

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
VILLAGE HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBER
January 8, 2015
7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair David Mann; Commissioners Mark Benson, Garret Eakin, Mark Gartland, Douglas Gilbert, Greg Marsey, and Steven Rouse

EXCUSED: Commissioner Jeremy Burton

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Jacob Karaca, Plan Commission Attorney; Anthony Compaglia, applicant

Roll Call

Chair Mann called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and roll was called. A quorum was present.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Gartland moved to approve the minutes from November 6, 2014. Commissioner Marsey seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously with a grammatical change on page 2.

Commissioner Gartland moved to approve the minutes from November 13, 2014. Commissioner Marsey seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously with a word change on page 1.

Public Hearing(s)

PC 14-07: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment; Craft Brew Lounge; The Applicant seeks approval of an amendment to the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance to allow Craft Brew Lounges as a special use in the B1/B2 General Business District, B-3 General Business District, B-4 Downtown Business District, and the C Commercial District.

Mr. Failor reviewed the staff report. He said the report indicated the village was working on creating a new liquor license category for a craft brew lounge that would be similar to a wine shop license that was currently on the books. He said staff noted the hours of operation listed in the application were not typical bar or tavern hours. Commissioner Rouse asked if the hours of operation was the primary difference between a tavern license and a craft brew license. Mr. Failor replied it was mainly the hours and the type of spirits sold.

Mr. Failor said there would be no manufacturing of beer and no food preparation, although food could be brought in from neighboring restaurants. He said some package food would be sold as well. The application would go back to the Village Board in mid-February at the same time as the liquor license language would be reviewed. Commissioner Rouse asked if the applicant could begin construction work on the premises in the meantime. Mr. Failor said it would be at the applicant's own risk to begin work, but it would be allowed.

Mr. Tony Compaglia, the applicant, reviewed his application through an overhead presentation. Commissioner Rouse asked staff why there were so many different licenses like brewery, brew pub and brew lounge coming before the Plan Commission. Mr. Failor said liquor licenses were limited in Oak

Park so that each different category has to go through the commissions so that there was control over what was granted and could be accommodated.

Chair Mann asked how craft brew was defined and would the liquor code address that issue. Mr. Failor said there was a standard definition of craft beer in the liquor code. Commissioner Rouse clarified the applicant could not make their own beer, they could only sell it. The applicant and staff agreed.

Chair Mann opened up public testimony.

Attorney Karaca swore in those wishing to testify.

Mr. John Hedges, Director of the Oak Park Economic Development Corporation (OPEDC), spoke in favor of the application. He said OPEDC believed it would be a benefit to the community and the downtown area. Chair Mann asked if any other people had approached the group with a similar concept. Mr. Hedges said a new brew pub was expected to open on Roosevelt Road and there had been other brew pub interests and they expect more inquiries in the future. Commissioner Rouse asked if there were any inquiries about opening taverns. Mr. Hedges said he had not heard from anyone, but he had heard that from time to time there has been interest in the idea.

Mr. Compaglia said he and his partner started their search for a location in the summer and were very excited when they came to Oak Park. He said the downtown area was very unique and there was energy in the evening that they are excited to become a part of.

Commissioner Gilbert moved to approve the application. Commissioner Benson seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Gilbert- yes
Benson- yes
Eakin- yes
Gartland-yes
Rouse-yes
Marsey-yes
Mann-yes

The motion was approved unanimously.

PC 14-10: Special Use Application- Craft Brew Lounge (1026 North Boulevard); The Applicant seeks approval of a craft brew lounge on North Boulevard within the B-4 Downtown Business District subject to the text amendment approval.

Mr. Failor said there were three letters of support for the special use application: one from Downtown Oak Park, one from OPEDC, and one from Careful Peach Boutique, a neighboring business. He reviewed the staff report. He said the Greater Downtown Plan supported creating businesses that were locally owned, and as this was a one-of-a-kind business, staff believed it would fit in the area. He said the plan also referenced reusing buildings, which this applicant was doing. He said staff believed the business would contribute to increasing foot traffic as well as those traveling by car as a destination location.

