

**PLAN COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION NOTES
April 17, 2017**

I. Call To Order

The Plan Commission Study Session was called to order by President Thomas Anderson at 6:15 P.M. at the Schererville Town Hall, 10 E. Joliet St., Schererville, IN.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

President Anderson stated that the Pledge of Allegiance was already recited at the Plan Commission Meeting held prior, and would stand for this meeting.

B. Roll Call

President Anderson stated that the Roll Call had been taken at the Plan Commission Meeting held prior and would remain the same.

II. Commission Business

A. K & C Development

General Location: 7771 U.S. 41

Petitioner(s): K & C Property Holdings, LLC

Request: 7-Lot (C-3) Highway Commercial Subdivision

Mr. Gary Torrenga from Torrenga Engineering represented the Petitioners. Mr. Torrenga stated that he was here tonight along with Mr. Ken Drenth and his son from K & C Property Holdings.

Mr. Torrenga stated that the property is south of 77th Ave. near Drenth's Highway Garage and the storage building behind it. Mr. Torrenga explained that a couple of months ago, they had the property to the south re-zoned as C-3, so that now it is all C-3.

Mr. Torrenga said they are here tonight to see how the Board feels about their plan. Mr. Torrenga stated that Mr. Drenth would like to have 300' lots along U.S. 41 that would be 170' wide with some type of business in the future. Mr. Drenth wants to put in storage buildings and a 14,000 S.F. warehouse at the end of the cul-de-sac that he would build off of U.S. 41. Mr. Torrenga stated that the additional Lot 6 would be for the same purposes.

Mr. Torrenga stated that there is a low spot in the ground that will be used as an outlot detention area. Mr. Torrenga said they would have to re-arrange the fenced area for security purposes; build a street; put in sewer and water taps behind the lots; build a warehouse and put in the storage buildings. President Anderson asked if this would run right up to the railroad tracks to the east. Mr. Torrenga said yes; and that this is the railroad right-of-way; and is 106 ½' from the railroad tracks to the property line. Mr. Torrenga added that their buildings would be ten feet from the property line.

President Anderson asked if there would be a cross-access agreement. Mr. Torrenga stated there would be open access and pointed out the area on the map. Mr. Torrenga said there would be a gape at this point between storage areas one and two; but there would not be cross-access from the north through Lot 4. President Anderson asked about the south end of the property; and said there was a floating access somewhere. President Anderson said he liked the use of the property.

Mr. Jarvis said that when we have had developments in front of us before, they were always trying to get out on 77th Ave. at the back side of the property; and asked if this was something they were going to do. Mr. Torrenga said no; and that they already have two accesses. Mr. Jarvis asked if the 14,000 S.F. warehouse would be temperature-controlled. Mr. Drenth said that it would be; and that it would be for his Mi-Box loaded containers. Mr. Jarvis asked if it would be sprinkled which was confirmed by Mr. Drenth. Mr. Drenth added that as far as access to 77th Ave., he has made attempts to obtaining the property back there, but there is no entertaining that idea at all.

Mr. Jarvis asked Mr. Drenth if he had intentions of using buffering or landscaping around the storage units. Mr. Drenth said they could put landscaping in. Mr. Jarvis said if they are going to develop the front lots, they would want to hide that area. Mr. Drenth said that with the first building they do not plan on putting any doors on the west end, and that they could put landscaping there. Mr. Jarvis said it would work to their advantage.

Mr. Jarvis asked if the cul-de-sac would be large enough for plowing. Mr. Torrenga replied that it would be a sixty feet diameter with one-hundred feet of pavement. Mr. Jarvis asked if Mr. Drenth would be using down-lighting. Mr. Drenth said definitely and that it would most likely be LED lighting. Mr. Drenth added that he had just replaced all of his lighting on his other buildings with LED.

Mr. Jarvis stated that this was a great choice as far as concept, especially leaving the front lots open for retail. Mr. Jarvis stated he felt this would really take off.

