

City of Verona
Minutes
Plan Commission
August 3, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Verona Plan Commission held its meeting as a virtual meeting. The Plan Commission did not meet at City Hall, 111 Lincoln Street. Members of the Plan Commission and Staff joined the meeting by using Zoom Webinar. Members of the public were able to join the meeting using Zoom Webinar via a computer, tablet, or smartphone, or by calling into the meeting via phone.

- 1. Call to Order:** Luke Diaz called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.
- 2. Roll Call:** Luke Diaz, Mike Hankard, Katie Kohl, Pat Lytle, Tyler Powers, and Beth Tucker Long were present. Also present: City Administrator Adam Sayre, Community Development Specialist Katherine Holt, City Engineer Carla Fischer, and AECOM Traffic Engineer Jess Billmeyer. Steve Heinzen was absent and excused.
- 3. Public Comment:**
 - Michael Samuels, representing the Andev Group, LLC, spoke on behalf of the Andev Group petition for annexation and zoning of the property at Whalen Road and Liberty Drive for a senior living facility.
 - Grant Emmel, representing St. Ambrose Academy, spoke on behalf of the proposed St. Ambrose Academy project located at 301 North Main Street.
 - Fr. Scott Emerson, representing St. Christopher Parish, spoke in support of the proposed St. Ambrose Academy project located at 301 North Main Street.
 - John Bierberitz, representing Traffic Analysis and Design, Inc., spoke regarding the traffic analysis done for the proposed St. Ambrose Academy project located at 301 North Main Street.
 - Wade Wyse, representing Wyser Engineering, spoke regarding the Certified Survey Map, as well as sanitary sewer, water, and storm sewer connections for the site of the proposed St. Ambrose Academy project located at 301 North Main Street.
 - Terrie Smith, 106 Panther Trail, Monona, WI, spoke in opposition to the St. Ambrose Academy project located at 301 North Main Street.
 - Michael Ehly, 6370 DeMarco Trail, Verona, WI, asked about plans for food service and utilization of school district athletic fields and gymnasiums for St. Ambrose Academy, and stated the St. Christopher parishioners are not all in favor of the proposed St. Ambrose Academy project.
 - Ronald Trachtenberg, attorney with Fuhrman and Dodge, and representing St. Ambrose Academy, spoke to offer answers to any legal questions that may arise regarding the proposed St. Ambrose Academy project located at 301 North Main Street.
 - Kirk Keller, representing Plunkett Raysich Architects, LLP, and representing St. Ambrose Academy, spoke to offer answers to any questions regarding the interior layout and use of the proposed St. Ambrose Academy building.

4. Approval of minutes from July 6, 2020 Plan Commission meeting.

Motion by Kohl, seconded by Tucker-Long, to approve the minutes from the July 6, 2020 Plan Commission meeting. Motion carried 6-0.

5. Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit for a health and wellness facility located at 1155 Clarity Street.

Motion by Diaz, seconded by Lytle, to open the public hearing at 6:54 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

There were no comments from the public.

Motion by Kohl, seconded by Powers, to close the public hearing at 6:55 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

a. Discussion and Possible Action – Conditional Use Permit for a health and wellness facility located at 1155 Clarity Street.

Sayre explained the Applicant is planning a training area, as well as a small juice bar, in this space. The site has sufficient parking, and the use fits the zoning requirements for this area.

Tucker Long asked why a conditional use permit is required for this use.

Sayre replied any restaurant or fitness use is considered Indoor Commercial Entertainment Land Use, and requires a Conditional Use Permit.

Motion by Tucker Long, seconded by Diaz, to approve a Conditional Use Permit to allow an Indoor Commercial Entertainment Land Use at 1155 Clarity Street.

Lytle asked if this is the last vacant suite in this building, and if there are any concerns by Staff regarding adequate parking space in the future.

Sayre replied there is one 2,500 square foot suite still available. Staff has no concerns as there is adequate parking space on this site.

Motion carried 6-0.

6. Discussion and Possible Action – Site plan review for Big Sky Engineering to allow for exterior improvements to the building and grounds for 515 Commerce Parkway.

