



City of Aurora

44 East Downer Place
Aurora, Illinois 60505
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Legistar History Report

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Status: ATS Review

Version: 3

General Ledger #:

In Control: Planning & Development Committee

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File Name: Project Canvas / 100 S. River Street / Plan Description Revision

Final Action:

Title: An Ordinance Approving a Revision to the River Street Plaza Plan Description on 0.21 Acres for Property located at 100 S. River Street being at south east corner of River Street and Benton Street

Notes:

Agenda Date: 04/27/2017

Agenda Number:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: Exhibit "A" Legal Description.pdf, Exhibit "B" Plan Description Revision - 2017-03-29 - 2017.020.pdf, Planning Commission PPT Presentation - 2017-04-17.pdf, Property Research Sheet - 2017-02-14 - 2017.020.pdf, Land Use Petition and Supporting Documents - 2017-03-15 - 2017.020.pdf, Plat of Survey - 2017-03-15 - 2017.020.pdf, Legistar History Report - 2017-04-11 - 2017.020.pdf

Enactment Number:

Planning Case #: AU22/3-17.020-PD/R

Hearing Date:

Drafter: tvacek@aurora-il.org

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

Version:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:	
1	Committee of the Whole	03/21/2017	Forward to Planning Council	DST Staff Council (Planning Council)	03/28/2017			
	Action Text: This Petition was Forward to Planning Council to the DST Staff Council (Planning Council)							
1	DST Staff Council (Planning Council)	03/28/2017						
	Notes: <i>Representatives Present: Stu Whitt and Scott Hodge</i>							

I'm Stu Whitt. I work with Orchard Valley Community Church and also with Project Canvas. This is Scott Hodge, who is the lead Pastor at the Orchard Community Church and the founder of Project Canvas.

Pastor Hodge said Project Canvas is an organization in Aurora whose purpose is to create a social space in downtown Aurora. We are purchasing the Pocus Building at 100 S. River Street. It is going

to become home to a social space, it is going to feature an urban coffee house, a local artisan market, a full sized commercial kitchen, business incubator, mid-sized rooms that will host seminars, workshops and those types of things and then a 350 seat event space on the top floor that will be used for concerts, corporate events, weddings and those types of things. Then it will also become the weekend gathering location for our church on the weekends.

Mr. Sieben said so the church, or the religious use, will be strictly an accessory use. Do you want to just explain a little bit about that? You said that would really be mostly on Sundays.

Pastor Hodge said we estimate maybe 15% usage will be the church for church services on Sundays, maybe Saturday evening, but probably mostly on Sundays.

Mr. Whitt said the church space will be available for banquets and for wedding receptions and for corporate events. It is designed to be very fluid in terms of their ability to maximize the space. It probably won't look like a typical church inside. Is that fair to say?

Pastor Hodge said that's correct.

Mr. Whitt said it is going to be geared more toward an attractive place to have an event space in downtown Aurora.

Mr. Sieben said but the predominant use will be the uses you already just mentioned?

Mr. Whitt said yes. The predominant uses will be those that I mentioned. Again, 7 days a week.

Mr. Sieben said then parking, the way parking is allotted for, that's in the public lots or street parking. Do you want to touch on that?

Mr. Whitt said this property is bounded on the east by the Fox River, immediately on the north by Benton, on the west by River and on the south by the River Street Plaza Condominiums. It has no ground to speak of. Before they got into this property, they took a look at the parking that is north and west of the space, which is a city lot that has posted hours that show the length of time you can park on the west side of the library and that whole area running south of the library, which also we are aware of the limitations on the timing that folks can park there. There is more than sufficient parking to cover the needs to this organization.

Mr. Sieben said how much economic investment is your group looking at?

Pastor Hodge said \$1.8 million as of right now.

Mr. Whitt said the church owned the property. Scott's father built a church out across the road on the southwest corner of Barnes and Galena across from Blackberry Farm. It is the church with the big 3 white crosses. A mega church came to Scott and wanted to buy it and so the Orchard got a big windfall, a big windfall and so they are looking at taking that money and investing it in downtown Aurora. For the last 2 years, I think, 2½ years, Scott's been talking about trying to do something like this in downtown Aurora. You've traveled the country with your wife looking at different spots and different cities and your idea is to emulate that here?

Pastor Hodge said that's right. He said it pretty well. The heart behind this project is to contribute really to the culture of downtown Aurora. We see there is something really great happening here. We want to be a part of that at a greater level and so we feel like this is the opportunity to do that.

