

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRINCETON PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD HELD
ON FEBRUARY 26, 2007, AT 7:00 P.M., AT THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., by Dave Thompson. Members present were Ken Haskamp, Edward Juntilla, and Lee Steinbrecher. Township member: Dan Minks, Princeton Township. Staff present were Jay Blake and Mary Lou DeWitt.

Absent was Jack Edmonds.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON JANUARY 29, 2007

HASKMAP MOVED, SECOND BY JUNTILLA TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 29, 2007. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARING:

A. #07-02 Conditional Use Permit for an Addition to Modular Classroom at South South Elementary School

Blake informed the Planning Commission Board that Princeton Public Schools is requesting a Conditional Use Permit in order to add an additional modular section to the existing modular building at the South Elementary School. This will add four classrooms to the original building site. The new section will match the existing specs and exterior of the building and will be painted to keep the building aesthetically pleasing for the surrounding area.

It is anticipated that this modular building will be needed for a period of three to five years, as enrollment continues to increase. The District will continue to work on expanding the current facility or construct a new one.

Princeton Public Schools believes it is justified in making this request due to current space constraints. The addition will provide a stopgap while the District studies its options in regards to current facilities and potential new construction.

The Fire Department reviewed the plans and are okay with the addition.

This Conditional Use Permit would amend the previous Conditional Use Permits on June 17, 2002, and May 19, 2003. For both of the Resolutions #02-08 and #03-06, the conditions were a modular unit has to be fully skirted and reviewed in five years.

Keith Barlage, Building and Grounds Coordinator for the School District was present. Barlage said that adding this addition will hold the school for capacity for approximately five years. After that another elementary school hopefully will be built.

STEINBRECHER MOVED, SECOND BY HASKAMP TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

STEINBRECHER MOVED, SECOND BY HASKAMP TO APPROVE ITEM #07-02 CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR AN ADDITION TO THE CURRENT MODULAR CLASSROOM AT SOUTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

The Planning Commission Board reviewed the Findings of Fact:

1. Are there characteristics of the proposed use that may violate the health, safety or general welfare of Princeton residents? No.
2. Does the proposed use present any unique concerns regarding erosion, runoff, water pollution or sedimentation? No.
3. Could the proposed use create any special problems with parking? No.

4. Would the proposed use cause any problems with access or traffic generation? No.
5. Is the proposed use incompatible with other uses located in the zoning district? No.

UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Coborn's Sign Size Variance

Blake informed the Planning Commission Board that Coborn's new site would like an on site pylon sign that would be seen from Highway #169. The site is zoned B-2, General Business. The proposed sign would be 70 feet in height with the square footage including all three signs is 691. The sign displays Open 24 Hours, Coborns Logo Graphics and changeable fuel prices.

Staff has reviewed the sign regulations for the City and is recommending no change in the sign height or size requirements for individual pylon signs in the General Business District. Blake said that the key question seems to be whether or not the land owner would be deprived of reasonable use of the property without the variance. It seems that the burden of proof in this matter may not have been met since other stores have been successful in similar communities and that the two most recently constructed stores in Minnesota have signs that are significantly smaller than the one being requested. There does not appear to be any uniqueness to the proposed site, since other signs have been required to meet the current standard. The proposed height and area of the sign is a significant departure from current standards and other signs in the same general location, it could be argued that the proposal would alter the character of the area.

Juntilla said that looking towards the signage area coming into Princeton from the south is really a small area and having a monument sign should be sufficient. He is concerned on the size that they are requesting.

Steinbrecher commented that he was on a trip and that he was looking for a certain service station and saw the one he was looking for by the pylon sign. He is concerned at what could be happening on the west side of town and what the signage for incoming businesses would require. He is not opposed by the height of this sign, but believes the size of the sign is too large.

Haskamp said people will find what they want without having large signage. Coborn's did not have a number of what they will lose in business if they did not have this large of a sign.

JUNTILLA MOVED, SECOND BY HASKAMP TO DENY ITEM #07-01 VARIANCE FOR COBORN'S SIGN AT NEW LOCATION.

The Findings of Fact were reviewed by the Planning Commission Board:

1. Without the variance, is the owner deprived of a reasonable use of the property? No.
2. Is the alleged hardship due to circumstances unique to this property? No.
3. Were the circumstances causing the hardship created by someone or something other than the landowner or previous landowners? No.
4. Will the issuance of the variance maintain the essential character of the locality? No.
5. Does the alleged hardship involve more than economic considerations? No.

UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

B. Signage Ordinance Amendments for Highway Business Uses

Blake informed the Planning Commission Board that Staff has reviewed the numerous sign ordinances from all over the area and noticed a number of new trends in business signage regulations. The aesthetics and construction of signs has become a greater concern for a number of communities. Items such as illumination and materials have been added to some of the ordinances. The area wide business signs or multi-tenant business signs are starting to replace the multiple pylon signs that one can notice in many strip developments.

Blake suggested that the height for signage in the City is good, but we are restricted in the area of the signage for the size. We need something in our ordinance for multi-tenant signs. This could be set up as an Interim Use Permit with the Developers and modify the signage. The Planning Commission Board then has the ability and flexibility regarding signage. For Highway Business District a sign plan could then be negotiated with the Developer.

