

Minutes - Goshen Plan Commission  
Tuesday, March 15, 2022 - 4:00 pm  
Council Chambers, 111 E. Jefferson Street  
Goshen, Indiana

**I.** The meeting was called to order with the following members present: Rolando Ortiz, Richard Worsham, Tom Holtzinger, Hesston Lauver, Doug Nisley, Caleb Morris, and James Wellington. Also present were City Planner Rhonda Yoder and Assistant City Attorney James Kolbus. Absent: Josh Corwin, Aracelia Manriquez

**II.** Approval of Minutes of 2/15/22 – Holtzinger/Wellington 7-0

**III.** The Zoning/Subdivision Ordinances and Official Staff Reports were unanimously filed into the record: Holtzinger/Morris 7-0

**IV.** Postponements/Withdrawals - None

**V. B-4 Major Change & Preliminary Site Plan Approval** (public hearings)

**22-03MA** – HSN, LLC and Abonmarche Consultants request a B-4 major change to the Willow Lakes of Goshen (planned shopping center) and preliminary site plan approval to allow a self-storage facility (Warehousing, Mini, not permitted in the B-4 District), including two freestanding signs, a 6' fence located within the front yard setback along Ferndale Road, and self-storage parking requirements. The subject property contains ±3.98 acres, is zoned Commercial B-4 District, and is generally located at the southeast corner of Ferndale Road and Willows Way.

*Staff Report:*

Ms. Yoder explained the Willow Lakes of Goshen is the B-4 portion of an overall Willows development that also includes a residential area with R-4 zoning. She provided background information on the formation of the overall development which began in 1996, noting that development is tied to a site plan. She also explained that in 2001 a preliminary plan included the Target/Kohl's area along with an area to the south, including the subject property, for an office complex. She also noted that uses and developmental standards follow the B-4 district in the area zoned B-4.

Today's petition is for an automated self-storage facility containing 8 buildings and no onsite office. A major change is required because this use is not permitted in the B-4 district. Approval of the preliminary site plan is requested with the major change. The request also includes several developmental components, including 2 freestanding signs, a 6' fence within the front yard setback, and self-storage parking requirements.

Ms. Yoder pointed out that the automated self-storage use with no office or on-site employees would be a less intense use than the originally proposed office development. She referred to a 2001 site plan included in packets that show the proposed office and retail use. She stated the proposed use is not out of character with the proposed site plan which included multiple buildings. She pointed out the only entrance is on Willows Way which is internal to the site. There will be no access from Ferndale Road. She also noted that Willows Way is a private drive and access is through an agreement between the property owners.

Related to the two freestanding signs, the site plan shows one at the intersection of Ferndale Road and Willows Way and one near the internal entrance. She noted that the B-4 district allows more than one freestanding sign, but it's based upon street frontage and because the private drive is not public, it's not considered a street. She explained if it was a public street instead of a private street, it would automatically qualify for two freestanding signs. She pointed out the freestanding sign along Ferndale Road is required to be non-illuminated and Staff recommends that both signs be monument signs, with each sign limited to 32 sf in area and 8' in height.

Regarding the fence, the B-4 district requires a 50' front building setback and in business districts, a fence located within a front yard is limited to 4' in height. She explained that in this case the 6' fence is proposed approximately 20' from the Ferndale Road property line and she noted that landscaping will be required between the property line

and the fence. She went on to say the fence cannot be placed at the 50' setback because of a drainage easement that goes north and south through the property and also a large detention basin which is currently overgrown with trees and shrubs. She said Staff recommends the fence be placed as far east as possible so taller tree species can be planted. She noted overhead power lines will limit the height of trees that can be planted along Ferndale Road.

The 2001 preliminary site plan approval included a parking requirement for the office area of 1 space for every 240 sf or 210 total spaces. She explained this would be similar to parking requirements for Target. She pointed out that because there will be no office or office staff, it doesn't make sense to use this as the parking standard. She went on to say required parking for mini warehousing is 1 space for every 2 employees and this is Staff's recommendation for parking requirements.

A landscape buffer is required along Ferndale Road with a short berm and alternating deciduous and coniferous trees. She noted the berm currently exists, but the trees will need to be planted as part of this project.

Ms. Yoder discussed several standard B-4 restrictions, which include no outside storage, no barbed wire with the fence, as well as lighting requirements, that will apply to the site.

Ms. Yoder noted the proposed major change and preliminary site plan are consistent with the overall Willow Lakes development and is a low-intensity use that will complement and not adversely impact adjacent residential areas. Staff recommends a favorable recommendation be passed on to the Goshen Common Council.

Ms. Yoder noted for the record that an email was provided to all Commission members from a neighboring property owner who raised concerns about the fence, site access, and trash.

#### *Petitioner Presentation*

Crystal Welsh, 303 River Race Drive, Unit 206, spoke on behalf of the petitioner. She stated they feel the self-storage units are a good buffer between the more intense commercial use and the residential areas. She pointed out the previously approved office use would have had over 100 parking spaces with a lot of employees. She noted there will be no onsite employees, but this development is locally owned and owners are available for any issues that might arise. She pointed out the landscaping will provide a good buffer to the residential areas to the west. She also explained the retention area which is currently overgrown with trees will be cleaned out which will help with stormwater in the area. She went on to explain the reason two signs are being requested is to help eliminate concerns of traffic turning around in neighboring properties.

Mr. Holtzinger asked if there are any storage facilities in the area that are not staffed.  
Mr. Welsh stated she believes there is one in Mishawaka that has an automated entry.

Mr. Holtzinger asked if the retention pond will be fenced in.

