

Planning Commission Minutes

March 17, 2003 7:30 PM

Gladstone City Hall

1. Meeting Called to Order - Roll Call

Members Present: Mary Abbott, Anne Alexander, Allen Dillingham, Joe Evans, Chairman Brian Hill, Wendell Kiser, Brenda Lowe, Anita Newsom, Mike Steffens, Mark Revenaugh and Joyce Wilde

Members Absent: James Bone

Council/Staff Present: Councilman Wayne Beer, Councilman Carol Rudi, City Counselor David Ramsay, Asst. City Manager Scott Wingerson, and Interim Asst. Kelli Behr

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from January 21, 2003 Meeting were approved as submitted.

4. Communications from the Audience

There were no comments from the audience.

5. PUBLIC HEARING – Special Use Permit File No. 1187:

Mr. Wingerson explained the hearing is for consideration of an amendment of an existing Special Use Permit for 1500 NE Englewood Road. The original permit, granted in 1994 and renewed for 25 years in 1997, contained a specific prohibition of bingo gaming. The applicant, Knights of Columbus, has requested the condition be lifted to allow bingo two nights per week between the hours of 5:00 PM and 10:00 PM.

Mr. Wingerson stated staff has recommended approval of the request provided the two nights of bingo are not consecutive during the week, and that the activities do not generate any noise at the perimeter of the property. The staff report is included in the packet for the Commission's review.

Chairman Hill invited the applicant to speak. **Mr. Bill Dunsing, Grand Knight, 4118 NW Claymont Drive, Kansas City**, approached the podium and introduced himself. He prefaced his statements by explaining the history of bingo operations by his organization; Since 1984, the Knights of Columbus have conducted bingo gaming from the Northland Optimists location on N. Oak. As a result of these games, \$750,000 was raised and donated to charities. For unknown reasons, the bingo games lost popularity. It was no longer economically feasible to continue. The dwindling participation and extreme decrease in profits resulted in the Knights of Columbus ceasing the bingo operations.

Mr. Dunsing continued by explaining how, if the bingo game was moved to the Knights of Columbus Hall in Gladstone, they could conduct the games without paying the \$33,000 in rental fees. Even with smaller games, a profit may still be achieved. He added the Knights of Columbus have been good citizens of Gladstone. Their location on Englewood Road has been used as a polling place, a Gladstone Police meeting place and meeting space for the Northland Optimists. He believes the neighbors will attest to the lack of disruption to the community.

Chairman Hill asked how many people the Knights anticipate will attend the bingo sessions. Mr. Dunsing replied there would be 100 at the most. Chairman Hill asked how many parking spaces are available currently. Mr. Dunsing answered there are 85 spaces. Mr. Wingerson clarified there are 90 parking spaces.

Mr. Revenaugh asked which nights they plan to have bingo. Mr. Dunsing answered they usually play on Tuesdays, but have requested a second night to reserve the option of alternating with the Optimists without the need to amend the Special Use Permit again. In the beginning, they plan to operate once per week, alternating every other Tuesday with the Optimists.

Ms. Abbott asked how the bingo could be conducted on Tuesday if the location is used as a polling place on certain Tuesdays. Mr. Dunsing responded he hadn't thought of that concern but would suggest the bingo be conducted on Wednesday instead, so as not to interfere with election activities.

Ms. Newsom expressed concerns about the occupancy of the building as it relates to fire safety. Mr. Dunsing said the building occupancy is 225 on both levels. The bingo would be conducted on one level only. Part of the approval of the permit involves receiving an inspection from the Gladstone Fire division to verify safety. Mr. Wingerson stated only 100 people are anticipated for the bingo, but 150 people can safely occupy the bingo level. Gladstone fire staff will handle the occupancy concerns including the posting of a maximum occupancy sign.

Chairman Hill asked for speakers on behalf of the request to approach the podium.

Mr. Harley Sprague of 1405 NE 56th Terrace described how he lives diagonally across Flora from the Knights of Columbus. While he is neither a member of the Knights nor a player of bingo, he is in favor of the request. He has driven his wife to bingo regularly in the past and has observed no disruption to the surrounding neighborhood; the players go into the hall, play bingo and then go home quietly. He stated the police officers who provide security at the bingo halls can confirm there is no problem. He expressed that the Knights of Columbus are an asset to the community, and should be allowed by the City to continue.

