

Pekin Planning Commission Meeting
Council Chambers
111 South Capitol Street, 2nd level
April 10, 2019
5:30pm

Present:

Don Hild, Vice Chair
Steve Thompson
Chris Deverman

Amy Wilson
James Ruth

The regular meeting of the Pekin Planning Commission was called to order and a quorum was declared.

Staff present: John Lebegue, Building Inspections/Development Director, and Rob McCoy, City Attorney

MOTION by Steve Thompson to approve the April 10, 2019 Agenda, seconded by James Ruth. On roll call vote, all present voted AYE. Motion approved.

MOTION by James Ruth to approve the minutes of January 9, 2019, Seconded by Steve Thompson. On roll call vote, AYE: Don Hild, Steve Thompson, and James Ruth; ABSTAIN: Chris Deverman and Amy Wilson. Motion approved.

Council Action Reports:

Vice Chairman Don Hild reported that at the March 25, 2019 regular meeting of the Pekin City Council, the members of the City Council concurred with the recommendation of the Plan Commission and by a unanimous vote approved the petition and ordinance for the rezoning of the property at 131 N. Parkway Drive from OS-1, Office Service District to B-3, General Business District.

Application #1: Consideration of a petition submitted by St. Joseph's Catholic Church for the vacation of a portion of St. Joseph Place right-of-way, with a Legal Description of: All that part of Tharp Place lying adjacent to and immediately north of Block 2 in Tharp Place Addition to the City of Pekin, Illinois and all that part of the alley lying adjacent to and immediately West of Lots 8 through 10 in said Block 2 of Tharp Place Addition, being more particularly bounded and described as follows: Beginning at the Northeast corner of said Lot 8; thence West, along the North line of said Lot 8, 120 feet, more or less, to the northwest corner of said Lot 8; thence South, along the West lines of said Lots 8 through 10, 134 feet, more or less, to the Southwest corner of said Lot 10; thence West, along an extension of the South line of said Lot 10, 15.6 feet, more or less, to the East line of Lot 3 in said Block 2 of Tharp Place Addition; thence North, along the East line of Lots 1 through 3 in Block 2 of said Tharp Place Addition, 134 feet, more or less, to the Northeast corner of said Lot 1; thence West, along the North line of said Lot 1, 120 feet, more or less, to the

Northwest corner of said Lot 1; thence North, along an extension of the West line of said Lot 1, 66 feet, more or less to the South line of Lot 19 in Colts Addition to the City of Pekin, Illinois; thence East, along the South line of Lots 19 through 22 in said Colts addition, 255.6 feet, more or less, to the Southeast corner of said Lot 22; thence South, 66 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning.

Open Public Hearing: 6:20 p.m.

Vice Chairman, Don Hild opened the discussion and asked if there was anyone here to speak in regard to the issue.

Devin Birch, representing Austin Engineering came forward and addressed the members of the Plan Commission. Mr. Birch explained that Austin Engineering has been assisting St. Joseph Catholic Church in the planning and design of the proposed addition and parking lot development. Mr. Birch continued by stating that the vacation of a portion of St. Joseph Place is necessary to connect the proposed addition to the existing church, as the corridor connection could not be accomplished without the vacation of the St. Joseph Place right-of-way. Mr. Birch ended by stating that he would be happy to answer any questions the commission may have.

Bill Fleming, speaking on behalf of St. Joseph Catholic Church, appeared before the members of the Plan Commission and explained that the vacation of St. Joseph Place was critical to what the church wishes to accomplish, as the corridor connection between the existing church and the new building would allow parishioners to safely walk between the buildings without have to walk outside and cross a street.

Judy McCabe, 624 Hillyer Street, appeared before the members of the Plan Commission and stated that she had concerns about closing that portion of the street, as traffic will increase on other surrounding streets, which are not in good condition. Ms. McCabe ended by stating that the intention of the church is good in improving their property, but she doesn't want to look at a big parking lot and deal with the traffic generated by the new community center.

Bruce McCoige, 401 Haines Avenue, came forward and appeared before the members of the Plan Commission and stated that he and the neighborhood had concerns that they would lose the residential character of the neighborhood as a result of the proposed church development and explained to the members of the Plan Commission what they consider the boundaries of their neighborhood. Mr. McCoige continued by stating that the neighborhood around the church is a family neighborhood, with several long-time residents and is primarily a single family neighborhood with no multi-family dwellings. Mr. McCoige further stated that the church has purchased and demolished 7 homes in the neighborhood, reducing the tax base and altering the essential character of the neighborhood. Mr. McCoige stated that the existing streets in the neighborhood are too narrow to handle the level of traffic that would be created and that rendering S. 7th Street a dead end would only make the problem worse. Mr. McCoige stated that snow plowing, garbage collection and emergency vehicle access on S. 7th Street would also be negatively impacted if a portion of St. Joseph place were vacated. Mr. McCoige further stated

that the size of the proposed parking lot was equal in area to the parking lots around the hospital and that due to the design of the proposed parking lot, an excessive amount of traffic would have to travel down Haines Ave. to access the new parking lot.

Vice Chairman Don Hild asked Mr. McCoige to please wrap up his comments to give others in the audience an opportunity to speak.

