
SYCAMORE PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2009

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairperson John Lewis called the meeting to order and City Clerk Candy Smith called the roll. Those Commissioners present were: Marvin Barnes, Ron Bemis, George Bridgewater, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Bill Lorence, and Chuck Stowe. Commissioner Cindy Henderson, Steve Nelson, and Michelle Schulz were absent. Other staff members present were City Manager Bill Nicklas, Municipal Engineering Corporation Engineer John Brady, and Plan Commission Attorney Kevin Buick.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2009.

Motion

Commissioner George moved to approve the Minutes of February 9, 2009 and Commissioner Bridgewater seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 9 - 0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Evans seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 9 - 0.

OLD BUSINESS - NONE

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of a Petition from the City of Sycamore to Annex Property Owned by Jerome Johnson at 401 N. Main Street and to Rezone the Property to "C-3," Highway Business District.

City Manager Nicklas said this matter was continued from the February 9 meeting and the parties met on March 3 to review drafts of zoning and annexation plats and agreed that a portion of a right-of-way might be vacated to allow a portion of that slice to offer more usable land in the M-1 zoned area.

Duane Slayton, attorney for Mr. Johnson, said he and his client are in favor of a continuance.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to continue this item until the next meeting and Commissioner Davey seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 9 - 0.

B. Consideration of a Petition from Rick and Gloria Kramer to Revise Table 5.3.1 of the Unified Development Ordinance to Allow Tattoo Parlors by Special Use Within the "C-2" Central Business District and "C-3" Highway Business Districts in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

City Manager Nicklas explained that the Kramer's have petitioned to revise the UDO table so tattoo parlors could be a special use in the C-2 Central Business District and the staff has added C-3 Highway Business District as another option to consider. He said that clearly in this area there is an evolving standard of what three or four decades ago would have carried a stigma, but today there are many more people who would find this welcome. He said the testimonials he has heard over the past couple of weeks as outstanding neighbors and business people. He said the issue is not about the Kramer's, but where the City should allow tattoo parlors. He said the proposition is can tattoo parlors be allowed by Special Use Permit in the downtown business district. He said that is an area that is bounded by Locust, Exchange, Sacramento, and High Streets and is the area that gives Sycamore its identity. He said the C-3 Highway Business Districts are harder to define geographically because they are spread all over town and they total more than a square mile of turf if they were all pulled together into one area. He said that if Plan Commission gives direction tonight, this would go to council and if a Special Use Permit is the vehicle by which such a use can be introduced into a particular zoning district, it would require another set of hearings. He recommended a Special Permit Use be required for this type of use.

Chairperson Lewis asked if this would go under personal and business services or retail.

Mr. Nicklas said it would be a retail use so it would go under H.

Rick "Spider" Kramer, 337 Charles St., said he and his wife have owned a business called Spider Tattoos for 23 years and they moved to Sycamore six years ago because they love the downtown atmosphere. He said they want to combine their Native American art gallery and their tattoo artwork under the same roof. He said they are not looking for a storefront, but are looking at an upstairs space and do business by appointment only. He said they are currently booking 4 to 8 weeks in advance and they would like a chance to work in the same City they live in. He said he understands about the look of the downtown area and that is why they are not interested in a storefront. He said the rent outside of the downtown district area is triple that of what they are looking at now. He said they will work with the City in any way possible to get this done. He said they worked with Oak Park to write the rules for tattoo studios and maybe Sycamore would like to put some restrictions for the number of studios.

Commissioner Davey asked what building they were considering.

Mr. Kramer said they were looking upstairs above the laundry mat that is located across from the Library.

Bob Corrigan, 219 Alfred Dr., said he and his wife have known Rick and Gloria Kramer for several years and they are great people. He said he thought the City would do well to have them incorporated into the business environment. He said he could not imagine why, if they are a legitimate and good enough business, they would be restricted to a certain district. He said that tattoos are now part of the culture and we would benefit by having an outstanding artist performing that business in our community rather than having our children go to a less than respectful and sanitary environment.

Michael Gillespie, 973 Arvle Cir., said Mr. Kramer is an outstanding artist and he is an asset to this community.

Bear Wolf, 1221 Sycamore Rd., DeKalb, said he has known Spider and Gloria for 20 years and he has no doubt that they will want to keep the downtown as it is. He said Spider has people coming to him from California to Canada to get tattoos. He said that his clientele ranges from professors to police officers to firefighters. He said he thought the tattoo parlor/art gallery would bring a lot of money to the community as well as the cultural value of his work.

Mr. Nicklas explained that the issue before Plan Commission tonight was not to judge the character of Mr. Kramer, but to judge the use alone.

Commissioner Barnes said because the Special Use Permit would open the door for other such establishments, he suggested the Special Use Permit be for one owner with a sunset law.

Mr. Nicklas said you cannot condition the zoning. He said maybe the area of concern is not the use or the location, but the issue may be a need for criteria required for a tattoo parlor.

Mr. Kramer said there were a lot of black eyes in his business because of the guy who works in his house and tattoos minors and does not pay his taxes. He said he is tied by OSHA guidelines and the State of Illinois is trying to license tattoo studios, but are having trouble getting their heads together to come up with a good plan. He said because there are so few studios they were looking at a tattoo license of over \$10,000, but they have lobbyists downstate to oppose those kind of rulings. He said the new certifications coming out are guidelines for record keeping, sanitation, and sterilization and the studio and each working station have a fee. He said he would be willing for work together with staff to come up with some kind of protocol to follow to keep the standards high. He said if this type of business is not allowed it will force some of these people underground again to do tattoos in their basements.

Mr. Nicklas said if Mr. Kramer had some guidelines he might want to meet with staff to go over those things that would legitimize what he does before going to a vote on this tonight. He said they could develop some reasonable criteria to elevate the best and discourage the worst.

Mr. Kramer agreed to work with Mr. Nicklas to come up with some standards.

Chairperson Lewis said he thought even if they established criteria, there would still be an issue of location in town that they should be thinking about.

Aldersperson Stowe said he thought it would be a good idea to have guidelines for the Special Use.

Duane George, 15528 Bethany Rd., said even if they give Mr. Kramer a license, anybody who wants to open this type of business would have to come before the City. He said the City has the right to shut businesses down.

Mr. Nicklas said the question is how to have some basis defining why to allow or not allow this type of business.

Chairperson Lewis said there was the issue of the zoning and Special Use and the criteria.

Mr. Nicklas said that usually our Special Use Permits do not have criteria, but each has to state their case because there is an underlying permission to have that use in a certain zone. He said we do not have either of those yet.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to continue this item until the next meeting and Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 9 - 0.

C. Consideration of an Amendment to Article 6.12.1H of the Unified Development Ordinance to Provide for Construction Site and Post Construction Site Runoff Control Measures for Construction Sites Greater Than One Acre in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

City Manager Nicklas said this amendment is required to update the UDO language so it is in line with the NPDES permit language and consistent with our Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to forward a favorable recommendation to Council to amend Article 6.12.1H of the UDO and Commissioner Bemis seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners Marvin Barnes, Ron Bemis, George Bridgewater, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Bill Lorence, Chuck Stowe, and Chairperson Lewis voted aye. Motion carried 9 – 0.

WORKSHOP ITEMS

REPORTS

PERSONS TO BE HEARD FROM THE FLOOR ON OTHER THAN AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. and Commissioner Bridgewater seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 9 - 0.

Approve:

Chairperson – John Lewis

Attest:

Candy Smith, City Clerk