

PLAN COMMISSION (special meeting)

January 21, 2016

Members present: Morrissette, Yoerg, Casanova, Rhoades and TeWinkel

Others present: Michael Leverty, Mike Hoefler, Matt Hoefler, Randy Hanson and Denny Darnold

The meeting was called to order by acting-chair Morrissette at 7:30 a.m.

Certified survey map (CSM), two (2) commercial lots and one outlot, south of Coulee Road and east of STH 35 / Second Street – MLME Holdings / Michael Leverty. Darnold commented that the proposed certified survey map (CSM) is proposed to create a development parcel for the proposed Hudson Boat Works project to be discussed next on the agenda. Darnold suggested that both items be discussed and consideration to follow. Chair Morrissette read the second matter on the agenda – Hudson Boat Works.

Final development plans, Hudson Boat Works, 7,400 sq. ft office and restaurant, south of Coulee Road and east of STH 35 – HAF RED, LLC / Mike Hoefler. Darnold reviewed the Hudson Boat Works development plans noting that Lot 1 of the proposed CSM is the development lot for the Hudson Boat Works project, lot 2 is the lot for the existing Northwest Mutual office facility and the outlot is proposed as the access to both lots. Darnold explained that phase 1 of the Hudson Boat Works project will include a 7,400 sq. ft. building and associated off-street parking. Businesses proposed to occupy the building include the LoLo American Kitchen restaurant / bar and HAF Architects, Darnold noted. There are 36 parking stalls proposed. Phase 2 is proposed to include two buildings and additional parking. Darnold also reviewed the proposed sanitary sewer and storm sewer utilities that will be relocated on the site east of the proposed buildings in the private parking lot of lot 1. Storm water from Second Street / STH 35 currently flows from the east curb line at the entrance of Dairy Queen to the area that was formerly a stub of Second Street that provided access to the homes that previously existed. In the future when the dedicated right turn lane is extended the storm sewer can be redirected along the new curb line.

Matt Hoefler reviewed the proposed two-story, 7,000 sq. ft. building with a partial basement. Hoefler noted that LoLo American Kitchen, maximum 77 seats, is proposed to occupy the main floor. Hoefler explained that they have been working with the city staff to develop a plan for sanitary sewer and water to the proposed and future phases. The proposed building will have large glass openings.

Morrissette asked about the proposed roof sign. Darnold commented that type of sign is not permitted.

The brick façade facing STH 35 / Second Street is 28 1/2 feet high and an extension of the building to provide roof top access will increase the overall height to 35 feet, Hoefler explained.

Morrissette expressed that his primary concern is traffic flow and the left turn exiting of the site particularly during the evening dinner traffic and late afternoon peak hour traffic. He also expressed

concern of the timing of the I-94 bridge improvement project scheduled for 2017 and what impact that may have on traffic in this area. Yoerg also expressed this concern that traffic accelerates as they travel south on STH35 to access I-94 and that northbound vehicles, in the p.m. peak hour, are stacked back to and through the access creating a concern for vehicles that turn left / south exiting the site which also makes it difficult for a vehicle to leave the site if they are turning left (south).

Morrisette commented that the turnover of traffic from the restaurant during the peak hour traffic period and the left turn movements either entering or exiting the site is the concern. He questioned if the access can be made to be safe.

Mike Hoefler noted that the dinner hour generally is from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

TeWinkel noted that another concern with the peak hour p.m. traffic is that vehicles turning left (south) may start to exit going south because a northbound vehicle in the right turn lanes stops to let them out but a northbound vehicle is not aware a vehicle is exiting and a collision occurs.

Yoerg suggested no left turn out of the site. TeWinkel agreed that may be the only option to address the safety issue.

Yoerg asked if right of way may need to be obtained for the extension of the dedicated northbound right turn lane. Darnold explained that was accounted for when the city vacated part of the right of way recently. Yoerg also expressed concern of future uses that may have high turnover, again particularly during the peak p.m. period. Matt Hoefler explained that they are looking primarily at office space as part of the uses proposed in the future phases.

Casanova asked how you solve the traffic issue. Darnold agreed that the two left turn movements are the issue. Darnold commented that the developer knew that was the condition and the p.m. peak hour traffic backup for the northbound traffic may be an issue. He added that the success of a restaurant business at that site will depend on accessibility. Yoerg opined that some wanting to turn left into the site may continue south to Edina Realty and turn around, if a left turn was blocked. Darnold noted that if access is restricted to a right out only it will force traffic into downtown to turn around. Morrisette expressed that the city must review options to make it a safe access.

Morrisette asked if limiting the exiting left turn can be implemented. TeWinkel questioned if limiting it to right turn only would be any safer if it forces people that want to go south into the downtown area to turn around.

Michael Leverty noted that when traffic backs up past the entrance his employees turn right and go to Coulee Road and then to the I-94 / 14th Street on-ramp versus trying to turn left to go to Exit 1. He expressed that if you get into the left southbound lane and turn on your turn signal once you get past the DQ that it is generally not an issue. Morrisette noted that generally applies to morning traffic. Leverty agreed. Leverty added that most of the traffic heading south is going to Minnesota and is in the right lane. Morrisette asked how many accidents Leverty had seen at the access to the Northwest Mutual building. Leverty said one, about 3 to 4 years ago.

Yoerg inquired if the developer is working with DQ for shared parking, which if that is done may provide a secondary access to the proposed development. Matt Hoefler stated that is not being considered. Morrisette stated he has had conversations with the owner of the DQ and that he does not want to share parking.

Morrisette reiterated his concern for the safety issue. Leverty reiterated he has not had an issue and that they advise visitors to turn right and proceed up Coulee Road to the on-ramp at 14th Street.

Morrisette asked about a start date. Hoefler noted late spring to summer of 2016 to start construction with occupancy late summer or fall, 2016.

Morrisette asked about WisDOT's schedule for the I-94 project. Darnold commented that will be a summer long project (2017). Darnold noted that the on-ramp to I-94 westbound to Minnesota will be remaining open throughout the project.

Yoerg asked about options; additional lanes, or if it may be a signing issue. Darnold noted that the only additional lane that may be added in this area is dedicated northbound right turn lane (to Coulee Road); however, there is no specific schedule for the lane extension, but the staff will be visiting with the WisDOT staff to see if that may be considered in the grind and overlay project from I-94 to Vine Street scheduled for 2021. Leverty commented that would help reduce the length of vehicles stacking at the intersection of Coulee Road/Buckeye Street and STH35/Second Street.

TeWinkel suggested an option to review may be an island that would serve to allow right out only.

Matt Hoefler suggested a sign advising no left turn during a specified time period. TeWinkel noted that some left turns still could occur.

Darnold commented that the plan commission may make a recommendation to the Common Council or consider postponing this review to allow the staff / developer to explore some options that will address the safety issue.

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A motion was made by Yoerg, seconded by Casanova to postpone action on this matter until the access issue can be addressed with recommendations as reasonable as possible with a special meeting to consider this matter if necessary. **Motion carried.**

Mike Hoefler expressed concern that not allowing a left turn into the site may have a negative impact on any development that may occur there in the future. Leverty reiterated that he has not experienced getting into the site coming from the north and turning left.

Other business for discussion purposes only. No items were brought forward.

A motion was made by TeWinkel, seconded by Casanova to adjourn. **Motion carried. 8:00 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Darnold, Secretary