

Meeting of the Planning Commission, November 18, 2014

Notes taken by Nancy Young

Since it seems that the most important items are at the end of the meeting, these notes are presented in reverse order.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

The December 2 meeting was cancelled as there are no items ready for review. The December 16 meeting will include Wanco's application for annexation and rezoning for its expansion. Wanco is a nationally known producer of variable-message road signs and other traffic safety equipment.

The Olde Town Arvada Station Transit Hub: rezoning, PDP (Preliminary Development Plan), and height exception

This "transit hub" will be located on the south side of the railroad tracks between Olde Wadsworth and Vance. The structure will be tucked into the hill just north of the movie theater.

Tony Thornton of RNL, the design firm, noted that the design was intended to create an iconic building and was not meant to look alien or too modern. He believes it will compliment the Olde Town National Historic District. The structure will be free-standing (not attached to the hill) to allow air to flow through the garage and eliminate the need for venting equipment. Materials, especially at eye level, will reflect natural stone and other building materials found in the Historic District. There will be a number of plazas, including at the first level entrance and along both Olde Wadsworth (at the Flour Mill) and Vance.

A portion of the location for the structure is currently zoned as part of the Olde Town Grandview sub-district. This zoning does not accommodate a "garage" structure. Therefore, rezoning is needed to Planned Unit Development (PUD), Business, Professional, and Residential (BPR), which is more compatible zoning.

The structure itself will have a bus station on the lowest level, with buses entering and leaving on the Vance side onto W. 56th Avenue. From Olde Wadsworth, entry by cars will be right-in, right-out only. From the Vance side, cars can enter and depart in both directions. The parking structure will be at about the same height as Grandview, although there will be two stair towers (steel frame with glass sides) and a square, flat-roofed clock tower that will rise 55 feet from the first level. As a result, a height exception was also being requested.

The top of the structure, while primarily intended for parking, will also be constructed to accommodate events, like festivals. Vehicle access for these events will require City approval in order to remove posts that otherwise prevent such access. The historic Arvada Flour Mill will have no direct vehicle access, although there will be a pedestrian plaza on the west side of the Mill along Olde Wadsworth.

Two citizens commented in opposition to the height limitation. Jane Schnabel noted that the iconic view of Olde Town from the south will be blocked, especially by large square clock tower. Also, the view of the mountains and across the valley from Grandview will be blocked by the stair/clock towers from many vantage points. Nancy Young echoed these comments. She also noted that the design of the clock tower is incompatible with the National Historic District. Furthermore, a local, non-profit organization that owns the Arvada Flour Mill will suffer by the lack of vehicle access, without even drop-off or pick-up capability.

Commissioners' questions focused on pedestrian access from the parking structure to the Gold Line platform. This access will only be at the sidewalk crossings of the railroad tracks on Olde Wadsworth and Vance. There will be pedestrian access to the platform behind the Bank and along the railroad tracks. They also asked about bicycle parking, which will be provided on the lower level. The City might be providing additional bicycle

parking in the plaza along Grandview adjoining the train platform.

The parking spaces within the structure will be 8'6" wide and 18' long, a size which is increasingly accepted as a standard. One Commissioner understood that the parking spaces would be narrower than people generally expect. Regarding the 400 spaces to be dedicated to rail commuters, staff noted that the details of enforcement, if necessary, would be addressed. While there will not be any specified taxi/car service drop-off/pick-up facilities (i.e., if someone wanted to go to the Arvada Center from the parking structure), such services could be met at the lower level entrance.

The rezoning and PDP were approved unanimously. Commissioner Caswell commented that the height exception did not appear to meet the standards for approval. Commissioners Crouse and Hannan also expressed concern about the height exception. The height exception passed by a 5-1 vote, with Commissioner Caswell voting in opposition.

Sheridan Gold Strike Station: Annexation and rezoning

This station, at about W. 60th and Sheridan, requires annexation of land located in Adams County and a segment owned by the Manhart Ditch Company in order to bring the station within the boundaries of Arvada. Vehicle access to the station will be on Wolff Street. Rezoning is necessary for the annexed land. This area is light industrial, and the Arvada zoning requested is the same - I-1, Light Industrial. Also, RTD will make improvements to the intersection at W. 60th and Sheridan. The Annexation and Rezoning were both approved unanimously.