Holt explained Big Sky Enterprises has purchased the building located at 515 Commerce Parkway, and is requesting a site plan review to renovate the exterior of the building. The building footprint and access points to the property will not change. Renovations include updating the brown exterior with metal panels, honed brick base, and accent metal awnings. Additional wall pack lighting may be added, as well. No landscaping plan was submitted, but the applicant is planning to remove some of the overgrowth in front of the building. It is not known how many plants will be removed, or how many will be replaced. Staff is generally supportive of the proposed exterior renovations, and recommends the site plan be approved with the following condition:

1. Prior to planting landscaping, the Applicant and Staff will coordinate the species of the plantings and locations.

Hankard stated he would like to see the other sides of the building remain brown, as the color blends in with the surroundings, making the building less conspicuous.

Lytle asked if Staff will check back with the Applicant to ensure that the City's landscaping requirements are upheld.

Kaine McNett, KSW Construction, replied the initial plan is to keep the landscaping as is, but open up the north side by trimming back some of the overgrowth. Future landscaping will be

done through The Bruce Company with the purpose of creating more curb appeal for the property.

Motion by Lytle, seconded by Powers, to approve the site plan for Big Sky Engineering for exterior improvements to the building and grounds for 515 Commerce Parkway, subject to the following condition:

1. Prior to planting landscaping, the Applicant and Staff will coordinate the species of the plantings and locations.

Motion carried 6-0.

7. Discussion and Possible Action – Initial review for two (2) commercial buildings with drive-thrus that would contain a total of approximately 8,180 square feet of commercial space located north of 233 Wildcat Way.

Holt explained the property, located south of West Verona Avenue, is currently owned by Kwik Trip, and is zoned Urban Commercial. A Certified Survey Map will create separate lots for each of the two buildings, and will require a shared parking agreement, shared access agreement and a stormwater management easement agreement. Access to the site will be shared with Kwik Trip from West End Circle and Wildcat Way. A sidewalk is proposed to extend from the existing sidewalk along West End Circle and through the property, connecting the two buildings. Sixty-one (61) parking stalls are proposed, which is below the minimum parking requirements for Urban Commercial zoning. The Applicant will be requesting an exemption to the parking requirement. The proposed buildings will include a 2,200 square foot building with a drive-thru wrapping the building, and a 5,980 square foot building for a bank. The property is located in the Downtown Design and Use Overlay Zone. A retaining wall along the northern portion of the property is proposed, with a height approximately three (3) to four (4) feet above the grade to screen the drive-thru lane. Staff recommends installation of a wrought-iron fence on top of the retaining wall that mimics other fences in the City.

Powers asked if the additional height of the retaining wall will hide the facades of the buildings.

Holt replied the height of the buildings was not included in the site plan, so we do not know how tall they will be, but only the portions of the buildings taller than the retaining wall would be seen from the street.

Tucker Long asked if the drive-thrus could be positioned to prevent the queue of cars in the drive-thru for the building nearest West End Circle from blocking cars leaving the other building's drive-thru.

Sayre replied it may depend on where the message board for the building nearest West End Circle is located. Adjusting the placement of the buildings may be an option, as well.

Tucker Long stated she would like to see the parking on the east side of the bank building moved to the west side, so people don't have to walk through the drive-thru to get to the building.

Kohl asked if there is an area dedicated to bicycle parking.

Holt replied bicycle parking was not included in the preliminary plan, but will be added in subsequent plans.

Diaz stated he would like the area to be bicycle and pedestrian friendly, and is interested in what will be provided in terms of landscaping.

The Commission took no action on this item.

8. Discussion and Possible Action – Planned Unit Development (PUD) concept plan review for a one (1)-story, 1,280 square foot addition to the existing commercial building located at 517 Half Mile Road.

Holt explained Atkins Bike Shoppe is requesting to expand the existing building to the south. A rear setback exemption from the required 25 feet to 18 feet is being requested. Access will continue to be from Half Mile Road. The parking area may be expanded toward the south. Staff recommends the Applicant discuss the proposed addition with the neighbors.

The Commission took no action on this item.

9. Discussion and Possible Action – Planned Unit Development (PUD) concept plan review for a 118-unit senior housing comprised of sixty (60) units assisted living and fifty-eight (58) units of assisted/memory care located adjacent to 1100 Whalen Road.

