

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 27, 2019, 6:00 PM

Planning Commission Members Present: Mayor Ken Tutaj, Alderman Steve Wattawa, Commission Members Eric Stemwell, Charles Buechel, Richard Lentz and Tom Kiepczynski.

Planning Commission Members Excused: Tim Niemiec.

Also present: City Administrator Mark Johnsrud, City Engineer/Director of Public Works Melinda Dejewski; City Attorney Paul Alexy; representing Maker Village Tom Gralewicz, and other interested persons.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Wattawa at 6:00pm. Mayor Tutaj joined the meeting at approximately 6:10pm and assumed the Chair position.

2. Minute Approval

A motion was made by Commissioner Lentz, seconded by Commissioner Kiepczynski to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2018 meeting. Motion carried.

3. Correspondence

None.

4. Discussion and Possible Action

A. Initial PUD Submittal – 2517 E. Norwich Avenue, Milwaukee Maker Village, LLC

City Administrator Johnsrud stated that the City has been approached by Milwaukee Maker Space to purchase the City-owned building at 2517 E. Norwich Avenue. Maker Space is currently located in Bay View. It is a club where members work and create items. The existing building has areas for tools and construction of all types of items including areas for woodworking, a metal shop, a CNC machine, etc. The Maker Space has outgrown their existing location and would like to add the Norwich building as a new location with more area for their tools, equipment and construction.

The 2517 E. Norwich Avenue building is distressed. It has been vacant for many, many years. The building has become dilapidated. The roof leaks, there are broken windows, but the building itself is structurally sound.

Mr. Gralewicz has investors along with his own funds to invest approximately 1.5 million dollars for this project. They will be improving the building by replacing windows, roof, paving the parking lot, sprinkling the building. The interior will house some areas for incubator businesses, construction areas, shop areas, a small retail area. The building will be accessible by club members 24/7/365. The City has approved the purchase and the City is providing TIF incentives. The City is still the lead for the environmental issues. The site has contamination that can be capped. There are 8 more quarters of samples and then the site can be closed by the DNR. The new parking lot will become the cap. In addition, the landscaping will be improved.

Mr. Gralewicz reiterated that the current location is out of space and this location will allow for growth of the club. The Maker Village will have all kinds of areas for the members to work on their hobbies and small businesses. There will be a wood shop, metal shop, crafting area, pottery area with a kiln, and many tools. Their current location is approximately 16,000 square feet and 300+ members. The 2517 E. Norwich Avenue building is around 40,000 square feet so there will be a lot of room to grow. The concept for the building is to have 8000 – 10,000 square feet of maker space, an area for rent by members, an area by Norwich Avenue that will be retail space for members to sell their crafts/hobbies. The main level will also have some space for incubator businesses to lease until they need more space. The lower level will be storage for members. There is an upper area that will be converted to a meeting space for members and the community would be able to use that space as well for meetings.

There was discussion on the types of projects that the Maker Village members do. There are so many ideas and interests of members. Some of the types of projects may need special approvals.

Mr. Gralewicz also stated that the incubator areas will be leased. The Maker Village is self-policing. Members are diligent about holding everyone accountable. The building will be sprinklered. There is a properly vented spray booth for painting. The power tools have access control so members have to log in and log out, and any guests sign a waiver and cannot use power tools. All new members are required to watch the introductory video. All waivers have been vetted by attorneys and they have full liability insurance for the site and members.

There was a question about access for the police and fire departments. Mr. Gralewicz stated that they will add a "knox" box to the site.

There was discussion on how to list all the types of uses that will be done in the building. City Attorney Alexy stated that there are categories in the code that can be worked with.

There was a question about ventilation. Mr. Gralewicz stated that their members have built the proper ventilation systems where necessary.

A question was asked regarding special events. Mr. Gralewicz stated that there are some gallery nights for artist. They participate in Open Doors Milwaukee. Members are encouraged to teach classes and they can reserve the meeting room to do so.

Mr. Bob Roberts is a member of the Maker Space and a St. Francis resident. He has been a member for 2 years. He stated that the Maker Village will bring a lot of people to St. Francis. They have done outreach in the community and schools. There are some loose connections with Milwaukee Tool and Betty Brinn Museum.

There was a question regarding if the current Bay View location would be kept. Mr. Gralewicz stated that it would be for now.

City Administrator Johnsrud stated that the building will be taxable. Mr. Gralewicz added that the Maker Village is starting as a for-profit entity in St. Francis. He added that all the proposed upgrades to the site will be done before occupancy. They want to start in April.

A question was asked if there was going to be a food service provided. Mr. Gralewicz stated that there would be a kitchen area that members could use on their own but not a formal kitchen or food service.

A motion was made by Commissioner Buechel, seconded by Commission Lentz to recommend to the Common Council to approve the initial PUD for Maker Village, LLC and set the date for the public hearing subject o the conditions in the letter from the City Engineer and discussed at the meeting. Motion carried.

5. Adjourn

A motion was made by Alderman Wattawa, seconded by Commissioner Stemwell to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:43pm.