PLAN COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION NOTES
MAY 19, 2025

I. Call To Order

The Plan Commission Study Session was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by President Tom Anderson at the Schererville Town Hall, 10 E. Joliet St.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. Roll Call was taken with the following members present: President Tom Anderson, Secretary Gary Immig, Mr. Myles Long, Mr. Robert Kocon, and Mr. Tom Kouros. Staff present: Director of Operations Andrew Hansen and Recording Secretary Megan Schiltz. Absent were: Vice-President William Jarvis, Mr. Chris Rak, Town Manager James Gorman, and Planning & Building Administrator Denise Sulek. In the audience was Councilman Tom Schmitt.

II. Commission Business

A. **Shoppes of Schererville, Lot 2 (Proposed: Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers)**

General Location: 703 U.S. 41 – Shoppes of Schererville, Lot 2

Petitioner(s): Raising Cane's Restaurants, LLC & Premier Design Group

Represented by: Premier Design Group, Debbie Stosz/Raising Cane's, Felicia Bevins

Request: U.S. 41 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Plan Review

Mrs. Debbie Stosz from Premier Design Group represented the petitioners. Mrs. Stosz stated that they will be demolishing the existing TGI Friday's building and would redo the majority of the parking lot to build a new 3,300 to 3,400 sq. ft. building with fifty parking spaces, forty-six spaces are what is required based on having fifteen employees; 46 indoor seats, and 15 outdoor patio seats. Mrs. Stosz said that there will be a double drive-thru where the outer lane would open up during peak times and that there would be crew members outside with tablets taking orders. Mr. Anderson stated that it looked like there would be 26 stacking cars. Mrs. Stosz replied that Cane's prides themselves on being one of the quickest in the business, once an order is placed it could typically be picked up in under three minutes because unlike the competitors, they only serve chicken fingers, coleslaw, french fries, and texas toast. Mrs. Stosz went on to say that there is a camera so once someone pulls in the place, the chicken goes in the fryer and starts the process so that people are not left waiting a long time. Mr. Immig asked if Raising Cane's was corporate owned store or an individual owned franchise. Mrs. Stosz replied that most are corporate owned. Mr. Immig then asked where the outdoor seating area was located. Mr. Stosz pointed to the area and replied that there were four patio tables with fencing. Mr. Anderson asked if there would be a raised curb there. Mrs. Stosz responded that there is a six foot curb as well as protective metal fencing. Mr. Immig asked Mr. Hansen if bollards were required. Mr. Hansen replied that was correct, there must be bollards placed there as well and that there should be a spec in the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Immig asked what the stacking looked like at some of the other busier locations. Mrs. Stosz replied that it would depend on the size of the property but some of the other locations have fifteen to thirty queued. Mrs. Stosz added that during the "honeymoon period" when they first open they hire some off duty police officers to help, and they have everything set up so there would not be a traffic jam. Mr. Anderson asked if there was going to be a monument sign at the northwest corner. Mrs. Stosz stated that they are proposing a 20 ft. tall pylon sign at the northwest corner. Mr. Hansen wanted to make the board aware that the sign is 12 by 20 which was larger than what is allowed by ordinance. Mrs. Stosz asked what the maximum allowed would be. Mr. Hansen replied that he would need to double check but believed 8 ft. tall with the base. Mr. Kouros asked what the hours of operation would be. Mrs. Stosz replied that the hours of operation varied depending on what is allowed within the municipality; the typical hours are Sunday – Thursday 9:30 A.M. to 1:30 A.M., Friday and Saturday 9:30 A.M. to 3:30 A.M.