Steinbrecher asked what determines the size for the sign face.

Blake responded it is just the advertising of the business and not the surrounding that is holding the sign.

Steinbrecher asked on the multi-tenant signage what would be the maximum signage. If there are multiple businesses on the signage, who gets to decide what amount for sign size for each business.

Blake said a business has a standard of what size of sign they need. The Developer will be the one working with that, deciding the signage size per business.

Thompson commented that on the illuminated signs the language should be broken down more to what we will allow. If the sign has is lit, it could create too much light that would cause problems for neighbors.

Blake will look into what other communities have for highway signage and if they have it determined per the speed on the highway. Blake will bring this back at March's meeting in a form of an amendment.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Sign Review at 513 Rum River Drive North

Blake informed the Planning Commission Board that the subject property was on the agenda of the January 29, 2007, Planning Commission meeting. At that meeting was a site plan review and stipulations of the Conditional Use Permit that was issued for this property back on September 27, 1993. Amy Meyer is the applicant and would like to install signage with the new name of the business and operation.

The sign would be placed on the current sign pole and the signage would be 5' x8' double face sign and lighted. There is also signage on the building that meets the sign regulations. The square footage of the sign is 40 feet.

Meyer stated that on the photos of the sign she had given the Planning Commission, she is using the sign with the white background and it will have exterior lighting.

STEINBRECHER MOVED, SECOND BY JUNTILLA TO APPROVE THE SIGNAGE FOR 513 RUM RIVER DRIVE NORTH. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

B. Site Plan Review at Dollar Bell Store

Blake informed the Planning Commission Board that this request has been reviewed and a variance was granted with a rear yard setback and was not used. The proposed site does not meet the impervious coverage. In the B-3 Highway Commercial District the City Ordinance allows 60% impervious coverage. When Rivertown Crossing site was first reviewed the impervious coverage was missed and is more than the 60% impervious coverage. It is approximately 80% coverage. If the entire area of Rivertown Crossing were reviewed it comes to about 74%. Blake believes that this impervious coverage should be increased to allow more for building and parking. The small strip mall put in is about 63% coverage. If a large anchor store were to come the 60% would not work. Blake suggested that the site plan for Dollar Bell Store be table. They could get a variance or the Planning Commission Board could amend the impervious coverage to 80% and this would be addressed at March's meeting. This will also help in designing storm water plans.

Steinbrecher asked if the water drainage system were design to hold all the runoff in that area then would an ordinance be different if they could handle all the drainage. That could make the difference in the ordinance where this was defined. If drainage is in place it should be higher than 80%. Use the lot for business use. Get it as close to 100% as possible and then have a small amount for landscaping.

Thompson commented that the first floor elevation for 100 year floodplain would have to be changed.

Blake said he would have to talk to the City Engineer. The Storm Water Management Plan is moving into place and they would be related.

STEINBRECHER MOVED, SECOND BY JUNTILLA TO TABLE THE SITE PLAN REVIEW FOR DOLLAR BELL STORE UNTIL MARCH 19TH, 2007, MEETING AND STAFF WILL PREPARE AN ORDINANCE AMENDMENT FOR IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. Aero Business Park Rezoning Discussion

Blake informed the Planning Commission Board that all or part of Aero Business Park should be rezoned General Business. If you look at the 2004 Comprehensive Plan you will see MN-1 Industrial was put in a lot of places. The City had thought we needed more industrial land. The strip that is developed is currently MN-1 Industrial and adjacent to the Business Park and across First Street is Highway Business. There will be a proposal next month on the Green Meadows area. This intersection will be a high demand and this would increase the traffic patterns. The Real Estate Professionals said the Business Park lots will be hard to sell with it zoned Industrial. Once the hangers are removed this area will be wanted more. General Business does allow many types of business. The positive is that manufacturing, trucking, etc. are not allowed. A Conditional Use Permit would be required to allow something like that to come in. A public hearing would be required to change the zoning.

The lots in Aero Business Park are not deep so it makes them harder to sell. The characteristic of these lots is not really designed for industrial. Blake said the EDA Board has in the past expressed their interest in General Business and the Planning Commission Board agreed that it would be a good idea. Blake will prepare an ordinance amendment for the next meeting with a public hearing having the entire area for Aero Business Park rezoned General Business.

COMMUNICATION AND REPORTS:

A. City Council Minutes for January & February, 2007

The Planning Commission Board had no comments.

Blake said a Resolution will be brought to the City Council for moving the JOBZ Program. The old Westling building that the U.S.D.P. purchased will be leasing a small portion of that building to Waterworks Manufacturing. This looks very good. There have been continued conversations with anchor stores for the west side of the City. Traffic count has been done on Highway #95 and First Street in hopes to justify a light in that area.

STEINBRECHER MOVED, SECOND BY JUNTILLA TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED. THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:25 P.M.

ATTEST:

Dave Thompson, Chairperson

Mary Lou DeWitt, Comm. Dev. Assist.