

# CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS



## Planning and Zoning Committee Meeting Minutes May 24, 2022

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McGovern called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. on May 24, 2022. In attendance were: Chairman McGovern, Alderman Clifford, and Alderman Key. Also present were Community Development Coordinator Ken Busse, and Recording Secretary Tayler Swiedals.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman McGovern called for approval of minutes of the February 22, 2022 Planning & Zoning meeting, seconded by Alderman Clifford. All in favor and motion carried.

### NEW BUSINESS

**DOCKET 2022-03:** a petition filed by the City of Palos Heights to allow a zoning change from R-1 Residential to B Business for purposes of constructing and operating a Special Use Municipal Parking Lot at 12303 s 71<sup>st</sup> Ct. (PIN: 24-30-301-001).

### Discussion

Ken Busse presented to the committee and audience members the attached power point presentation, which outlines historic conditions of the Olde Palos Commercial District, parking challenges throughout its history, historical city plans to address parking, and the current city proposal for off-street parking to implement long-standing plans to address commercial parking matters. Main points included in the presentation are outlined below.

#### Historical Conditions

- Platted in 1935 when Harlem Avenue was a two-land farm road
- 1935-1975: Plenty of front-loaded customer parking, separating customer parking from service, delivery and employee parking along the rear sides of buildings
- 1975: Harlem widening relocated front-loaded customer parking to rear of buildings, creating circulation and parking conflicts between customer vehicles and service, deliver and employee vehicles.
- Owners burdened with costly reconfigurations of rear buildings and lots to accommodate add surface parking and second entranceways to buildings where storage, deliveries and refuse was once the function of rear sides of buildings
- Inability of multiple property owners to deploy consistent, well-lighted and interconnected sidewalks along inconsistent rear building lines, and intermingled with trash enclosures.
- Geographic and structural changes in retail sector, combined with diminished parking led to the loss of mid-size anchors, causing Olde Palos businesses and property owners to shift their attention to local niche markets.

#### Historical City Plans: 1968 to Present

- 1968 Parking Plan: encourages unified off-street parking and sidewalk connections
- 2003 Yas/Fischel Plan: encourages (i) narrowing Harlem Ave, (ii) reducing speed along Harlem, (ii) increasing commercial building footprints and height, (iii) adding

on-street parking along Harlem, as well as expanding off-street parking along 71<sup>st</sup> and 72<sup>nd</sup> Courts from College Drive to 127<sup>th</sup> Street.

- 2008 Comprehensive Plan: encourages residential properties between 71<sup>st</sup> and 72<sup>nd</sup> Courts to be repurposed with commercial uses, extending from College Drive to 127<sup>th</sup> Street. Reiterates goals and objectives contained in the Yas/Fischel Plan for improving parking and circulation.
- 2015 Harlem Overlay District: Expands the geographic reach and influence of commercial uses into residential areas, including increased commercial density and building height, and extends the possibility of commercial uses east of 71<sup>st</sup> Court, and west of 72<sup>nd</sup> Court.
- 2019 Comprehensive Plan Update: Interviews of residents and Steering Committee members concluded many residents, customers and local business owners are concerned over a lack of parking and well-lighted and interconnected sidewalks throughout Olde Palos. The 2019 Comp Plan update encourages the City to acquire centrally located properties for the provision of off-street parking that are connected to Olde Palos with well-lighted and interconnected sidewalks.

### **Implementation of Off-Street Parking and Circulation Plans**

- 2009: The City acquired a 13,382-SF parcel at 12219 S Harlem to construct a 33-space off-street parking lot, as well as to host special city events (e.g., farmer's market, car shows, kris kringle market, concerts, etc.)
- 2017: The City acquired a second 13,382-SF parcel at 12221 S Harlem, and adjacent to 12219 S Harlem to construct an additional 36 off-street parking spaces, as well as to expand the area for which the city may host special events.
- 2022: The City acquired 12303 S 71<sup>st</sup> Court to construct 30 centrally located off-street parking spaces for customers of the Olde Palos Shopping & Dining District. This municipally owned and operated surface parking improvement was the subject of the Planning & Zoning Commission Hearing conducted on March 14, 2022, and is the subject of the current Planning & Zoning Committee meeting.
- 2022/2023: The City plans to acquire 12259 S 71<sup>st</sup> Court to construct a second centrally located 30-space off-street parking lot for customers of the Olde Palos Shopping & Dining District. The two lots will mirror one another with ingress and egress along 123<sup>rd</sup> Street. Their near proximity to Harlem Ave will allow way-finding directional signage to quickly intercept customer vehicles, thereby minimizing the spillover effects of customer vehicles into adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Off-Street Parking Improvements: Landscaping and attractive fencing will visually and audibly screen parking from adjacent residences and neighboring areas. The city will maintain the landscaping to enhance the appearance of the area and vicinity. Well-lighted and interconnected sidewalks and striped street crossings will improve the safety and circulation of customer and pedestrian movements. State of the art cut-off lighting will minimize, if not eliminate the spillover effect of lighting onto adjacent properties. On-site storm water collection improvements will improve storm water management for neighboring residences, as well as the adjacent streets.

