

# MINUTES OF THE ALBERT LEA PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting  
September 5, 2023  
5:30 pm – City Center

Chairman Lucas Schuster called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

## MEMBERS PRESENT

Wyeth Anderson, Vice-Chair  
Leon Axtman  
Rachel Christensen, Ex-Officio  
Jared Dawson  
Matt Dorman  
Matt Maras  
Lucas Schuster, Chair  
Steve Thompson

## MEMBERS ABSENT

None

## STAFF PRESENT

Megan Boeck, City Planner

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Schuster and second by Dorman to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Schuster and second by Dorman to approve the July 5, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Staff report prepared by Megan Boeck, City Planner, is to become part of these minutes by reference.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **1. 1721 Main Street West – Conditional Use Permit**

Boeck stated that the applicant has applied for a CUP for a retail store with outdoor seasonal and permanent storage. The property currently operates under a 1985 CUP. The application is more about obtaining proper special use permitting for how it is currently operating and not really any changes to the actual site. The application designated outdoor seasonal greenspace area, permanent outdoor storage and display areas, and parking and landscape areas.

**Schuster opened the hearing to the public at 5:41 pm**

Axtman stated he supports the application but notes the pavement of the Skyline Mall area is in disrepair and encourages enforcement efforts for that site.

**Schuster closed the hearing to the public at 5:46 pm.**

Motion by Dorman and second by Maras to recommend to City Council approval and issuance of the Conditional Use Permit at 1721 Main Street West with the following conditions:

1. A 3-foot discernable pedestrian walkway shall be required along the front of the entire building which is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
2. Exterior lighting on site shall be adequate to provide security and shall be compatible in design and character with surrounding residential areas. Lighting shall be directed toward the site or contained on the site and shall not be directed toward adjoining residential areas.
3. All landscaped areas shall be maintained in accordance with Sec. 50.0935 which states the owner or agent is responsible for all regular maintenance of all landscaping, keeping it in good condition and in a way that presents a healthy, neat and orderly appearance.
4. All parking areas shall be maintained in accordance with Sec. 50.0894 which states the operator of the principal building shall maintain parking, loading, access drives and yard areas in a neat and acceptable manner including adequate drainage for the property.
5. All seasonal and permanent outdoor storage and display areas shall be limited to the area shown on Exhibit A and Exhibit B.

Motion passed on a 6-0 voiced vote with Thompson abstaining.

### **2. 1311 Front Street West – Conditional Use Permit**

Boeck stated that the applicant has applied for a CUP for a retail merchandise and food store with the potential for a future car wash component. The property was originally part of a 6-lot

CUP approved in 1987. In June 2022, there was a CUP amendment that was approved to allow for a construction contracting office. The current application has no proposed changes to the exterior aspect of the site so staff has allowed the applicant to re-use the site plan submitted in 2022.

The application states the specific retail use is a liquidation store with hours of operation being 11am-7pm Monday-Friday and 10am-6pm Saturday and Sunday. There are no hours of operation for the carwash yet as it will not be operable immediately. Staff asked that the Planning Commission establish carwash hours and consider noise level effects to neighboring residential uses.

**Schuster opened the hearing to the public at 6:02 pm**

Maras asked if there was record of carwash hours of operation in the past. Boeck stated staff was unable to find that information.

Dorman questioned if the hours granted could be revoked. Boeck stated they could through a lengthy revoking process. Dorman stated he supported hours being 7am-10pm to avoid the revoking process and to protect neighboring properties.

**Schuster closed the hearing to the public at 6:07 pm.**

Motion by Anderson and second by Schuster to recommend to City Council approval and issuance of the Conditional Use Permit at 1311 Front Street West with the following conditions:

1. At least twenty (20) percent of the site shall be landscaped.
2. Exterior lighting on site shall be adequate to provide security and shall be compatible in design and character with surrounding residential areas. Lighting shall be directed toward the site or contained on the site and shall not be directed toward adjoining residential areas.
3. All off-street parking areas shall be developed with concrete or asphalt surfaces.
4. All refuse shall be enclosed in a 3-yard or smaller dumpster container and screened with like building materials.
5. No outdoor merchandise display or sales are allowed.
6. No outdoor storage of construction equipment or materials including vehicles, trailers, lawn mowers, snow blowers and other recreational vehicles is allowed on site.
7. Retail store hours shall be limited to 11am-7pm Monday through Friday and 10am-6pm on Saturday and Sunday.
8. Car wash hours shall be limited to 7am-10pm each day.

Motion passed on a 7-0 voiced vote.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION**

Boeck introduced Matt Maras as the newest member of the Planning Commission. Boeck stated that Maras has previous city board experience with the Board of Zoning Appeals and that she is happy to have the vacancy filled.

### **STAFF COMMUNICATION**

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Dorman and second by Schuster to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 pm. Motion carried.

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Cierra Maras, Planning Commission Secretary

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Lucas Schuster, Chairman