Mr. Failor said the Comprehensive Plan has two chapters that touch on this- Land Use and Built Environment and Economic Health and Vitality. He said staff believed this business would enhance the overall development and mix in the downtown area. He said it would add choices to the area and add to the market mix while still being compatible in nature to other businesses. He said staff felt it would help activate evening hours and therefore, staff supported the application.

Commissioner Rouse asked if there was a limit on the number of liquor licenses that go into a particular location. Attorney Karaca said each license type has a limit. Mr. Failor clarified the limits were by type of license, not geographically.

Mr. Compaglia gave an overview of his application. He said this concept came about on the west coast as a combination of craft beer bottles/package sales to-go, as well as having tap beer available. He said the idea was to bring a wine store experience to craft beer drinkers. He said the craft beer category was growing 20-30 % every year- even through the recession. He said the store would provide local distributors a location to sell their beers.

Mr. Compaglia said they anticipated 50% of their sales to be in the packaged sales area. He said on-premises sales would be draught beer and merchandise and they would also allow neighboring restaurants to deliver food.

He reviewed their alcohol policy and said they had been Basset certified. He said there would be signage that minors would not be allowed to come into the shop without their parents.

He said they hoped to partner with retailers in Oak Park and especially with the Oak Park Home Brewing Club.

Commissioner Gartland asked for clarification about the floor plan and available seating. Mr. Compaglia said there would be seating for nine people, five in the tap room area and four at a table in the window area. Commissioner Gilbert asked if would there be standing room. Mr. Compaglia agreed, but said it was 1100 square feet. It was not a huge space. Commissioner Gartland asked if they were pursuing only this type of liquor license or would they want to serve other spirits as well. Mr. Compaglia said they only wanted to do craft beer.

Commissioner Gilbert asked if there was anything similar in Chicago. Mr. Compaglia said in Lincoln Park there was a store, Beermiscuous, which opened in July that was doing well. Commissioner Eakin noted it seemed like a clean, focused business that reminded him of old tap rooms. Commissioner Rouse asked how many taps would be on site. Mr. Compaglia said there would be twelve taps that would be rotated regularly every five or six days. In addition there would be around 25 different brands of beer for bottle sales. Commissioner Gartland asked about storage. Mr. Compaglia said there would be a cold box installed in the basement for storage. Commissioner Gilbert asked if they would sell kegs. Mr. Compaglia said no.

Chair Mann asked for a review of the special use standards in the application. Mr. Compaglia went through his application. He said they saw craft beer as a category that complements gourmet food. He said they were a unique business model and they've gotten endorsements from neighboring businesses. He believes they would support other businesses in the area. Commissioner Eakin asked about the exterior aesthetic. Mr. Compaglia said they would not change the windows, only the awning.

Mr. Compaglia said the store would bring economic benefits by driving foot traffic to the area, by partnering on food sales with restaurants and by adding tax revenue to the village. He said they were very excited to participate in the craft beer festival held downtown each year.

Chair Mann asked for public testimony. As there was none, Chair Mann closed public testimony. There was no one signed up for cross-examination.

Commissioner Benson moved to approve the special use application. Commissioner Rouse seconded. Commissioner Gilbert said this would be a great addition to downtown area. Commissioner Eakin suggested adding a distinctive element on the façade. Chair Mann asked if they would be supplying items

for the home brewing market. Mr. Compaglia said they have considered it and were planning to meet with the home brewers group.

A roll call vote was taken:

Benson- yes

Rouse –yes

Eakin –yes

Gartland –yes

Gilbert –yes

Marsey-yes

Mann- yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Mann said at the February Plan Commission meeting, scheduled for February 5, 2015, they would review the Findings of Facts for both applications and then it would move on to the Village Board.

Other Business

Mr. Failor said the initial application for the Colt site development has been received by staff and it would likely come to Plan Commission in March. There could be double Plan Commission meetings in March and April. An application for 1000 Lake Street was anticipated to come before the Plan Commission sometime in April.

Adjournment

Commissioner Rouse moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Angela Schell,
Recording Secretary