

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024 7:00 P.M.**

**Members Present:** Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard (via Zoom), Muenz, Lencioni, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Mayor Lora Vitek; Heather McGuire, City Administrator; Russell Colby, Director of Community Development; Derek Conley, Director of Economic Development; Bruce Sylvester, Assistant Director of Community Development-Planning & Engineering; Allen Fennell, Assistant Director of Community Development-Building Services; Rachel Hitzemann, City Planner; Peter Suhr, Director of Public Works; Fire Chief Scott Swanson; Nick Peppers, City Attorney

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was convened by Chair Lencioni at 7:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALLED**

Roll was called:

Present: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Lencioni, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber

Absent: None

**3. OMNIBUS VOTE**

\*4d. Historic Preservation Commission recommendation to approve a Façade Improvement Grant Agreement for 720 Prairie St.

\*4e. Recommendation to approve a Final Plat of Subdivision (Minor Subdivision) for 3925 Stern Ave. Lot Consolidation (Bryan McCusker)

**Motion by Ald. Gehm, second by Ald. Weber to approve omnibus items \*4d and \*4e on the agenda.**

**Roll was called:**

**Ayes: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber**

**Nays: None**

**Motion carried: 9-0**

**4. COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- a. Recommendation to approve a General Amendment to Ch. 14.14 “Business and Mixed-Use Districts”, Table 17.14.1 “Permitted and Special Uses”, regarding Cultural Facilities in the BL District

Rachel Hitzemann, City Planner, presented the Executive Summary and materials posted in the meeting packet.

**Motion by Ald. Wirball, second by Ald. Pietryla to approve a General Amendment to Ch. 14.14 “Business and Mixed-Use Districts”, Table 17.14.1 “Permitted and Special Uses”, regarding Cultural Facilities in the BL District**

**Roll was called:**

**Ayes: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber**

**Nays: None**

**Motion carried: 9-0**

- b. Recommendation to approve an Application for Special Use for a Cultural Facility to establish a motorcycle museum for 1317 E. Main St., Motorcycle Museum (Andrew Koczvara)

Rachel Hitzemann, City Planner, presented the Executive Summary and materials posted in the meeting packet.

**Motion by Ald. Wirball, second by Ald. Weber to approve an Application for Special Use for a Cultural Facility to establish a motorcycle museum for 1317 E. Main St., Motorcycle Museum (Andrew Koczvara)**

**Roll was called:**

**Ayes: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber**

**Nays: None**

**Motion carried: 9-0**

- c. Recommendation to approve an Application for Special Use for a Place of Worship for 3809 Illinois Avenue, Promise Church (Rino Miulli)

Rachel Hitzemann, City Planner, presented the Executive Summary and materials posted in the meeting packet.

Ald. Weber asked if the space is being purchased or leased. It is being leased.

**Motion by Ald. Wirball, second by Ald. Weber to approve an Application for Special Use for a Place of Worship for 3809 Illinois Avenue, Promise Church (Rino Miulli)**

**Roll was called:**

**Ayes: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber**

**Nays: None**

**Motion carried: 9-0**

- f. Recommendation to approve a Temporary License Agreement between the City of St. Charles and Pollyanna Brewing Company (106 Riverside Ave.)

Derek Conley, Director of Economic Development, presented the Executive Summary and materials posted in the meeting packet.

**Motion by Ald. Wirball, second by Ald. Gehm to approve a Temporary License Agreement between the City of St. Charles and Pollyanna Brewing Company (106 Riverside Ave.)**

**Roll was called:**

**Ayes: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber**

**Nays: None**

**Motion carried: 9-0**

- g. Recommendation to approve a Temporary Closure of Walnut Avenue from April 15, 2024 through October 31, 2024

Derek Conley, Director of Economic Development, presented the Executive Summary and materials posted in the meeting packet for items g, h, and i.

Christopher Curran, owner of The Graceful Ordinary and representative for several businesses on the downtown east-side, spoke in support of the proposal. This creates a special place for the community to come together.

