

**CITY OF AURORA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 5, 2020**

The Aurora Planning Commission met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2020, in the Council Chambers of Aurora City Hall. The Planning Commission Chairman Kathi Grandillo called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present:           Laura Duguay  
                      Peter French  
                      Sarah Gilmore  
                      Kathi Grandillo  
                      Jim Maulis

Also Present:    Denise Januska, Director, Planning, Zoning & Building Division  
                      Justin Czekaj, City Engineer  
                      Marie Lawrie, Commission Clerk

Kathi Grandillo administered the oath to those in attendance who wished to speak.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

None

**SUBMISSION OF SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:        To adopt the minutes of the January 15, 2020, as submitted**

Mr. French moved; Ms. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

Yeas:            Mr. French, Ms. Duguay, Ms. Gilmore, Ms. Grandillo, Mr. Maulis

Nays:            None

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**Volunteers of America, W. Garfield Rd and N. Bissell Rd, New Commercial Building – Preliminary Site Plan (2001002)**

Robert Bajko, Principal of HSB Architects + Engineers, 1250 Old River Road, Cleveland, Ohio attended to represent the project. He was representing the Volunteers of America. He was seeking approval of a preliminary site plan for a new 25,400 square foot single-story commercial building. Dennis Kresak, Former President/CEO at Volunteers of America of Greater Ohio was also in attendance. Mr. Bajko stated that the VOA has operated a thrift store at the present location in Aurora since 1983. It is currently located at 1063 N. Aurora Road. Mr. Bajko stated that the VOA would like to expand their services to the community and the veterans they serve. The current parcel is 14 acres, of which they would purchase 3.5 acres and erect their building next to the Ganley Chevrolet dealership. Along with the retail thrift store, a covered donation drop-off will be located on the east side of the building. Also located on the east side will be a trash compactor. He stated that donations will be received through sliding doors and no outdoor storage will be present on the parcel. A loading dock will be present on the rear of the building. He stated that the VOA is a good neighbor and takes pride in their facilities.

Ms. Grandillo asked if the food pantry would relocate to this new facility. The answer was no. She also asked about the lot split and exact location of this project. It was confirmed to be abutting Ganley Chevrolet and not occupying the corner of W. Garfield Road and N. Bissell Road.

Ms. Grandillo asked the members for their comments and questions. Ms. Duguay asked if it was necessary to notify homeowners of this application. The answer was no. The use is permitted and no variances have been sought. Ms. Duguay further asked about the driveway for the facility. The staff report indicated that only one curb cut onto W. Garfield Road would be permitted. The site plan submitted by the applicant showed two curb cuts along W. Garfield Road. She was concerned about whether there would be an entrance along N. Bissell Road that might line up with the current entrance to the Lakes of Aurora subdivision. Ms. Januska stated that currently there are no plans for a connecting entrance from that direction. She further stated that if development plans are submitted at a later date for that corner piece, that an interconnection could be possible then.

There was a discussion about where the single entrance should be located when the drawings are revised. Mr. Czekaj stated that the city adheres to the ODOT Access Management document. He stated that a discussion may be necessary with the engineers of the project to determine a location. Mr. Bajko stated that lining the entrance up with the Fifth Third Bank entrance may be the best option. Mr. Czekaj agreed that it may be the best option and stated that he would be available to talk about it.

Ms. Duguay asked what the plan was for the current location. Dennis Kresak stated that they will discontinue the lease except for the food pantry, which will remain where it is. There was intension to move the food pantry to the new building, but he stated that it is working well at the current location. In the future, it is possible they will relocate the food pantry to another location, but not at this time. Ms. Duguay stated that the current drop-off location on N. Aurora Road is unsightly. She asked how they would prevent this at the new location. Mr. Kresak acknowledged that situation and explained that it was due to the amount of traffic at the current space. Donations will happen under the canopy. Sliding doors will open and someone will help unload your car. Mr. Kresak stated that it will be quicker and will not back-up traffic.

