

Meeting of the Planning Commission, April 5, 2016

Notes taken by Nancy Young

Sprouts coming soon to W. 64th & Joyce (between Indiana & McIntyre) - access a major concern

“Mini-storage” redefined as “self-storage” with multi-story buildings required to have a tower, windows, and other very specific design elements

6:00 pm Commissioners present were Caswell, Hannan, Sullivan, Rothschild, Crouse and Connell. Commissioner Goff was excused. Presenters - 5; Citizens- about 11.

The workshop on Self-Storage units is reported at the end of these notes.

Sprouts Neighborhood Market

6:30 pm Public Hearing regarding a Sprouts Neighborhood Market, 15000 W. 64th Ave. The application included three actions: Amend the Comprehensive Plan, Rezone the property from Industrial to Mixed Use, and Approve the Preliminary Development Plan (PDP).

Cadence Development plans to build a 28,000 square foot Sprouts Farmers Market. The neighborhood supports this project. Cadence Development sent notice of the neighborhood meeting to residents within almost a quarter mile, or 3 times the minimum requirement. The biggest neighborhood concern was additional traffic on W. 64th generated by the project.

An existing, vacant building will be demolished and replaced with a modern design grocery building, incorporating agricultural elements, like “barn red” color accents. The building will be almost pentagonal, to make best use of the 3-acre site, with interesting design elements on all sides. The tallest point of the building will be 34 feet, within the City-wide height limit of 35 feet. Primary access to the site is from Joyce Street, with secondary access through the neighboring Walgreens store from McIntyre, allowed by an existing easement but requiring an awkward drive around Walgreens.

The site is currently zoned Planned Unit Development - Industrial (PUD-I), which does not allow commercial uses like grocery stores. Cadence is requesting a change to Planned Unit Development - Business/Professional (PUD-BP), which allows commercial uses and retains light industrial and many other uses allowed in PUD-I zoning. Also, the Land Development Code (LDC) has earmarked this land for industrial and office uses. An amendment to the LDC would change this designation to mixed use, which is more compatible with PUD-BP zoning.

Commissioner questions focused on two issues:

1. Access to the site, particularly from southbound Indiana.

With rapid growth in NW Arvada, southbound traffic on Indiana is likely to continue increasing, and access to the Sprouts location will become more difficult as customers from these developments increase.

Specifically - after turning right onto W. 64th, there is approximately 400 feet to cross three lanes of traffic to the left-turn lane onto Joyce (primary access to the property). If traffic does not permit such a crossing, the alternative is to travel to McIntyre and make a U-turn.

Several Commissioners noted that this is the second proposal in a month that relied on U-turns to access a property. There was substantial concern that the traffic analyses included in Commission packets are insufficient and that reliance on U-turns for access is not a solution.

2. The Comprehensive Plan Amendment was particularly troubling to the Commissioners.

Concerns focused on the apparently increasing requests to change land use designations to accommodate a single project, especially since the Comprehensive Plan has been recently revised. A lack of consistency in application by the staff was noted by several Commissioners.

The applicant indicated a willingness to work within whatever land use designation was appropriate, noting that they have a tight schedule to complete the project.

The Vote:

To Amend the Comprehensive Plan - passed 4 to 2 (Commissioners Rothschild and Caswell opposing)

To Rezone - passed 6 to 0

To Approve the PDP - passed 5 to 1 (Commissioner Sullivan opposing)

6:00 pm Workshop – Self-Storage

City staff has developed some “design guidelines” for self-storage, currently called “mini-storage” in the Land Development Code (LDC). The workshop seeks Planning Commission input on these guidelines, created because:

- Developers have stated that land available for this type of “use” is in short supply, while demand is high, especially where rapid residential growth (i.e. “urbanizing”) results in higher housing densities - people living in apartments who want storage facilities.
- In response to the need, staff is requesting expanding the areas where self-storage facilities are allowed, but in doing so, would like to ensure quality buildings that house self-storage. Such facilities are currently allowed in Light and Heavy Industrial zoning, as well as in similar districts with industrial zoning.
- This proposal would expand zoning districts to include PUD-I (Planned Unit - Industrial) and PUD-BP (Planned United Business/Industrial).

NB: Recently, the former McDonalds site (next to the Monterey House on Ralston Road), was sold by Arvada Urban Renewal to Exmark, who intends to construct multi-story, self-storage units on the site. It appears that Exmark is attempting to acquire adjacent properties to enlarge their project, potentially including Monterey House, among other properties.

The proposed design guidelines consist primarily of the following components:

- A main building with a “tower”. The “tower” would extend past the basic walls of the facility and be somewhat taller than those walls.
- Transparency - the use of windows and glass to create the illusion of an office-type structure, in contrast to the “orange doors” often associated with this type of storage. More transparency would be required in PUD-BP zoning districts (20%) than in PUD-I zoning districts (7.5%).
- Garage-type doors would be de-emphasized and not allowed facing major streets
- Other requirements would include screening equipment (like heating/cooling units) and quality “cladding” (exterior finish). Parking requirements are proposed at 1 space per 10,000 square feet.

A lively discussion ensued. Commissioners noted the following concerns:

- These guidelines appear “overly specific” and apply to only one use. Staff noted that this use is “utilitarian”, and the guidelines are an attempt to improve their appearance if allowed in office-like zoning districts.
- The guidelines would only apply to the “PUD” (planned unit development) districts. There would be no change to the requirements for current zoning districts where this use is allowed like “industrial” zoning districts).
- If this use occurs near residential neighborhoods, there would be a meaningful setback of 50 feet from the nearest residential property.
- The proposal includes two different standards for “transparency” (windows and glass surfaces). In PUD-I zones, staff proposes 7.5% “transparency”. In PUD-BP zones, staff proposes higher transparency of 20% to complement the “office” nature of such zoning districts. No survey of comparable cities was performed, so “standard practice” was not available. Some Commissioners agreed with this approach, noting that industrial buildings have a very different “look” than office buildings. Others felt that a single standard for this use was more appropriate to simplify requirements placed on developers. One Commissioner questioned whether higher transparency would increase energy consumption (i.e., air-conditioning costs).
- The “tower” element was controversial. Staff suggested that one alternative was to grant a permanent exemption to the city-wide 35-foot height limit to allow these required “towers” at a height of 37 feet. Commissioners were not enthused about this proposal.

- Parking was an issue. Staff recommended that a minimum of 3 spaces be required, with total spaces be adjusted to include 1 space per 10,000 feet of storage space, a standard suggested by trade magazines. If employees are included (such as administrative staff and on-site security), some Commissioners felt that 3 spaces were too few. Perhaps a minimum requirement of 5 spaces would be more appropriate, with additional spaces based on the size of the building.

Staff agreed to include these comments for the anticipated City Council workshop on May 9.

Staff updates:

- There will be a joint City Council-Planning Commission-Arvada Urban Renewal meeting on April 11 regarding Arvada Urban Renewal (AURA) on April 11, 2016.
- The next Planning Commission meeting on April 19 will have one item in the Village of Five Parks

(NOTE: Current Arvada Development Maps indicate a Mixed Use Commercial/Residential project at 13730 W 85th Drive, Developer - Jaime Mills, is currently under review. No residential units were noted, suggesting that this would be a commercial development).

7:55 pm - Meeting adjourned.