Ms. Welsh stated the proposed fence will be between the retention pond and Ferndale Road, noting the rest of the facility will be fenced on the west and north sides.

Ms. Yoder remarked that the proposed fence will connect with the existing fence along the south and east property lines. She went on to explain the entire site will be fenced in.

Mr. Wellington asked for clarification on the location of the landscaping.

Mr. Yoder replied it will be along Ferndale Road and on the west side of the fence.

Mr. Wellington asked about the south side of the fence.

Ms. Yoder responded that nothing is required along the south side of the fence, but pointed out there is already a tall masonry fence. She also noted there is a wide green space through there that contains a high-pressure gas main. She explained this provides a barrier between the residential area and the B-4 area to the north.

Mr. Nisley asked how complaints will be addressed if there is no onsite office.

Ms. Welsh stated this is locally owned and there will be weekly maintenance. The owners have also stated they will provide phone numbers to The Willows office. She noted there will also be signage and the phone numbers can be

listed on the signs as well.

#### *Audience Comments*

Eric Cox, 23042 Marydale Drive, spoke to the petition. He voiced concerns about light, noise, and the visual effect of this proposed development and feels this will not stimulate the local economy.

Collette Crowder, 128 The Willows, also spoke to the petition. She voiced concerns regarding the upkeep of the property, noise, traffic, and intruders. She also asked how they contact owners with concerns.

Mr. Holtzinger if there are problems with Target immediately north of The Willows.

Ms. Crowder stated Target keeps their property clean and trees act as a buffer between the properties. She also stated they turn lights off and stated the lights at the storage facility will be on 24 hours per day.

John Long, The Willows (no address given), also spoke to the petition. He asked why an 8' fence with vinyl slats can't be installed to hide the buildings from view, instead of a 6' fence. He's also concerned that this facility will cause additional traffic.

Glenda Thompson, 115 The Willows, spoke to the petition. She asked if Willows Way is a private road. She is also concerned about additional lights, noise, and traffic.

Betty Stafford, 118 The Willows, also spoke to the petition. She stated it's difficult to contact anyone at The Willows and asked how to contact them.

#### *Petitioner Response:*

Crystal Welsh, Abonmarche, responded to audience comments and concerns with the following information:

- Willow Way is a private street with an access agreement between the owners. That agreement was recorded in April 2021.
- There will be no direct access from Ferndale Road.
- A Google search shows traffic generated by storage facilities usually averages approximately 2.5 trips per 1,000 sf. To put that into perspective, a business park would generate approximately 13 trips per 1,000 sf which makes this a relatively low generator of traffic.
- If approved, lighting, drainage, and other engineering requirements will be reviewed with a site plan at a Technical Review meeting with City staff. She explained how the lighting review process works, noting that lighting is for the safety and security of the facility.
- The existing berm, together with the landscaping and fence should help buffer properties to the west. Additionally, the first building will be placed 100' away from the property line along Ferndale Road.
- Confirmation that the new fence will attach to the existing masonry fence. The requested 6' fence is already taller than what is normally allowed in the front yard setback.
- Ben and Mike are the owners and it's expected that a phone number will be on the signage for anyone wanting to rent a unit.

Mr. Lauver asked how tall these buildings will be.

Ms. Welsh stated she's unsure of the exact height, but these buildings are only one story.

Ms. Yoder pointed out that in the B-4 zoning district, 2.5 story buildings are permitted, so these units will be well under the maximum allowed height.

Rick Thompson, 115 The Willows, spoke to the petition. He stated it's not uncommon to see an ambulance and firetruck in the complex. His concern is that traffic will be lined up to get into the storage facility and emergency personnel won't be able to get through the traffic jam. He also questioned who will maintain the road with the additional traffic.

Ms. Welsh explained there is a 20' entrance drive off of Willows Way leading to the fenced area inside the storage facility. She noted vehicles will pull into the drive, put in their code and then enter the facility. Traffic will not stop

on Willows Way. Regarding maintenance and repair of the roadway, she noted that the access agreement spells out the requirements for maintenance and who is responsible.

Mr. Thompson questioned how this will be adequate if someone arrives with a 26' moving truck.

Ms. Yoder responded that this brings up a good point and it's something that will need to be looked at. She stated there may be a way to adjust that, but today's request is for preliminary approval only.

*Close Public Hearing*

*Staff Discussion:*

Mr. Wellington asked if an adjustment needs to be part of a motion or will it be done later.

Ms. Yoder responded that because this is preliminary, Engineering has not looked at this plan. They will look at the access and other technical things and determine what changes need to be made. She went on to say there should be room to move the entrance back if necessary.

Mr. Nisley commented that this is not the final decision; that this request will also be heard by the City Council.

Ms. Yoder agreed that this will be heard by the City Council and that it will also be reviewed as part of the City's technical review process.

Mr. Lauver asked Ms. Yoder where the high-pressure gas line is that she referred to earlier.

Ms. Yoder responded that it's on The Willows property, immediately adjacent to the south.

Mr. Lauver questioned what the distance is from the fence to the adjacent homes.

Ms. Yoder replied it's over 80 feet, pointing out there are two easements there.

*Action:*

A motion was made and seconded, Wellington/Holtzinger, to forward a favorable recommendation for 22-03MA to the Goshen Common Council, based on Staff analysis. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

**VI.** Audience Items  
None

**VII.** Staff/Board Items  
None

**VIII.** Adjournment – 4:54 pm Holtzinger/Lauver

Respectfully Submitted:

/s/ Lori Lipscomb

Lori Lipscomb, Recording Secretary

Approved By:

/s/ Richard Worsham

Richard Worsham, President

/s/ Tom Holtzinger

Tom Holtzinger, Secretary