Ms. Duguay asked if the hours of operation would remain the same. Mr. Bajko stated that the hours would be the same as they are now. The current hours of operation are Monday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., and closed on Sunday. Ms. Duguay asked if they were expecting increased volume at the new location. The answer was that they hope so. Ms. Duguay made the applicant aware that another charity has a donation drop-off in the parking lot of the PNC Bank building.

Mr. French asked if the new location would be owned by the VOA. The answer was yes. With a 25,000 square foot building, Mr. French inquired about how that compares to other locations around the state. The answer was that some locations are 35,000 square foot and the current house is 1,200 square foot. Mr. Kresak stated that they are trying to be more uniform in their new builds. Mr. French stated that VOA also offers counselling, training, etc. He wanted to know if those services would be available in the new building. The answer was no. This location will be strictly a retail use.

Ms. Gilmore asked if the land has been purchased. The answer was that there is a purchase agreement. She then asked where the next closest locations might be. The answer was that there are current locations in North Olmsted and Brunswick. She asked if there are any development plans for the remainder of the parcel. The answer was no. Ms. Gilmore asked how soon items would be taken inside if they were dropped off after hours. Mr. Kresak said that this location would be open on Sundays. Ms. Gilmore asked if any items would be for sale outside of the building. The answer was no.

Ms. Gilmore asked about the location of the proposed banked parking spots. Ms. Januska explained that code requires a certain number of parking spaces. Some spaces can be land banked to prevent unnecessary paving, until it is determined that they are needed. Ms. Gilmore agreed that if the parking spaces in the rear were not needed, to leave that area unpaved for the time being.

Mr. Maulis asked if a 25,000 square foot building would be expected to hold all of the items that might be dropped off at the new facility. The answer was that items turn over rather quickly. Mr. Bajko stated that there is no surplus.

Ms. Grandillo opened the floor for public comment.

Deb Conti, 234 S Chillicothe Road was in attendance. She inquired about how much of the building will be devoted to the processing center and how much will be designated for the retail store. She also stated that she visited the Mansfield store. She noticed mostly clothing. She stated that at the Aurora location, there is a wider variety of articles, including furniture. She inquired about the truck that sits in the parking lot. She stated that it appears to stay in the parking lot until it is full and then the merchandise is moved off site. The truck then returns. She asked for clarification that the truck would not be parked at the new facility. She also inquired about how they planned to stop people from dropping off donations after store hours. She was concerned that people would continue to drop items off at the food pantry location even after a new facility is built. She asked how they planned to re-train people after 37 years of this habit.

Mr. Krecek addressed the comments and questions. He stated that with the new drop-off area, there should not be a lot of excess and if there is excess, they have a warehouse in Cleveland. They can also redistribute items to other stores. He stated that the hours of this new store would differ from the current hours of operation. The new store will be open until 9:00 p.m. If things are dropped off, they will be brought in first thing in the morning. Mr. Bajko stated that there is 2000 square feet of processing area. Mr. Krecek confirmed that trucks would not sit daily in the parking lot.

**MOTION: To accept for study the application for Volunteers of America, W. Garfield Rd and N. Aurora Rd – New Industrial Building – Preliminary Site Plan (2001002)**

Mr. French moved; Ms. Gilmore seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. French, Ms. Gilmore, Ms. Duguay, Ms. Grandillo, Mr. Maulis

Nays: None

Mr. Bajko asked a question about the traffic study that would be required for final site plan approval. Ms. Januska confirmed that due to the location on a state route, they would need to have a full traffic impact study report to submit. He also inquired about when to submit the lot split information. Ms. Januska stated that he can submit that information for a later meeting, as it is not necessary for preliminary site approval.

### MISCELLANEOUS

None.

### ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m.**

Mr. Maulis moved; Ms. Gilmore seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Maulis, Ms. Gilmore, Ms. Duguay, Mr. French, Ms. Grandillo

Nays: None