Mrs. Vacek said right now this is set for the April 19th Planning Commission. There are some signs that need to go up, so I will be getting you those signs shortly and we'll touch base to get everything set for that.

Mr. Whitt said the mailing notices have gone out and I'm told you've got the affidavit.

Mrs. Vacek said I got it on Friday.

Mr. Beneke said they are in for permits and we are reviewing it.

Mr. Feltman said the only thing Engineering will have is you are in the PE use fee area, so you will need to count all of the plumbing fixtures and the existing and then compare that to the proposed. I

don't know how much additional plumbing fixtures you are adding. Did you ever get any of those sheets or the instructions?

Pastor Hodge said I think our contractor did. I'll double check though.

Mr. Feltman said and again, it is only additional plumbing fixtures.

Mr. Frankino said our comments at this point are very similar to Dan's where we would like to see a list, too, of the existing fixtures compared to the new, but for purposes of off-setting permit fees. The old fixtures would credit toward what will be there when it is all said and done.

Mr. Feltman said it is the same procedure. It is not duplication. It is actually mirrored.

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| 1 | DST Staff Council
(Planning Council) | 04/04/2017 | | | | |
| | Notes: | Mrs. Vacek said this is set for the April 19th Planning Commission so we will be moving this forward next week. | | | | |
| 1 | DST Staff Council
(Planning Council) | 04/11/2017 | Forwarded | Planning
Commission | 04/19/2017 | Pass |
| | Action Text: | A motion was made by Mrs. Vacek, seconded by Mrs. Morgan, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Planning Commission, on the agenda for 4/19/2017. The motion carried by voice vote. | | | | |
| | Notes: | Mrs. Vacek said this is just some additional changes to the uses for this building. I'm actually going to vote this out to go to the April 19th Planning Commission. I make a motion to vote it out. Mrs. Morgan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. | | | | |
| 2 | Planning Commission | 04/19/2017 | Forwarded | Planning &
Development
Committee | 04/27/2017 | Pass |
| | Action Text: | A motion was made by Mr. Cameron, seconded by Mrs. Anderson, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Planning & Development Committee, on the agenda for 4/27/2017. The motion carried. | | | | |
| | Notes: | Mrs. Vacek said the subject property, which is the former Pocus Automotive building, is located at 100 S. River Street and is zoned DF(S) Downtown Fringe, which is part of the River Street Plaza Special Use Planned Development. The Petitioner, Project Canvas, has a contract to purchase the property and is looking to provide the community with a creative social space. I'll let the Petitioner kind of go into that a little bit more. What's before you tonight is the request for approval of a Plan Description Revision to the Special Use Planned Development to allow for additional uses on the property, including retail sales and services; catering, including but not limited to a full size kitchen, banquet facility, cooking demos and tasting classes, seminars, training workshops and events; performing arts or supporting establishments, including but not limited to concerts and plays; art galleries and studios; and special purpose recreational institutions limited to fitness classes and dance recitals. It would also allow for additional accessory uses, including a religious institution and sidewalk activity out along the front of the building. With that being said, I will turn it over to the Petitioner unless there are questions for staff. | | | | |

Mrs. Cole said I have a question. Since one of the uses is going to be a church, is this building then going to be on the tax rolls or off the tax rolls?

Mrs. Vacek said I can let the Petitioner answer that.

The Petitioners were sworn in.

Good evening. I'm Rick Petesch from Whitt Law. I'm here on behalf of Stuart Whitt who reluctantly is on vacation. I'm here this evening to thank you for holding this public hearing and to considering this project and also to introduce our team to you. Speaking tonight will be Scott Hodge, who is the founder of Project Canvas. He is also the Pastor of the Orchard Community who hope to utilize the facility as well. Cara Mamott from Haven Design Group is an interior designer and she is here to tell you about some of the great things that she hopes to accomplish on the interior of that building. She'll also pitch in to talk about some of the construction aspects and architectural components. With that, I'll turn it over to Scott Hodge and thank you again for your consideration.

Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity for us to be able to share about this project that we are very excited about. As Rick mentioned, my name is Scott Hodge and I serve as the lead Pastor of the Orchard Community here in Aurora, a church that's been actually in Aurora for over 100 years now believe it or not. For the past 12 years, I've had the privilege of leading the church as its Senior

Pastor. My father, Larry Hodge, was the Pastor before me for 25 years and so needless to say we have a lot of roots here in Aurora. It is our place, our city. Over the past several years, our church has had more and more opportunities to be involved in downtown Aurora. As we've done that, our desire to be an even greater part of what's happening in Aurora has continued to grow. Last year when we were presented with an opportunity to sell our campus, which our campus was located on the far west side of Aurora right across the street from Blackberry Farm, the church with the big white crosses, so when we had the opportunity to sell our church to a local mega church in the area, we really saw this as an opportunity to make an even greater investment here in downtown Aurora, which, of course, is why we are here and what we want to talk with you about. Our plan is not to plop a church into downtown Aurora, but rather it is to develop and create a 7 day a week social space that will be owned and operated by a completely separate entity that we've created called Project Canvas. I'll get into more detail in just a moment, but the purpose of this space is real simple. It is to cultivate creativity, community, and connection while contributing both economically and culturally to our city as well. What I'd love to do is, and I know I'm a Pastor, so I promise I will keep it brief, but in just a moment I'll come back up and talk about a couple of things, but before I go any further, I want to introduce Cara Mamott. Cara is our creative director. She is going to come up for just a minute or two and share about the concept itself and the space as well.

Ms. Mamott said first I just want to say that we are so honored to be part of the Project Canvas team and have the opportunity to collaborate on such a unique concept for the area. We are equally excited to be working with the City of Aurora on the continued effort of revitalization. There are some emerging trends happening all over the country and all over the world. In a time when technology and digital tools are running our daily lives, people are feeling the urge more than ever to get connected. They seek inspiring places to work, to socialize and to dream. They are hungry for spaces designed to spark collaboration and productivity and also incorporate the community. There is a rise in the glorified coffee houses that now also act as art galleries and musical venues. There is a boom in multi-sensory creative hubs and social houses, which provide creative environments for like-minded people. Our goal is to capitalize on this trend and bring it to a local level. We believe this concept, as well as the physical space it encompasses, will become a creative destination, one that mimics an urban eatery, coffee house, art gallery and studio space. A space designed to fuel creativity, inspire one another and provide a social setting that connects people right in the heart of downtown Aurora. The location, layout, size and architectural style of 100 S. River Street will be the perfect home for the 7 day a week social space. The high ceilings, concrete pillars and flooring on the ground level provide a cool urban vibe, perfect for the coffee house, work space, artisan market and test kitchen. On the second floor we will be utilizing the existing exposed brick and timber trusses to create a beautiful state of the art venue space for events. The renovated space will provide a warm, inviting, and modern sensibility that is comparable to some of the world's coolest social clubs. But when looking more closely at the composition, it will be filled with handmade goods, locally sourced materials and artwork all created by local artisans, designers and creators inspiring those who walk through the front door and creating a heightened sense of community. It will become a place to gather, create and ignite. Thank you.

Mr. Hodge said thank you Cara. So these are some of the concepts. You have these as well, I believe. So as Cara mentioned, our plans are to acquire the old Pocus Motor building at 100 S. River Street where we will utilize every square inch of this space, of this building. What we are going to do that to create 5 very distinct spaces. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on these. I just want to give you an overview and then if you'd like us to go a little bit deeper into these we will be happy to. On the ground level, our plan is to create what is called the lounge. The lounge will be a 7 day a week urban coffee house. We will be serving fresh roasted coffee and locally baked goods. Our goal is to make this a very comfortable place to work; couches, work stations, really great Wi Fi, lots of beautiful art, live music on the weekends and at other times. That is the lounge. Next is the market. Inspired by many of the urban markets that are sort of popping up all over the country right now, the market will be dedicated to showcasing the work and the talents of locally based artisans, designers, makers. We are going to feature short-term low risk, low cost opportunities for local artisans to come and share their creations and their work with people in a way they perhaps have not had that opportunity to do so. There is also going to be a co-working and incubation element that are connected to this as well. Next is the kitchen. The kitchen will be a full sized commercial kitchen designed with artisanal small scale food producers, personal chefs and caterers in mind. The kitchen will be rentable by day, hour, week. We will also be hosting popup dinners, cooking demos, classes, workshops, etc. in the kitchen. Next are the studios. The studios are going to be midsize rooms that are going to be perfect for hosting things like yoga classes, writing workshops, film screenings, entrepreneurial seminars and more. Then last but not least, the room. The room is going to be a gorgeous state of the art 350 seat venue that will host everything from weddings to black tie galas, concerts, corporate events and more. We would love to bring some of the concepts that we've seen around the country, things like PechaKucha