Additional comments in support of the proposal were made by business owners Doug Denz, Riverview Counseling Services and Ann Smith, Smitty's on the Corner. Both stated they would like to see an area on the east side similar to what is available on the west side.

Anita Dickerson, resident, spoke in favor of the closure of Walnut Avenue. Closing the street would enhance the dining experience by providing more patio options and would also keep the area safer for pedestrians.

Greg Taylor, resident, spoke against the proposal to close Walnut Avenue. He said it would increase parking issues and hinder the ease of walkability. He felt this was intended to benefit a single business and that it is disrespectful to other businesses who have used their own funds to create outdoor dining experiences. The neighborhood residents use the street daily and should have been contacted for feedback.

Joe McMahon, attorney and representative for several downtown business owners (The Hotel Baker, The Filling Station, The Office, Whiskey Bend, Alley 64 and McNally's). Each have supported and encouraged downtown development and have been respectful competitors of each other. However, they do not support taking action that benefits an individual business to the detriment of others or tips the scales of competitiveness in favor of one business. He noted several legal issues that should be considered and encouraged voting against the closure of Walnut Avenue.

Bryan Kidder, resident, spoke in support of the proposal. He encouraged having a walkable area and said they can't put cars first every time.

James Bryner, St. Charles North High School Student, expressed support for the closure of Walnut Avenue stating a downtown area should be more important to pedestrians than it is for cars. Creating a more walkable area would provide more of a community environment.

Patrick Turner, attorney representing a few businesses including Hotel Baker, McNally's, and ZaZa's Trattoria. He pointed out issues with the parking situation and ADA considerations. He said his clients should have been given an opportunity to express their concerns and requested the committee table this issue to allow time to address those concerns.

Megan Curren, co-owner of The Graceful Ordinary, said the closure will not just benefit one business. She said having walkability helps create visibility for other businesses. The whole point is to have a thriving downtown community.

Lauren Duddles, resident, expressed her support of the proposal. She said they need more community spaces in the downtown area, not fewer, and Walnut Avenue is a great location for adding more public space to that area.

Paul McMahan, resident, spoke against the proposal. First Street Plaza is a business area and the Walnut area is residential and blocking access to the residential area is not a good situation. There is public space in the park across the street.

Curtis Hurst, Frontier Development, said he takes objection to the fact that there hasn't been enough outreach to all of the community businesses because he has been an open book in regards to how he wants to partner with the City and make this a great city all around. He noted the plan was not approved last year because they were asked to bring a temporary plan until they could figure out what the permanent use would be. This is that plan. The businesses on this side of the river do deserve some sort of City investment in this corridor just so it can have similar opportunities that all quadrants have.

Suzi Myers, resident, noted the residents on the west side are a little further away from the river, but residents on the east side are right there so everything that is done infringes on their properties and rights.

Robert Carter, resident, expressed his concerns with giving up a street for dining purposes. He doesn't think the closure should be viewed the same as a closure for a special event.

Written comments were received from June Lee, Lisa Schutz, Miki Powell, Karen Madura, John Glenn and Gregory Taylor.

Ald. Weber asked about the 70 city owned parking spots and what is happening with that. Mr. Conley mentioned these are related to the Whole Foods project. They are going to reconstruct the lot. Work is expected to begin at the end of the month and take about 2 ½ - 3 months to complete. Ald. Weber also asked how they came about the dollar amount for the bus parking spots. Mr. Conley stated it was based off of what the City charges for outdoor dining.

Ald. Bessner asked to go over the ADA aspects of the closure. Mr. Conley reviewed the plan included in the packet.

Ald. Wirball shared the following comments/concerns:

- Felt the price for the bus parking spots should be higher than what was presented.
- The outdoor dining option used last year worked well. He didn't receive any complaints.
- Referred to Ordinance 12.04.102 that says the proposed use shall not unreasonably interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic or with access to parked vehicles. If Walnut is closed, they are interfering with vehicular traffic and reducing access to parked vehicles. He also noted the recently completed parking study stated that any on-street parking in the SE quadrant should not be removed unless there are solid alternatives in place. They shouldn't be removing any on-street parking until other relatively close options are available.
- Felt the Whole Foods parking spaces are going to take longer to complete than anticipated.
- Raised concerns about ADA compliance in that area and said some items need to be verified before moving forward.
- Resident concerns regarding their quality of life in the neighborhood should be addressed.
- How are first responders going to navigate around the cars pushed up into the neighborhood? Need to give businesses the opportunity to meet with elected officials and staff members to share their concerns.