Sayre explained this project is currently located in the Town of Verona, and is not located within the City's Urban Service Area. There is a long process for this proposal to go through before anything could actually be built. The first step is for the Plan Commission and Common Council to determine if there is interest in developing this property and the proposed use of the property. The property is north of the ACS building and the City's Well 6 on Whalen Road, and is within the Southeast Neighborhood Plan. The Plan includes non-residential uses such as business park, light manufacturing, and warehousing. There is a transition area to the east of the property which allows for a transition of properties from residential to commercial uses. The Plan is very explicit about what should be in the Liberty Business Park and Verona Technology Park areas. North of Whalen Road, the Plan is not as explicit. It might make some sense to not place a high concentration of warehousing or businesses that would create a lot of truck traffic in this area. It is difficult to get to US HWY 151 and the ramps from this area. Staff is open to a residential/institution type use here, as it creates a nice transition for this area of the City. Liberty Drive will have to be extended, and sidewalks will have to be added on Liberty Drive and Whalen Road. An east/west road through the lot to the east will have to be constructed, as well. Staff has requested the Applicant to include underground parking in the project. Parkland dedication will be discussed as part of the annexation agreement process.

Hankard stated facilities such as this are relatively benign, and on the surface, it seems to fit in well with the long-term plan for this area.

Tucker Long stated she would like to see some park land dedicated around the facility. She also asked if locating a residential facility in this area would negate the Neighborhood Plan.

Sayre replied it would likely negate the Neighborhood Plan. The question is whether or not office and manufacturing-type uses are appropriate for the corridor between Whalen Road and Grandview Road.

Powers stated he is not sure this is the right location for a residential facility.

Tucker Long stated Verona has a limited amount of non-residential area. If this site is converted to residential, she would like to see a swap of non-residential land for residential land.

Sayre replied that would be difficult. The City does not want to move non-residential uses too far off the highway, as it would create more truck traffic on the City streets.

Diaz stated he is in favor of underground parking and the parkland dedication on this project.

Lytle agrees that this project does not fit the neighborhood plan as developed. There was not a lot of thought put into access and the capacity of roads to serve the area when the Neighborhood Plan was developed, particularly north of Whalen Road. It may be time to take a

more realistic look at what can be served in terms of transportation, and possibly revisit the Neighborhood Plan.

Tom Ostrom, representing Matthews Senior Living, stated basically none of the residents of their facilities drive, therefore they believe that underground parking is not needed. In addition, use of underground parking would be discouraged, as every person going into the building should go through the front door, and must now because of COVID-19.

Tucker Long asked if parking for staff could be placed underground.

Ostrom replied at this time, everyone must be screened when entering the building, so underground parking is not feasible.

Tucker Long asked if the company has looked at any other properties in the City, and if there is a reason this location was chosen.

Ostrom replied they prefer an area with some visibility, which puts the facility in mind for people that may need care for themselves or a loved one.

The Commission took no action on this item.

10. Discussion and Possible Action – Planned Unit Development (PUD) concept plan review for a two (2)-story, 34,000 square foot multi-phased private school located at 301 North Main Street.

Sayre explained this property is located across from the former high school, and north of St. Christopher Parish on North Main Street. St. Ambrose Academy is requesting to build a private school for grades 6-12, with a capacity of approximately 150 students. A land division and rezoning will likely be necessary. A public informational meeting was held by St. Ambrose via Microsoft Teams on July 20th, which was attended by 75 people. In 2014, the extension of Silent Street to Main Street was removed from the City's Downtown Redevelopment Plan. The proposed plan includes an access point to the property from Silent Street, but does not connect Silent Street through the property to Main Street. City Staff prefers a shared access point with the church to the south, and shared parking space with St. Christopher Parish. Staff also recommends that if a second access point off Silent Street is recommended, Staff will require that the private drive will be removed from the right-of-way, as having it there may impact any future plans that the City may have for this area. Parking plans will be reviewed in an attempt to prevent spill-over parking into the surrounding neighborhoods. A bike path connection to the property is planned. Proposed completion of this project follows the beginning of the 2021 school year. The project will be completed in three phases.

Diaz asked Sayre to address questions raised during Public Comment regarding the floor plan of the building and a potential contract with Verona Area School District (VASD) for use of their sports fields.

Grant Emmel, representing St. Ambrose Academy, explained there is a breakout area that is used by multiple large groups, and is also used as a cafeteria area. The school utilizes a classical curriculum, which calls for small classrooms and a small footprint. Available green space will be utilized to the maximum degree possible. Regarding reserving space with VASD for sports and other extracurricular activities, St. Ambrose and VASD would have to come to an agreement regarding that use, just as would any other entity. St. Ambrose promised VASD Supervisor Dean Gorrell that they would wait until next year to have that conversation.

Diaz asked about reasons for the inability to have a shared access point and shared parking.

Emmel replied the church and school are separate entities. The school obtains no financing from the church. The parish is concerned that if an agreement is made requiring the church to share an access point and parking with the school building, and the school should happen to fail at some point, the church may be in a position of having to share access and parking with a business not involved in any way with the church.