Mr. McCoige stated that he was speaking on behalf of many in the audience and asked the audience if they wanted him to continue speaking. Several people in the audience announced that they wanted Mr. McCoige to continue speaking. Mr. McCoige ended by stating that the neighboring property owners do not want to live in an area with as much activity and traffic that would be created by the community center use.

Burt Dancey, speaking on behalf of the residents at 419 Haines Ave., came forward and addressed the members of the Plan Commission, stating that to his knowledge there are no standards for the vacation of a city street in the City Code. Mr. Dancey stated that every home in the neighborhood would be impacted if a portion of St. Joseph Place were vacated, as the street is actively used by the neighborhood. Mr. Dancey continued by stating that vacation of a city right-of-way usually applies to streets and alleys that are not used, not an actively used street. Mr. Dancey stated that the new, large dynamic community center will generate far more traffic than the current parish center and the existing streets in the area would not be able to handle the increase in traffic. Mr. Dancey ended by stating that the connection of the new building to the existing church is the rationale for the vacation of St. Joseph Place, but the proposed vacation would not be in the best interest of the neighborhood or the City.

Jamie Evans, 506 S. 7th Street, came forward and addressed the members of the Plan Commission, stating that he felt that Haines Avenue was too narrow to handle more traffic and congestion, as parked cars could impeded access of emergency vehicles to the neighborhood. Mr. Evan ended by stating that there already is a lot going on in that area with the schools and post office and the proposed vacation of St. Joseph Place and the proposed development would create even more activity and problems.

Devin Birch stated that a large portion of the proposed building would be replacing existing elements in other church buildings and that there would not be a mass increase in traffic and overall use of the property. Mr. Birch ended by stating that the City would also benefit from the vacation of a portion of St. Joseph Place, as they would no longer have to maintain or repair that portion of the street.

Burt Dancey stated that if you read the scope of use of the intended building, there will be a significant increase in the use of the property, despite the claims of the applicant.

Close Public Hearing: 7:05 p.m.

Don Hild, Vice Chairman, entertained a motion for discussion.

Motion by Chris Deverman, seconded by James Ruth, to open discussion.

Commissioner Jim Ruth stated that the City could look at other steps to deal with traffic in the neighborhood and could possibly consider opening 7th Street to Court Street.

Commissioner Amy Wilson stated that she felt that the vacation of a portion of St. Joseph Place would not increase traffic, but will reapportion the traffic to other streets in the area.

Bill Fleming came forward again and stated the youth groups that will utilize the proposed, new building are the same youth groups that are using the existing parish center. The existing parish center is old and inefficient and the new building would provide more space for the youth groups and additional office space as well.

Bruce McCoige came forward again and asked if the Fire Department had signed off on the proposed street vacation.

Commissioner James Ruth stated that he wondered if there was sufficient room to construct a driveway to the proposed parking lot south of the proposed addition, as placing a driveway in that location would alleviate traffic and congestion on Haines Avenue.

Vice Chairman Don Hild then called the question on the request of St. Joseph's Catholic Church for the vacation of a portion of St. Joseph Place right-of-way, and by a unanimous vote, the members of the Pekin Plan Commission recommended approval of the request for the vacation of a portion of the St. Joseph Place right-of-way.

John R. Lebegue, Building Inspections / Development Director stated that the vacation will not go to the City Council at the next regular meeting of the City Council and a notification will be mailed to all on the notification list of when the vacation request will be on the City Council agenda.

Application #2: Consideration of a Special Use Petition submitted by Austin Engineering Co., Inc., on behalf of owner, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, for Special Use authorization to construct an addition onto the south of the existing St. Joseph Catholic Church at a property located at 303 S. 7th Street with a Legal Description of: All that part of Lots 16 through 22 of Colts Addition to the City of Pekin, Illinois, all that part of Lots 1 through 5, Lots 8 through 10 of Tharp Place Addition to the City of Pekin, Illinois, part of Lots 6 and 7 of Tharp Place Addition to the City of Pekin, Illinois and Block 2 in Tharp Place Addition to the City of Pekin, Illinois and all that part of the alley lying adjacent to and immediately west of Lots 8 through 10 in said Block 2 of Tharp Place Addition in Tazewell County, Illinois, with the following P.I.N.# 04-10-02-101-001.

Vice Chairman, Don Hild stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals had failed to approve a variance request for the church project and asked if that didn't preclude the Plan Commission from considering and making a recommendation on the petition for Special Use.

City Attorney, Rob McCoy stated that the decision rendered by the Zoning Board of Appeals does not preclude the Plan Commission from considering the Special Use request and making a recommendation to the City Council.

Vice Chairman Hild stated that a Special Use decision is based on the Site Plan that is presented and if the Site Plan is altered as a result of the denial of the variance request, then the Site Plan being considered tonight would no longer be valid.

Commissioner Amy Wilson stated that she agreed with the opinion of Vice Chairman Hild about the need for an accurate Site plan and moved to table consideration of the Special Use petition until an accurate and representative Site Plan is submitted for consideration, seconded by Steve Thompson. On roll call vote, all present voted Aye. Motion approved.

No public input.

Motion made by Steve Thompson, seconded by James Ruth to adjourn. On roll call vote, all present voted Aye. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

John R. Lebegue, Building Inspections / Development Director