### **Public Comment**

Dr. Dan Nicholson, residing at 12313 S 71st Ct., expressed concerns that the property rights of the residents are not being considered in this matter. He expressed concerns for the proximity to three schools in the area, and the dangers the parking lot will pose to students. He adds that there are 2 vacant lots that should be considered as an alternative solution to this parking lot location.

Brad Lorch, residing at 12312 S 71st Ct., feels the parking lot does not benefit Palos Heights' residents, and feels it is a misuse of resident and business tax dollars. He also considers the berm along 71st Court is unkempt, and he fears the parking lot will be unkempt.

Don Borschel, owner of The Haven Indoor Golf at 12317 S Harlem Avenue, expressed that parking has been an issue for his business. There are 12 designated parking spots for his business. Mr. Borschel had portable signs made stating "No Restaurant Parking" and is still dealing with customers from other businesses parking in these spots. He recognizes the concerns of adjacent residents against the parking improvements. However, he believes the improvements will address many of the problems residents and area businesses have been complaining about.

Joan DeVito, residing at 12232 S 71st Ave., expressed her opposition to the proposed off-street parking. She feels that a parking lot will bring adverse negative affects to residents in the surrounding areas, including more noise, traffic and garbage. She explained that businesses continue to open without an adequate amount of parking spaces required by City ordinances. She expressed that without proper signage, vehicles using the parking lot will go through the neighborhood. Mrs. DeVito stated a real estate appraiser informed her that the parking lot can decrease her property value between 10-15%, and potentially increase the number of days her property is on the market. She asks that the committee consider the concerns of the residents expressed tonight, and at the Planning & Zoning Commission hearing March 14th before moving forward with the proposed change.

Mike DeVito, also residing at 12232 S 71st Avenue, expressed that his biggest concern is for the safety of residents in the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. DeVito read from the bi-laws of Palos Heights stating that improvement is only good or possible if no damage or harm is caused to residential areas. He expresses that this parking lot is in direct opposition to this bi-law.

Mike Coogan, owner of Franklin's Public House and residing at 123 Augusta Ln., expressed his support for the parking lot stating it will help the evolution of the downtown area. He recognizes concerns expressed by residents residing near the proposed improvements. He stated, however, that this is a rare opportunity for the City to improve the business district.

Chris Andersen, residing at 12313 S 71st Avenue, stated that he has personally handled the overgrown weeds on the lot in question on several occasions, and anticipates that the City will not maintain the parking lot. He expressed concern over increased lighting, noise pollution, and traffic the parking lot will bring to the neighborhood.

Jennifer Case, residing at 12242 S 71st Avenue, explained that her family has resided in Palos Heights for 20 years, and she has coordinated the city's 4th of July parade for over 10 years. She said her family frequents nearby Olde Palos businesses, and a parking lot near her home is not needed at this moment. There is an overflow parking lot available that patrons can use. She asks that this issue be reconsidered for the benefit of the residents.

Ken Busse informed the Committee that Morris Engineering is assembling information in response to concerns expressed at the March 14th Public Hearing. Morris will present the information at a future P&Z Committee meeting. Mr. Busse stated that once the matter is voted on by the Committee it will go to the City Council. Alderman McGovern stated that it is normal procedure for issues identified at a P&Z Commission hearing to be addressed at the P&Z Committee. Alderman McGovern thanked everyone for attending and voicing their opinions.

**POSSIBLE FUTURE ANNEXATION, 13300 S. 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue:** a request by McNaughton Development to be heard concerning the possible annexation and development of approximately 11 acres between Misty Meadow and Oak Hills Golf Course PRD.

### **Discussion**

McNaughton Development is the contract purchaser of 13300 S 80th Avenue, which consists of 3 parcels containing approximately 11 acres. The property is currently unincorporated and owned by one family, the Reilys. John Barry from McNaughton Development presented a power point outlining a preliminary concept plan for 55 townhome units. The streets will be private with a proposed blockade emergency access point in the southwest portion of the property near Misty Meadow Drive. A sanitary sewer connection may be made at one of two locations, either along Misty Meadow Drive or along an 80th Avenue extension to be constructed for access into the proposed development. For storm water collection there are two possible connections, either one of which would be privately owned by the HOA. McNaughton is currently developing a similar planned residential development in Orland Park. Each townhome unit will be professionally landscaped, fully sodded and irrigated. Mr. Barry presented renderings and price points of the potential townhomes. The committee discussed.

Alderman Clifford stated that McNaughton Development should contact the fire department to ensure emergency vehicles will have adequate room for maneuvering within the PRD. Alderman McGovern also suggested McNaughton consider looking into Palos Heights' ordinances regarding masonry when designing the units. Ken Busse stated the next step is to confer with City Attorney Tom Brown regarding a property annexation agreement. McNaughton will also want to approach the South Palos Sanitary District for possible disconnection from their district in order to avoid being taxed by the South Palos Sanitary District for services that the City will later provide.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Alderman Clifford entertained a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman McGovern. All in favor and motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Taylor Swiedals  
Recording Secretary