

MINUTES OF THE OTTAWA PLAN COMMISSION MEETING November 22, 2021

Vice Chairman Joh Stone called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Ottawa City Council Chambers.

ROLL CALL - Present: Barron (via phone), McConville, Stone, Hughes, Ruiz, Burns. Absent: Mangold, Volker, Sesto. Others: City Planner Doug Carroll of Carroll Planning, LLC

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Approval of the minutes from the September 27, 2021 meeting. Moved by McConville, seconded by Burns.

Ayes: Barron, McConville, Hughes, Ruiz, Stone, Hughes.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION

Joe Capece from the Ottawa YMCA appeared before the Plan Commission and presented a slide show and presentation on the proposed YMCA to be located along the City's riverfront.

Stone asked what would happen to the old YMCA. Capece stated the YMCA Board has not made a firm decision yet and they are working with the City of Ottawa on a flood buyout grant.

Capece noted options are for the City to buy the property and possibly turn it into a park or partner with the City on making it a teen center or something similar. Stone asked if Marquette Academy has approached them about using it. Capece stated they had not. The Plan Commission thanked Capece for the presentation.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

1. Public hearing to consider a request from Steep Hill Illinois for a text amendment to Chapter 118 (Zoning) of the City of Ottawa Municipal Code to provide for adult use cannabis testing establishments as a permitted and/or conditional use in certain zoning districts.

Stone opened the public hearing. John Tinsley, Delta 9 Labs & Steep Hill Illinois, introduced himself as one of the owners. He stated Delta 9 is a veteran led organization and they are a certified cannabis testing agency. Tinsley noted all cannabis has to be tested before it can be sold in the State of Illinois. Tinsley said they like Ottawa because of its location near the growers.

They like to be near community colleges for science and technical skills as well as good transportation. Tinsley stated it is not uncommon for municipalities to miss cannabis laboratory testing in their cannabis ordinances. Tinsley expressed they are projecting 45 samples on a good day and that will be done by 5 to 8 people. He likened it to a medical lab. There will be no discernible signage. He noted it is similar to agricultural testing in trying to maintain public safety on behalf of the regulators.

Nick Etton introduced himself as one of the partners in Delta Labs. He said one of the questions they usually get is about safety and security of the lab. His background is in security. He stated they only have small samples on site and they do not work in cash.

Tinsley talked about the process. He said they get samples in 3 gram sizes. He stated the samples are not usable after testing. They either incinerate the tested materials or contract with a licensed waste disposal.

Stone asked if the employment positions would be locally sourced and Etton indicated they would. He noted there could be a lab director from farther away since they are required to have a PhD or a Master's degree and experience.

Hughes asked how does the product get to the facility. Tinsley said the lab can pick up product or the cultivator can deliver. 3rd party handlers are required to be licensed. Hughes likened it to a highly regulated courier and Tinsley agreed.

Hughes asked for clarification on the destruction of the product. Tinsley stated the product comes in a package similar to those that contain 35mm film. He said the product is rendered unusable within 10 minutes of entering the facility. Tinsley stated they will either contract with a licensed waste hauler or incinerate on site. Burns asked if there would be particulate matter. Tinsley stated not any more than a typical residential fireplace.

Barron asked what kind of square footage would one need for a lab. Tinsley stated they are currently in due diligence for a building at 130 E. Madison Street and is typical in size of what they see (4,700 square feet).

Barron stated he is inclined to make them a conditional use in C zoning and permitted in D and E.

Burns stated we are fortunate to have this industry looking at Ottawa but she questioned the location because she is worried about how it could affect the downtown and riverfront.

Etton stated he thought the building location creates a nice work atmosphere for the employees where they can utilize the downtown.

Stone noted the building has always been office type use and he thought that is what the building use will be.

McConville noted it's a dead end street, historically office type uses and she doesn't see retail uses there.

There was some discussion on what uses are allowed in the different zoning districts.

Generally, the Plan Commission agreed it should be a permitted use in D and E.

Stone noted he did see a fit near downtown because it would be high paying jobs with hopefully those people living downtown.

Barron stated he would like to see it as a conditional use in the C districts and permitted in D and E.

Burns agreed that it made sense as a permitted use in the D and E.

Stone stated he would like to see it as a conditional use in the C-3, C-4, C-5 and permitted in D and E.

Tinsley asked where are cannabis dispensaries allowed. Carroll stated they are permitted uses in C-3, C-4 and C-5 and then conditional uses in D, and E.

Barron made a motion for a text ordinance change to allow cannabis testing facilities as a permitted use in the D and E and a conditional use in the C-3, C-4, and C-5 districts.

McConville seconded.

Ayes: Barron, McConville, Hughes, Ruiz, Stone, Hughes.

Nayes: None

Motion Carried.

2. Public hearing to consider a request from the City of Ottawa for a text amendment to Chapter 118 (Zoning) of the City of Ottawa Municipal Code to provide for solar energy systems as a permitted and/or conditional use in certain zoning districts.

Stone opened the public hearing. Carroll gave some history in that Pilkington approached the City about installing solar panels on their property. Prior to Covid, the City had intentions on crafting an ordinance, however, it was put on the back burner. Now with Pilkington's possible use of solar, it was time to finish the ordinance and bring it forward. Carroll noted solar systems can be an accessory or principal use. There are setback and height restrictions. When they are a primary use, which would typically be in rural areas, he noted there are different setback and design requirements.

Barron asked about Pilkington and the big field to the east. He asked if they could cover half the lot. Carroll said no, the square footage would have to be at or below 50% of the Pilkington factory square footage (ex. 100,000 sf factory can have 50,000 sf of solar panels). If there are certain plantings they could increase the square footage.

Barron made a motion to recommend adoption of the draft solar energy ordinance text amendment.

Hughes seconded.

Ayes: Barron, McConville, Hughes, Ruiz, Stone, Hughes.

Nayes: None

Motion Carried.

Ruiz asked about wind energy and suggested the City look at a separate ordinance to address.

Being no further business, Stone adjourned the meeting at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Douglas Carroll, AICP
Carroll Planning, LLC