night, which I won't get into, but it is a very cool movement that's happening. TEDx as well is something we would be interested in trying to bring here to Aurora. Then, of course, this will also become the weekend gathering space for the Orchard Community. Our hope with this whole thing is that this would become a type of hub, a gathering space where people would come on a regular basis. The picture that I'd love to paint for you is if you can imagine a young man named Johnny who wants to come in and do a guitar lesson in one of the studios. While he is in his guitar lesson, mom is in a yoga class, not just doing yoga, but meeting people. While mom is in the yoga class, dad is in the kitchen, I'm sure. Dad is learning how to make pasta or how to butcher a pig workshop that we are offering. But that is our dream for this to be a type of hub, a place where people will come from all over our city and even beyond to be a part of all kinds of unique and exciting programs and events. We've talked a lot about this with so many different groups, but the thing that I keep coming back to is we believe that not only will this be a great addition to downtown Aurora, but I think we also see this as a great addition to the local neighborhood. There are so many great things happening, especially in this area of downtown Aurora. We are literally across the street from the beautiful library. Sci Tech, which my kids love, is right on the other side, of course. The new development happening at the West Aurora School District buildings that was recently announced and I think for the residents, River Street Plaza, the Mayan Building and so many others that are happening down there. Our hope is that this would become a space for the city, a space where the residents and businesses would utilize it on a regular basis. Thank you.

Mrs. Cole said I still have the same question. Will this building remain on the tax rolls or will this building be tax exempt because it is a church use?

Mr. Hodge said the church won't actually own the building. The building will all be under the name of Project Canvas.

Mrs. Cole said is that a non-profit?

Mr. Hodge said it is a non-profit. If we lease the building, let's say, from the owner, obviously it will stay on the tax rolls. If we buy it, we are still trying to figure out right now how that will work, but it is likely that it will remain.

Mr. Bergeron said what are your hours going to be?

Mr. Hodge said the hours are going to be for the coffee house for example, which will be our 7 day a week presence hours. We are still trying to figure that out. Right now it is likely going to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. is our goal Monday through Friday and then a little bit later on the weekends. Of course, there are going to be so many other events happening throughout the day, throughout the week. The goal is to see this constant movement happening in this space.

Mr. Bergeron said do you know what your maximum capacity in that building is going to be?

Mr. Hodge said no we don't know that yet. We are still waiting on the final plans. The upstairs, which will be where the large space is, is a 350 seat space.

Mr. Bergeron said well with you dream, I can understand that, but River Street is such an incredibly busy street right now and if you get what you are proposing with all these people, parking, traffic, it just seems like it is an insurmountable problem.

Mr. Hodge said I don't know if you guys want to address the parking, but I know we've talked a little bit about that.

Mr. Sieben said do you want to just touch on how that is going to work?

Mr. Hodge said there is plenty of parking. We are pretty confident in terms of what we are offering.

Mr. Bergeron said within walking distance.

Mr. Hodge said within walking distance. Behind the library is parking. I'm not sure what their hours are, but on the weekends, on Sunday, they are not even open. So there is parking behind the library. This shows here some of the parking. So you've got behind the library, you've got over by El Tio Restaurant, and you've got some on the street there. When we've done the math to figure out our average size of events, we are pretty confident that we should be in good shape.

Mrs. Anderson said do you know of any other similar projects out there such as this one? If so, have they been successful?

Mr. Hodge said it would be very helpful if we could find someone who is doing exactly what we are doing. There are elements happening. There are people who are doing pieces of this. It is pretty unique actually. We've done a lot of research. We've done a lot of travelling to different spaces, so there are pieces and elements, not one exactly like this.

Mr. Cameron said what is the square footage of the building?

Mr. Hodge said it is a little under 20,000, I'd say 19,000 roughly.

Mr. Cameron said is that including the basement?

Mr. Hodge said it is 19,000 plus and the basement is 3,050.

Mr. Cameron said so 10,000 square feet per floor.

Mr. Hodge said per floor and about, I think, about 3,000 or 3,500 for the basement.

Chairman Truax said what is the general condition of the building now? Do you have a lot of renovation to do?

Mr. Hodge said we actually don't. It is in great shape. We've had inspections done and people come and everybody is pretty happy. We've got a little of elevator work we are going to do, but for the most part it is in great shape.

Mrs. Cole said I was with a group downtown yesterday and we were having a conversation about parking and with all the new residents going in downtown and the Paramount and now you are proposing a 350 seat venue also, you still don't see a parking problem? Incidentally, the Aurora Library is open on Sundays during the school year.

