

4808 Baum Community Meeting
May 17, 2021
Taken by Sam Spearing

Presenter: Robert Indovina, Ryan Indovina, Steve Todorovich
BDC Staff: Christina Howell, Sam Spearing

Section I: Welcome and Ground Rules

Christina Howell, facilitator:

- Introduced BDC
- 4808 Baum Boulevard, currently a vacated Asian restaurant between Mini Cooper and Chipotle
- Explains meeting structure.
- Facebook Live and recordings
- We summarize the entire meeting in the notes including space for community conversation after developer leaves.
- Ask participants to stay on mute

Section II: Presentation from Development Team

UNC District

The project requires an administrators exception, not fully by right. The administrator can decide based on the zoning code.

No lot size

4:1 is max FAR. But this is not occupiable space, so very far from that FAR.

20' set back. Height.

Will go through ZBA. The site is within the UNC zoning district.

A drive through needs a special exception from the zoning board.

In conversation with City Planning, should proceed through the ZBA process for that use next month.

The space is located in between Chipotle and Mini Dealership on Baum.

Single curb cut entry.

Converted from 2 driveways that are already existing.

4 large parking spaces for vacuum stations

Accessory uses. Wider spaces to allow for vacuum.

4 standard spaces, 1 is ADA.

5' buffer adjacent that is required for ADA spaces

Staffed by at most 2 people at any one time

1 internal office with a bathroom.

Chipotle side, 11' buffer between property and driveway.

Sidewalk buffer

Maintain similar to chipotle and mini dealership. We want to provide greenery along the sidewalk similar to the Chipotle location

Level of Sustainability

Saw Toothed roof = signature element. Photovoltaic (solar) panels offer on site energy production.

14' high bay assembly, clad in fiber cement or metal panels.

Mechanical Building

Ground face masonry. Lower than the adjacent bay building. Green roof tray system to provide some potential onsite water management. Visible.

Some canopy over the vacuum station areas

Front is to carry out the architecture massing.

Low wall that supports screen element, perforated for transparency into site. Not just a large surface parking lot.

3' planted buffer between that low wall and the sidewalk. New trees. Like the Chipotle strategy next door.

Solid roof assembly in the front to protect the fan noise.

Office is in the back, with staff on site, visible with windows in back.

Working with Civil Engineer

Stormwater management. Underground storage on site to accommodate city requirements.

Christina Howell: Clarify:

- You're asking for support for the drive-through use to be approved by ZBA (special exception).
- Are you asking for Sign Variance now too? - A: Not yet, we might eliminate signage in the first pass, but if we keep it would apply for a second permit.

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Section III: Q & A

Q: Architecture team did well. Buffer, green is good! But that's working in the parameters of a car wash. But if we zoom out, we're in between 2nd and 3rd downtown of Oakland and East Liberty on the biggest spine of 2 downtown centers. Thinking about the way we go into the future, even with UNC 4:1, special exception can go up to 6 stories. With need for affordable housing. What does the corridor need? I think a car wash would be pretty low on that list, especially with the automobile as a last. Why this specific development, as opposed to something that uses full potential of the site. And contribute the way the city is going / should go.

A: Stephen the owner does not do housing development. Not entirely sure how to answer that.

Q: Have you pursued any other uses for the property?

A: No.

Q: Are all of your developments car washes?

A: Yes, with additional uses depending on size of property. This site is small, so just a car wash.

Q: How did you select this site and other sites where you've developed car washes?

A: Generally they have been sites that have been vacant for long periods of time. Liberty Ave. location in Bloomfield was vacant for 7 years. This site was vacant for 3 years or so. Started talking to the broker. Traffic counts on the road and existing businesses make it feel like it goes with some of the other uses on the street.

Q: Potentially planting the area. How are you going to water it, and ensure it stays lush and beautiful.

A: Ryan: Strategy goes with maintenance on and buffer of trees. Also during the winter to keep it nice. Will identify best plantings to go with long-term maintenance projects. Will work with site civil folks, as a fully functioning rain garden. Depends on the soil type we find on the lot.

Q: This is in one of the worst sewersheds in the city it only takes 1/10" of inch of rain for the sewer to overflow into the Allegheny River How many gallons per day / per minute are you going to put into the sewer shed?

A: That will be for our civil engineers to determine.

