent
6 to all the Commissioners.

7 Comments/questions: None.

8 Motion to approve BP Station Additions, 819 East Chicago
9 Avenue, with the Above-Stated Conditions made by William
10 Allen. Second by Douglass Sloss.

11 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
12 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

13 MR. GOMEZ: I think, Mr. Morrisroe, we're going to have
14 to, either you and I, have a meeting with the Fire Chief and
15 see why is there always this issue coming up at every
16 meeting.

17 MR. MORRISROE: And this is a fairly small project
18 without a whole lot of fire issues. However as a courtesy
19 and as part of our usual procedure we feel it very important
20 in this case because of the petroleum and the flammability of
21 that petroleum.

22 MR. GOMEZ: I understand this was a small one. But like
23 Stacy says it seems that every meeting we have the Fire
24 Department is always -- every other Department gets their
25 reports in except for Fire Department.

26 We have to have a meeting with Chief Serna and find
27 out why. I mean I can see once or twice. But every time we
28 have a project.

29 I agree with Stacy. It's a little too much with
30 every project they don't have something for us. I suggest
31 maybe you and I can talk to him and find out what's going on.

32 MR. MORRISROE: I concur.

33 MR. GOMEZ: Okay. We'll move. Next we have the Mayor
34 to fill Plan Commissioner and the Board of Zoning Appeals.

35 Do we have a recommendation yet, Mr. Morrisroe?

36 MR. MORRISROE: I was told that the Mayor seeks to fill
37 those himself rather than seek recommendations from us.

1 MR. GOMEZ: Okay. We have the 2021 Plan Commission
2 Schedule. We need to vote to approve the Schedule.

3 Comments/questions: None.

4 Motion to approve 2021 Plan Commission Schedule made by Lilia
5 Ramos. Second by Douglass Sloss.

6 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
7 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

8 MR. GOMEZ: Next, Mr. Morrisroe, this is just
9 informational, right?

10 MR. MORRISROE: It's informational. I don't believe
11 that we have -- we issued a permit. We do seek input from
12 the Plan Commission. That was the mural guidelines.

13 Felix, you have those.

14 MR. MALDONADO: Yeah.

15 MR. MORRISROE: So we have before us Felix Maldonado who
16 is an artist from East Chicago. He has been retained by
17 Oscar Juarez of what was the Quarterback Club at the corner
18 of 151st and Indianapolis Boulevard.

19 It is switching theme from football to basketball.
20 The new name, the license application is for O.J.'s Game
21 Over.

22 He has retained, the owner, Mr. Oscar Juarez, has
23 retained Mr. Maldonado to do a mural on the wall of what was
24 the Quarterback Club. And you've received that in your
25 packet.

The changes that are recommended have come after
discussion among Val Gomez, myself and Mr. Maldonado in that
this picture or the model which was based on to some extent
one of the greatest, possibly number 3, as far as sports
pictures and we didn't want it to become caught up in
copyright fights either against O.J., but also against the
City for allowing it.

So I would like to invite Mr. Maldonado. I have
the picture of your redraft. And just to give us a couple
minutes of your inspiration of the picture and then to be
open for questions.

1 MR. MALDONADO: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My name
2 is Felix Maldonado. I am an artist from East Chicago. I
3 have 30 years experience doing murals all over the country.
4 Most of my recent works were in Gary, the Botanical Gardens
5 here in East Chicago. And I am here to explain a little bit
6 about the mural here.

7 As stated by Mr. Morrisroe we had to go through a
8 couple changes here regarding the image that we are
9 attempting to use depicting a basket player which in this
10 particular would be Michael Jordan.

11 Now, I understand the concerns of the City as well
12 as the fact that we do not want to stir any trouble with
13 anybody with copyright infringements.

14 So I have made some adjustments to the composition
15 which I feel confident that we can get this accepted without
16 any backlash from the NBA.