President Anderson asked if there were any other questions from the Board or Staff. Ms. Sulek stated that a Variance of Use would be required for the storage facility; and that there is a Sewer Reimbursable Agreement for that area.

President Anderson asked about the time frame. Mr. Drenth replied that his goal was to get the warehouse up before winter; and two or three of the storage buildings initially, adding more as needed.

Mr. Jarvis asked if Mr. Drenth considered installing ex-cell/ decel lanes in the front; and added that with the storage buildings, there would be a lot of people pulling in and out. Mr. Drenth replied that currently there is somewhat of a decel lane right now; but that there really isn't a lot of traffic with the storage business. Mr. Drenth said they currently have two-hundred-thirty eight storage units and not a ton of traffic. Mr. Jarvis said that the thing to remember is that they will have people pulling in and out that aren't used to driving trucks. President Anderson said also to keep in mind the possibility of retail in the front. Mr. Drenth agreed; and asked if anyone knew if the center turn lane was coming to U.S. 41. Mr. Drenth said he knew the survey had been done within the last year or two. President Anderson said he did not know what the time frame was for the center lane. Mr. Jarvis suggested checking if the Fourth District had the plans or drawings. President Anderson said they just resurfaced last year. Mr. Drenth said he received a letter two years ago, and they came out and did the survey from 77th Ave. all the way to the high school. Mr. Jarvis stated that the plans should be public record.

President Anderson asked when they were thinking of coming back for the Public Hearing. Mr. Drenth said the first of June. Ms. Sulek said she will try to get them on the May agenda for the Board of Zoning for the Variance of Use. Mr. Torrenga asked if there would be a Public Hearing and Study Session the third week of May. Ms. Sulek replied possibly. Mr. Torrenga said that is where they would like to go. President Anderson stated that they would require the Variance first which wouldn't be until the fourth week in May. Mr. Torrenga replied that they could come in the first week of June for the Public Hearing. Ms. Sulek stated that the Town Council would not act on the B.Z.A. findings until June 7; and that we were putting it beforehand but did not see this as being an issue, any approval would be contingent upon the Town Council's action.

Mr. Torrenga said what they would like to do if they are able, is build the infrastructure and road in June. Mr. Torrenga said that what they are looking at then is the first week of June for the Public Hearing and a few days later according to Ms. Sulek; we would get the approval from the Town Council on the Variance. President Anderson advised Mr. Torrenga to make sure they get their engineering to Robinson. Mr. Torrenga said he would. Mr. Jarvis suggested that when the Plan Commission meets in June, we could do the action or vote pursuant to the Town Council's approval of the Variance of Use. Mr. Torrenga said by the time Mr. Drenth gets the infrastructure in, they could have the final plat hearing next month and get their building permits. President Anderson said there would be thirty days between the Primary Approval and the Final.

President Anderson summarized that they like the project if they build a floating easement on the south side; and take Mr. Jarvis' suggestions on lighting and the ex-cell decel lanes, they should be good to go. President Anderson added that Mr. Drenth has been a good neighbor so far; and has no reason to believe it would not continue. Mr. Torrenga thanked the Board.

B. Community Revitalization Project – Beall’s Hospital Addition

Petitioner(s): Mark Beall, Jr. – Student at Indiana University Northwest

Request: Plan Commission’s views on a Hospital/Trauma Center in Schererville

The Petitioner Mark Beall, Jr. stated he was about to graduate from Indiana University with a degree in social work; and was doing a Community Revitalization Project on the need for a hospital in Schererville.

Mr. Beall provided a three page hand-out for the Board members and Staff supporting his Petition. Mr. Beall stated that Schererville has been a booming town for all of his thirty-three years as a resident; and that Schererville property values have increased every year at .21 %. Mr. Beall stated that Schererville has the need for a hospital. Mr. Beall said that twenty-two years ago he had an accident in Schererville and had to be driven all the way to Dyer Hospital where they were unable to treat his wounds. Mr. Beall said he was then airlifted to Olympia Fields Hospital, and nearly bled to death in the process.