Q: Where are PWSA service lines and drain lines?

A: They are in the sidewalk, not in the street. Have started process with the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Q: When do you anticipate construction starting?

A: We'll see how the planning process goes, as we still have to go through ZBA and city planning for the overlay. Will determine project timeline. Need to figure out the civil too. February were our first meetings. I'd guess construction could start in the first quarter of next year (2022).

Q: Agree with concerns that this isn't the best use. How many cars can fit in line and on property before spilling out?

A: 6 cars can queue. 2 car queueing is the requirement. So the queueing should not impact Baum Blvd.

Q: What type of traffic are you seeing at other locations that are relatively nearby? What is this new location going to get / anticipate?

A: One on Liberty Ave., Carson Street. Butler ST. Similar to those. This Saturday was busy, rarely seeing more than 4 cars in line (that is a busy day).

Q: Would you be bringing more people?

A: We don't advertise. Don't generate a lot of intentional purchases. 60% are spontaneous customers that pass by and see signage. Rely on driving by.

Q: Would there be an increase in traffic to the restaurants in the area. Because someone googled car wash and came to your car wash

A: Not advertising on google or outreach. Does not believe he is a traffic generator, rely on passing by. Providing for those already in the area.

Q: Have you given consideration to the left turn drivers might make as they leave the property? I worry about fast traffic, especially with queuing, drivers might have bad visibility.

A: Open to discouraging that left turn with signage and definitely don't think it would be a good idea. Just doing the right turn, and circling around if you want would be the desired option.

Q: Because this is a heavy pedestrian route, can you paint / markings on the drive through where drivers cross the sidewalk. So people are aware.

A: Yes, that should be easy.

Q: people will make a left, even if signed not to. Have you considered a small berm? Although that might be bad for pedestrian access.

A: I'm open to suggestions. Because it would definitely be hard to make a left turn safely.

Q: Have you met with BCI (Baum Centre Initiative) already?

A: Yes, back in February. Presented to a larger group. Good positive feedback. Another presentation for the special exception, presenting the same presentation to them as today.

Christina - Discloses that she serves as treasurer of BCI.

Q: I'm familiar with Indovina, they have maxed what is allowable on the site in other developments. Did any of the architecture team look at a different use for the site.

A: If the developer is looking at a particular type of project, we present a car wash. We follow the use desired by the client.

Q: Is there any pedestrian access? Only for vehicles?

A: Open to it. Not yet. Could add more access on the Chipotle side if we need a walkway. Currently configuration for pedestrians around the building, with peninsulas. Can add at the end of scrim wall. Very diligent about pedestrian access across the driveway of exit.

Q: If the lot sat vacant for multiple years and there were not a ton of contenders to build on the lot. Then this is great. I would rather have a service that people can take advantage of while already on the road. Wonderful!

Q: Looking at the county database the site area differs. Do you know the site area is?

A: Don't know the number off the top of my head. We have a site survey complete, so can get the info off of that. We are in excess of 5000 sq ft , so have crossed the threshold regardless on this property.

Q:Trash. Where are trash dumpsters? I assume there will be trash by the vacuums. Is recycling available for those cleaning out their cars?

A: That's a great idea! We'd be open to providing recycling.

Section IV: Community Discussion

Christina: We will try to get back to the developer by the end of day next monday. If we need more info, we will get it from them.

Q: Will it be a car wash even without drive through?

A: No. ZBA will likely consider the argument that it's adding the same curb cut frontage that any other development would have to.

Comment: The Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanias is just down the street. So this might be difficult for those going past this site with visual impairments.

Comment: I'm worried that the screening with a planting strip might be visually blocking the pedestrians walking on the street from the east. We don't want pedestrians to be surprised by cars pulling out.

Phil: Parking area locations do need to be screened. So their design meets the code currently.

Q: What exactly qualifies as a drive through use?

A: Essentially a business where a customer can conduct all of their business without leaving their vehicles. This is unique because it's the primary use in this case.

IF they dont' get through a drive through use, then probably would not go through since that's his business model.

Kevin: The project might have to go to CDAP.

Phil: Bloomfield Neighborhood plan in the pipeline. This corridor is something we can look at in terms of development, zoning, use, density, etc.

Signage would probably also have an eventual Zoning Board Review.