Mrs. Stosz stated that Raising Cane's usually does a hand painted mural which is something really desired to have if allowed going back to the first restaurant. Mr. Kouros asked how many locations there are. Mrs. Stosz stated that she believed there to be well over 400 stores nationwide. Mr. Anderson asked if they had numbers on the square footage of a sign. Mr. Hansen replied that he believed it to be 6 by 8 for the monument sign. Mr. Anderson responded that he meant for all the signs on the building as well; but that the monument sign would definitely need to be adjusted. Mr. Hansen pulled up the existing TGI Friday's sign and stated that it looked to be about 6 or 8 ft. high and that the maximum allowance had just recently been changed. Mr. Anderson agreed and said that signs require a 2 ft. base and with a sign being 6 ft. high itself that would be at 8 ft. without the pole. Mr. Hansen added that it is what the majority of what everyone seemed to be doing. Mr. Long stated that he believed that 20 ft. was far too big of a sign. Mrs. Stosz asked if the preference would be for them to have a monument sign with an 8 ft. tall max with 2 ft. base. Mr. Hansen said that was correct and that he could give her the page number in the ordinance book after the meeting. Mr. Anderson stated that he loved the building and the concept and to just dial back the sign to a monument. Mr. Immig asked what the red dog banner and one love channel letters were. Mr. Jeff Pountney from ADA Architects replied that the red dog is the symbol for the project, and the one love could be either a banner or could be adhered to a substrate depending on the ordinance; typically it would be on a metal panel on the substrate attached to the building on brackets to set it off the wall. Mr. Pountney then added that the one love would be on a canopy. Mr. Immig asked if they would fall part of the sign square footage. Mr. Anderson stated that on the building there are signs on each side but there is frontage on each side. Mr. Hansen said that they are basically on their own corner lot being a stand-alone building. Mr. Hansen added that he could give them the Zoning Ordinance to meet the specifications. Mr. Anderson went on to say that he did not believe that the building signage is out of line, just the monument sign. Mr. Anderson then asked if the painted murals on the building would count as signage. Mr. Hansen replied they would not. Mr. Immig asked if they would be putting any trees back in once taking them out. Mrs. Stosz replied that they would be tearing down the entire building, taking out some of the parking, and removing some of the trees. Mrs. Stosz went on to say that they would be leaving the trees along the north property line as well as a couple on the south; and that they would add new trees along U.S. 41, around the building, and along the east side access drive. Mr. Anderson stated that the only concerns are with the monument sign and having bollards by the outside dining area. Mr. Anderson asked if there were any questions or comments from staff or board. There were none.

B. **Caleb's Addition**

General Location: 113 W. Joliet St. – Caleb's Addition, Lot 1

Petitioner(s): RJ Construction, Isaac Johnson

Request: Joliet Street Overlay District Development Plan Review

Councilman Caleb Johnson along with Mr. Isaac Johnson from RJ Construction stated that there was currently a 660 sq. ft. residential rental unit above his existing law office at 113 W. Joliet St. Attorney Johnson showed an AI rendition of a 500 sq. ft. second story addition, adding that he would like to convert the entire 1,060 sq. ft. building into office space. Attorney Johnson went on to say that because he would then have a couple extra offices on the first level and that there would still be an exterior access to his office on the second. Attorney Johnson added that he would like to rent out the other offices to someone who would just need a single office and would then make it a lockable shareable space. Attorney Johnson said that they would add 500 sq. ft. to the east side of the building and would be redoing the façade; the lower level would keep the existing vinyl siding for now, and the upper level would get all new LP siding and trim around the windows. Attorney Johnson then added that the color contrast showed would remain the same; and that once he could afford it, will update the lower siding and trim to LP for a cleaner professional look. Attorney Johnson said that on the east side of the building with a 4 ft. cantilever, there will be a 24 sq. ft. sign that says Caleb S. Johnson Law as well as on the north side facing Anna St. Mr. Anderson asked if the signage would be lit. Attorney Johnson replied that there would be some illumination such as a little light that would shine down on the sign to see at night but would not be shining on the street. Attorney Johnson went on to say that he would also add a small roof awning over the back door with a main entrance sign to direct people where to go. Attorney Johnson informed the board that he had recently added five additional parking spaces with some landscaping around them with parking blocks that would give twelve parking spaces in total. Attorney Johnson said that should be sufficient parking to host meetings being that there are five or six spaces on Joliet and a few more on Anna St. Attorney Johnson then stated that if he had a tenant that wished

to advertise he would make the monument posts slightly talker and add a 12 in x 4 ft. sign below his. Mr. Anderson asked if there would be signage for the other tenants on the building as well. Attorney Johnson replied that it would only be his on the building. Mr. Anderson asked if there were any questions or comments from the board or staff. There were none.

III. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 P.M.