Diaz stated he has regularly seen unrelated businesses share access points and parking areas, and asked how this is any different.

Emmel replied the school is willing to work with the parish and is willing to talk about shared parking. The fewer parking spaces needed, the more green space will be available.

Hankard asked for a comparison of how many students are currently enrolled versus how many are anticipated for the new school, as well as how many parking spaces are available at the current location versus how many it is anticipated will be needed at the new location.

Emmel replied students generally come from large families, and from across the entire county, which makes carpooling a popular and natural option. This reduces the number of vehicles on site on a school day. The student population growth rate is now at approximately 5-10%. That would put the student numbers at approximately 120 the first year, and up to approximately 150-160 by the time phase three of the project is constructed.

Kohl asked if the school provides bussing, and if the school's hours are the same as the public school's across the street.

Emmel replied they do not provide bussing at this time. School hours are 8:15 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. The traffic study took school hours into account, and some flexibility in hours is possible.

Billmeyer stated a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) was prepared including the trip generation expected by St. Ambrose Academy. There are crossing guards on either side of this site, creating traffic gaps and long traffic queues on Main Street. A study was done of the traffic gaps, with the conclusion that there were a sufficient number of gaps to allow for vehicles leaving the St. Ambrose property to make their way onto Main Street without significant wait time.

Tucker asked when the gap study was done.

Billmeyer replied it was done in late 2019, which was pre-COVID-19.

Kohl asked if another gap study should be done, considering the new student demographic for the VASD school across the street and the effect of COVID-19 on traffic patterns.

Billmeyer replied the original traffic study was done in November 2019. The changing demographics were taken into account in the study.

Tucker Long asked if the gap study was done during the CTH M construction.

Billmeyer replied the CTH M construction was wrapping up at the time of the traffic study.

Tucker Long agrees with Kohl that a new traffic study should be done, as she believes there will be different kinds of traffic going through this area in the future.

Emmel stated VASD will be doing another traffic study when school is in session, and will be sharing those results with St. Ambrose.

Lytle stated focusing on traffic, access and stormwater drainage are important at this time. He would be reluctant to not find a way to gain some right-of-way from Harriet Street north to establish turning lanes, and to address traffic flow and safety. He believes the entrance to the St. Ambrose property should be lined up with the entrance to the old high school.

Diaz stated he opposes opening the Silent Street extension, and would like to see the church and school share parking lots. He asked Fischer if the site can be amended to reduce the impact of possible flooding in the neighborhood.

Fischer replied this area is very flat, and east side of the property is lower than the rest. The church parking lot sheet flows to the east. Most of the stormwater problems seem to be coming from the church property, so she is not sure if that can be amended with this project, as the issue is not located on the project property.

Powers stated the access point to the parking lot should be moved to Main Street. He is not sure what St. Ambrose would do for outdoor space if there are no agreements with VASD to use their facilities.

Tucker Long is worried that there will not be enough parking if the student population continues to grow.

Hankard asked if there is another school in the greater Madison area similar to this one that could be used as a comparison regarding parking needs.

Billmeyer replied the traffic study showed that 15 staff cars and approximately 60 other cars were parked in the parking lot per day, based on a student population of 112.

Hankard asked if we might be making up a problem that does not exist. He believes sharing the parking lot with the church is the smart way to go.

Fr. Scott, representing St. Christopher Parish, stated when the conversations regarding this project began, one of the concerns was separate parking. The church runs separately from the school. From time to time, there are events at the church for which the entire parking lot would be used. In addition, St. Christopher's former elementary school building has been used over the last few years as a 4k facility, and is being considered for housing an elementary school program once again. If this comes to fruition, the church's parking lot would be used during the day. He would hesitate to have sharing of the parking lot with St. Ambrose Academy be part of the conversation going forward. In terms of the concept of secrecy regarding this project, he believes it relates to difficulty disseminating information during COVID-19. The parish is supportive of St. Ambrose in general.

Kohl stated she has received several emails regarding this project, most of which have been positive. She would like to take some time before making a final decision on this project, as there are several factors to consider.

Lytle stated the City should expect the same coordination and cooperation between St. Christopher Parish and St. Ambrose School as would be expected from the participants in any other development project in the City. Shared access and parking should continue to be encouraged and expected. Other concerns may be addressed as more information becomes available.

No action was taken by the Commission on this item.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Tucker Long, seconded by Kohl, to adjourn. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.