17 If I may I can explain a couple details about this
18 image that I have done.

19 First and foremost the image itself was a full
20 color image where the crowd itself is in full color. What I
21 did is I transformed the background with the crowd into a
22 black and white composition. Also added to that I blurred
23 the image of the crowd so that the imagery in the background
24 is more suggestive and there would be no definite or detail
25 descriptions of anybody including the player itself.

I have also made the effort to eliminate any
trademarks, logos or any branding that may cause any sort of
conflict with this image including the name Jordan on the
back as well as the number 2, 3.

So I've made adjustments to make sure that the
numbers and the name will not be recognized.

On top of that I have eliminated a couple things.
I've eliminated the scoreboard. I've eliminated the
backboard. And I've eliminated again a couple logos that
were set on the backboard and the stand itself.

Aside from that I think that at this point the
image has been altered enough so that we can confidently move
on with this and hopefully get passed.

MR. GOMEZ: Any questions or comments? Commissioners,

1 any questions or comments on the mural?

2 MR. ALLEN: For the future is there any plan to do the
3 other half of the wall?

4 MR. MALDONADO: No. Only because of the fact, if you're
5 referring to what's left of that side of the wall, only
6 because there are way too many obstructions that would not
7 invite a nice mural to be put there.

8 MR. GOMEZ: Mr. Morrisroe, is there any type of a motion
9 we have to make on this?

10 MR. MORRISROE: I would ask if you would think to
11 approve it or just simply accept it. I think the adjustments
12 that have been made, I would recommend that we go forward,
13 that Mr. Maldonado be authorized to go forward and to try to
14 get most of it done before the bad weather sets in.

15 MR. GOMEZ: You intend to do it this year?

16 MR. MALDONADO: Yeah. I was able to do the Jackson Rail
17 which was 120 feet by 120 feet in about 14 days. So give me
18 5 to 7 days and I can do.

19 MR. GOMEZ: I mean with the weather?

20 MR. MALDONADO: Weather permitting, yes.

21 Comments/questions: None.

22 Motion to approve 719 West 151st Street Mural made by Lilia
23 Ramos. Second by Stacy Winfield.

24 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
25 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

MR. GOMEZ: Thank you.

MR. MALDONADO: Thank you.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

1 * Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, December 7,
2020 @ 4:30 p.m.

3 Motion to adjourn was made by William Allen. Second by
4 Douglass Sloss.

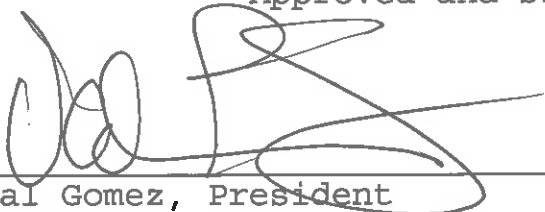
5 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

6 * Meeting ended at 5:12 p.m.

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Approval of Meeting Minutes of
Monday, November 16, 2020

Approved and Signed



Val Gomez, President



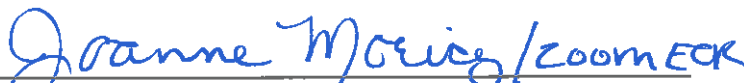
Anthony Serna, Vice President

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Lilia Ramos, Secretary

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Monique Kurmis, Commissioner

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Joanne Moricz, Commissioner

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Stacy Winfield, Commissioner

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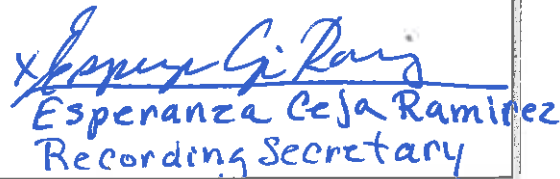
Douglass Sloss, Commissioner



William Allen, Commissioner

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Lydia Lopez, Commissioner

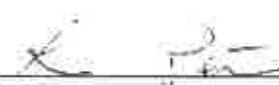

Esperanza Cesa Ramirez
Recording Secretary

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lisa Pena, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Portage, Indiana, this 3rd day of December, 2020.



Lisa Pena
Notary Public Porter County
Certified Shorthand Reporter
License Number 084-003483



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