Mr. Hodge said even with that, we've gotten a lot of input on it and when we've done our calculations we feel pretty confident.

Mrs. Cole said how many people do you draw on Sunday? I've been out there when you've had something going on at the church out there and it is packed.

Mr. Hodge said obviously if it is Easter or some big thing there are more people, but on average, I don't know for the count of cars, but on average between 200 to 300 people, but you have people who are 3 or 4 people in a car.

Chairman Truax said so is your congregation still out on Barnes Road?

Mr. Hodge said no. We are in an interim space right now in North Aurora.

Mr. Cameron said your seating plan for that upper area shows 216 at tables, so the 350 would be...

Mr. Hodge said that's right. There are different configurations. It depends on how it is set up. If it just chairs in a traditional conference style, it would easily be 350. If it is round tables, it is a bit less.

The public input portion of the public hearing was opened. No witnesses came forward. The public input portion of the public hearing was closed.

Mrs. Vacek said staff would recommend approval of the Ordinance approving the Revision to the River Street Plaza Plan Description for the property located at 100 S. River Street being at the southeast corner of River and Benton Street.

Mrs. Cole said I do have one more question. Can you kind of describe sidewalk activities?

Mrs. Vacek said sidewalk activities, if they are doing some like retails and they want to have like a sidewalk sale for the retail, that would be allowed in the downtown core pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance. There are certain limited things that they can sell outside in front of their building.

Mrs. Cole said do they have on-grade access to the Riverwalk in the rear?

Mrs. Vacek said it is on-grade, but I don't believe that there is a door to that back. I just was walking by it the other day and I did not see one.

Chairman Truax said but you have access if you go around the building.

Mrs. Vacek said correct. You do have access if you go around the building and you can get on from off of Benton.

MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mr. Cameron

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mrs. Anderson

AYES: Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Bergeron, Mr. Cameron, Mrs. Cole, Mr. Divine, Mrs. Head

NAYS: None

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Is the proposal in accordance with all applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

Mrs. Cole said these are listed in the staff report.

2. Does the proposal represent the logical establishment and/or consistent extension of the requested classification in consideration of the existing land uses, existing zoning classifications, and essential character of the general area of the property in question?

Mr. Cameron said it does seem to reflect the wishes of the city. It seems to be taking on development of street related and entertainment and various activities that seem to fit within the wishes of the city.

Mrs. Cole said and instead of doing it in different buildings, they are doing it all in one building.

3. Is the proposal consistent with a desirable trend of development in the general area of the property in question, occurring since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification, desirability being defined as the trend's consistency with applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

Chairman Truax said as Ken just said, it seems like it is a desirable trend of development from a cultural point of view for the other activities the city is trying to do.

4. Will the proposal maintain a compatible relationship with the traffic pattern and traffic volume of adjacent streets and not have an adverse effect upon traffic or pedestrian movement and safety in the general area of the property in question?

Mrs. Cole said this kind of remains to be seen. It sounds like this is going to generate a lot of traffic, both cars and human. There are traffic lights. There is parking to the west of this facility and also to the east, so if everyone follows the rules it should work.

5. Will the proposal allow for the provision of adequate public services and facilities to the property in question and have no adverse effect upon existing public services and facilities?

Mr. Cameron said I think they are in place already.

6. Does the proposal take adequate measures or will they be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to maximize pedestrian and vehicular circulation ease and safety, minimize traffic congestion, and not substantially increase the congestion in the public streets?

Mr. Cameron said typically the only congestion would come from cars, but the nature of it seems to direct and diffuse that out into adjoining parking areas, so it should be primarily pedestrian traffic, except for drop off. It might be a good idea to take a look at centralizing or setting up a spot for that to occur so it doesn't occur on two streets.

9a. Will the Special Use not preclude the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding properties due to the saturation or concentration of similar uses in the general area?

Chairman Truax said again, this is a unique use and I don't think there is a saturation or concentration of such things in downtown.

Mr. Cameron said it is not likely that we will have another automobile use in downtown.

9b. Is the Special Use in all other respects in conformance to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the City Council pursuant to the recommendations of the Plan Commission?

Chairman Truax said yes it does.

Mrs. Vacek said this will next be heard at the Planning and Development Committee on Thursday, April 27, 2017, at 4:00 p.m. on the fifth floor of this building.

Aye: 6 At Large Bergeron, At Large Cameron, At Large Cole, At Large Anderson, Fox Metro Representative Divine and SD 129 Representative Head