Ald. Silkaitis agreed with Ald. Wirball, but expressed concerns regarding the legal issues brought up earlier. He said it is going to present issues for residents navigating through the area.

Nick Peppers, City Attorney, did not have any concerns with the legality of the City entering into these license agreements.

Ald. Foulkes said if passed, is it worth it? Are we going to see the foot traffic? Does it really just benefit the one business? Are you going to be good neighbors? The businesses have a trial period to show that they are willing to try and be good neighbors and be responsive to concerns raised in a timely manner. He felt this would be a positive step towards helping the entire community and would contribute to having a thriving business district.

Ald. Gehm said he is a huge proponent of outdoor dining. He asked if other alternatives on the east side of the river have been considered. He suggested the park across the street.

Ald. Pietryla asked about the greenspace and how tight it is. How can they ensure that it will be welcoming to anybody and not just used for outdoor dining for the contiguous business? Mr. Conley said anyone can get take-out food and sit there. The agreement does state that Flagship cannot expand their designated area, and if they do, they are in violation of the agreement and the City has the right to take it away.

Ald. Pietryla said his position is the same as last year. The sidewalk opportunities worked well and noted that they have already received requests from other businesses to close other streets. He expressed concern over this. He suggested having more discussion on this topic.

Mr. Conley said other options have been discussed including closing Riverside Ave. That option would be a bit more difficult due to the fire department needing to use it for access to that

corridor. It would make it a little harder to accommodate that request. This option took about 10 week's worth of work. Looking at other alternatives at this date would mean they would not make the opening of outdoor dining which is one month away.

Ald. Muenz said a vibrant, active downtown is a positive thing. More people walking around will create that. Having the temporary nature of this proposal gives them the opportunity to learn from what does/doesn't work. They can't accommodate more cars than people because people make the community. She would like to see this in action to prove that this is a good option.

Ald. Weber supports outdoor dining, but he would like to evaluate this for one more month. He offered to be the liaison to talk to the business owners. He doesn't think that closing Walnut Avenue is the best option.

Chair Lencioni spoke about the responsibility of City Council and commented on some of the issues presented during the meeting.

Ald. Wirball said the conversation should keep going and include conversations with the businesses that just found out about it.

**Motion by Ald. Weber, second by Ald. Wirball to postpone the item to the April 8, 2024 Planning & Development Committee meeting.**

**Roll was called:**

**Ayes: Silkaitis, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Weber**

**Nays: Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Bessner**

**Motion passed: 5-4**

- h. Recommendation to approve a Temporary License Agreement between the City of St. Charles and C&A Management

**Motion by Ald. Pietryla, second by Ald. Wirball to postpone the item to the April 8, 2024 Planning & Development Committee meeting.**

**Roll was called:**

**Ayes: Silkaitis, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Weber**

**Nays: Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Bessner**

**Motion passed: 5-4**

- i. Recommendation to approve a Temporary License Agreement between the City of St. Charles and STC Arcada LLC

**Motion by Ald. Gehm, second by Ald. Pietryla to postpone the item to the April 8, 2024 Planning & Development Committee meeting.**

**Roll was called:**

**Ayes: Silkaitis, Gehm, Pietryla, Wirball, Weber**

**Nays: Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Bessner**

**Motion passed: 5-4**

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**6. ADDITIONAL ITEMS FROM MAYOR, COUNCIL OR STAFF**

Ald. Muenz asked if staff can find out about the lease agreement/cost associated with the Hotel Baker using Main Street to park vehicles.

**7. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None**

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Ald. Pietryla, second by Ald. Gehm to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.  
Unanimously approved by voice vote.**