Hope House, along Benton north of W. 64th Avenue: Rezoning and Preliminary Development Plan (PDP)

Hope House provides services to teen-age mothers, to include GED training and workplace training. The proposal is a resubmittal with substantial changes to meet concerns expressed by neighbors. The proposal now includes additional on-site parking spaces, more landscaping on sides facing the neighborhood, and lower density at one unit per acre. To meet parking requirements, Hope House and the neighboring Heritage Community Bible Church will enter an easement and access agreement in perpetuity. The agreement provides for 14 parking spaces and primary access to Hope House through the Church parking lot.

The proposal includes a new classroom/administrative facility, day-care center, playground and community garden, in addition to the existing group home. Rezoning is needed because a few of these activities do not fit within current residential zoning.

Lisa Stevens, founder of Hope House, noted that they are currently serving 140 teen-age mothers, although it is rare that more than 20 would be present at the facility at any one time, primarily for GED and workplace training. They have the capability to serve up to 375 clients, most of whom do not have cars. She is looking forward to the opening of the Sheridan Station, just a few blocks from Hope House as a way for clients to reach Hope House.

Five neighbors spoke in opposition to the proposal, most citing concerns about traffic and visitors parking on Benton Street rather than in the spaces provided. Several also commented about strained relations between Hope House and the neighbors.

Two citizens spoke in favor of the proposal. One focused on how this improvement would not harm property values, which are more dependent on how well each owner maintains their property. The other citizen stated that she would welcome this service to her neighborhood. She was a teen-age mom and would have benefitted

from such help. She went on to state that the neighbors should be thankful that this proposal is not a Walmart or 5-story rental apartment building - developments faced by similar neighborhoods located elsewhere in Arvada.

Commissioner questions focused on the permanency of the parking/access easement with the Church. Bill Caldwell, from the Church, stated that the easement agreement will be attached to their land, so if the Church should disband, future owners of the land would be bound by the agreement. He also stated that the agreement requires that Hope House continue their current work. Should the work change, then the entire congregation would vote on whether to continue the agreement.

Before voting, Commissioner Crouse noted that, in this proposal, Hope House had gone a long way to address the neighborhood's concerns and that he hoped the relations between these two will improve in the future. The rezoning and PDP (preliminary development plan) were both approved unanimously.

Partner Credit Union: Preliminary Development Plan at 6221 Sheridan

Sundie Seefried, President and CEO, stated that the plan is necessary because the headquarters building at 6221 Sheridan is unable to accommodate the growth in the Credit Union's business. The addition will be of a similar design and construction as the existing building on the site and will create a campus-like environment.

One citizen spoke to the application, noting that the partial repaving of Benton Street was confusing. The plan includes repaving the width of Benton Street (for a length of about 10 feet) and installing sidewalks and curbs on the east side, even though there will be no curb-cut to access the facility. Staff noted that they are considering what to do about Benton Street. The proposal was unanimously approved.

Centura Emergency Medical Building: Preliminary Development Plan at 16320 W. 64th

Kevin Jenkins of Centura explained that this proposal is Phase II of a plan envisioned several months ago when the Planning Commission approved their Clinic (Phase I). The Clinic is currently under construction.

The Emergency Care Building will be open 24/7 and is designed so that the staff activity in the back is not visible to the public. The facility will address health emergencies, primarily to address minor issues (broken limbs, etc.), or to stabilize major issues and arrange transport to a full hospital facility.

One citizen spoke to the application with several questions - hours of operation and incoming ambulances. It will have an ambulance pick-up area, and it is not anticipated that there will be much incoming ambulance service due to restrictions on the services they are allowed to provide.

Commissioner questions focused on the potential noise issue of incoming ambulances with sirens, and were assured that most ambulances would take their patients directly to a hospital. Also, it was noted that the Emergency Care facility and neighboring Clinic would have separate medical imaging and related services since they serve different medical needs. The proposal was approved unanimously.

Brandt: Annexation and Rezoning at 15902 W. 64th Avenue

John Kennedy noted that this acre of raw land is currently in unincorporated Jefferson County. He would like to build a single-family home here and is requesting that it be included in Arvada. The annexation and rezoning were approved unanimously.

The minutes from the October 21, 2014 meeting were approved as written.

The meeting began at 6:30 pm. Commissioners Caswell, Goff, Hannan, Crouse, Connell and Rothschild were present. Commissioner Sullivan was excused.