Mr. Beall further stated that with the “Crossroads of America” at U.S. 30 and U.S. 41, it would be a great benefit to have a hospital with a trauma center, maternity ward, and doctors’ offices. Mr. Beall added that if the hospital were owned by the Town of Schererville, it would be a new revenue stream; and would also benefit the residents.

Mr. Beall stated that he came up with four proposed locations:

1. East of Peoples Bank on U.S. 30

Mr. Beall said that although this is a small area, the building would suffice if it had three or four floors.

2. The former site of the Illiana Speedway on U.S. 30
3. The Luer’s Farm South of 91st and Burr St.
4. Behind Pete’s R.V.’s, East of the railroad tracks

Mr. Beall said that this location would probably be the best; as there have been talks about putting Kennedy through to U.S. 30 and the proximity to U.S. 41 and U.S. 30.

Mr. Beall concluded stating that he hoped his presentation planted a seed with the Developers and Land Planners for the future prospect of a hospital in the Town; and welcomed feedback from the Board.

President Anderson replied that currently we have St. Margaret Mercy in Dyer which is right on the state line on Route 30 in Dyer; and that Schererville paramedics also use Munster Community and St. Anthony’s. Mr. Beall said that he spoke to the Planning Coordinator/Office Manager Denise Sulek, who told him in the twenty-seven years she has been here, that she has never had anyone propose a hospital in Schererville. Mr. Beall added that he is aware of the hospitals in the surrounding towns; but with his trauma incident and all of the accidents that could happen at U.S. 30 and U.S. 41, a hospital in the town would be a great benefit. Mr. Beall further stated that most hospitals are owned by religious organizations; and felt that if we had a hospital owned and run by the town, it would offer a new revenue stream for Schererville which would be a very positive thing. Mr. Beall envisioned doctors’ offices on the ground floor; a maternity ward for people wanting their children to be born in Schererville; and most importantly, a trauma center.

President Anderson stated that trauma centers are very expensive to operate. President Anderson believed that Broadway Methodist in Gary is now a Level 3; with Level 1 being the best; and said that Christ Hospital in Olympia Fields is the nearest Level 1. Mr. Beall said that it does take a lot of money to operate a trauma center; but that perhaps a very good emergency room that was equipped to handle emergencies where time is of the essence. Mr. Beall said Schererville has almost 30,000 residents now that could greatly benefit from such a unit. Mr. Beall stated that he moved to Schererville in 1985 as a ten year old kid and that he is very proud of his community and this Commission. Mr. Beall said he just wanted to plant the seed for someone else with actual plans and money to

come in; and that the Commission would be open-minded to working with them for a hospital in Schererville.

President Anderson stated that he would not have an issue with having a hospital in Schererville; and that Community Hospital was at the Plan Commission held this evening and was granted their Secondary Approval for a Neuroscience & Sports Medicine Facility. President Anderson said that a hospital would be a little too big for the Town of Schererville to take on itself; but that Schererville would definitely entertain a proposal from one of the other hospitals if they were interested. President Anderson started that the Illiana Speedway site was going to be a park and that Luer's Farm was in the planning stages of being developed as a residential area. President Anderson said that there is land east of the Peoples Bank. Ms. Sulek said that would have to be re-zoned first. President Anderson said Kennedy Ave. is set to go through and meet the light at U.S. 30.

President Anderson reiterated that he has nothing against this proposal, but that it would be something too large for the Town to take on itself. President Anderson added that if a company wanted to come here and build a hospital, he felt the Town and the Plan Commission would be receptive. President Anderson further stated that we are the largest town in this tri-town area; and that traffic does get congested, and that an ambulance from Cline Ave. going to Dyer can take a while. President Anderson said that if someone were interested in doing this, he feels they would not have much opposition from the town; but felt the hospitals would think it would be too close to the other hospitals. President Anderson added that they have generally been doing the smaller surgical sites and specialty sites such as the Neuroscience & Sports Medicine, and orthopedic sites; but that he hasn't seen any emergency room requests. President Anderson reiterated that he would have no opposition to it. Mr. Beall thanked the Board for their time.

III. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 P.M.