Mr. Raleigh Fizer of 5600 N Highland shared he lives at the corner of Englewood Road. He too supports the Knights of Columbus' request and can confirm they are good neighbors. His wife enjoys the game, but he does not gamble. He believes it is up to the individual to make that choice based on our free country. As a resident of Gladstone since 1955, Mr. Fizer thinks the City should hang on to its good people.

Chairman Hill then asked speakers opposed to the request to speak. No one present was opposed and there were no further questions of the applicant. Chairman Hill closed the public hearing. He invited discussion among the Planning Commission members.

Ms. Newsom commented she was on the City Council at the time the initial Special Use Permit request was made. The primary concern then was disruption for the neighbors, however the Knights of Columbus have shown over the years they are not a problem. Their plan is thought out, and she is in favor of the request.

Mr. Dillingham asked for clarification of the parking issue. Mr. Wingerson explained the occupancy of the bingo room is 150. There are 90 parking spaces available. They would be a bit short, but considering they're only expecting 100 people at most, staff is not concerned. The 90 spaces to 100 people ratio is good because statistically more than 10% of people will carpool to the event. Staff is asking the neighborhood to inform the City if parking begins to be a problem.

Mr. Revenaugh asked if cars could also be parked in the large grassy area behind the building. Mr. Wingerson stated parking on the grass would be a code violation, however the Knights could pave some of the grassed area to increase the size of their lot, should that be necessary in the future.

Ms. Abbott made a motion to approve the request for amendment of the Special Use Permit at 1500 NE Englewood Road to allow bingo two nights per week from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM. Mr. Dillingham seconded the motion. A vote was conducted as follows:

In favor: Mary Abbott, Anne Alexander, Allen Dillingham, Joe Evans, Chairman Brian Hill, Wendell Kiser, Brenda Lowe, Anita Newsom, Mike Steffens, Mark Revenaugh, Joyce Wilde

Opposed: None.

Chairman Hill stated the vote is unanimous in support of the request and will be forwarded to the City Council for their April 14, 2003 Agenda.

6. Communication from the City Council and Staff

Councilman Beer echoed Ms. Newsom's comments that the Knights of Columbus have shown the fears of the surrounding neighborhood were unnecessary. He was on the Planning Commission at that time and remembers the fear of excess traffic, drunkenness and noise. The Knights have proven to be good neighbors. The fears of bingo activities there are no more to be feared than the Knights' original proposal.

Mr. Wingerson wished those present a Happy St. Patrick's Day. He said it is nice to see the group after such a long break between meetings. He thanked Ms. Behr for filling in while Ms. Jarrett is out following the birth of her baby girl. He also reminded the group they are invited to the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Amphitheatre: Saturday, March 22 at 10:00 AM. Mr. Wingerson mentioned the group may notice construction happening at Wal-Mart; they are enclosing the garden center so that it may be used year-round, similar to what was one at their Barry Road store. The Planning Commission was not part of the approval because it falls within the footprint of the building plan. The City Council approved the building permit with the conditions that the parapet door on the roof be secured and the fountain be returned to and kept in working order. Mr. Wingerson also welcomed Mr. Revenaugh to the Committee and apologized for not introducing him earlier in the meeting.

7. Communications from the Planning Commission Members

Mr. Evans asked if staff could have the entry signs straightened since they are leaning. Mr. Wingerson stated he will look into the matter. He added Ms. Behr and Mr. McClure have been working with a committee to get new signs installed. Members of the Arts Council were given a sneak peek at the designs.

Ms. Newsom mentioned the new entry signs and asked how the existing Signage Masterplan Project, which has already been designed, factors into the situation. Mr. Wingerson explained the Signage Masterplan is moving forward but has been delayed due to contract problems. That plan was for signage at the City facilities but did not include any City entry signs.

Ms. Alexander stated she is pleased to see the addition of planned lighting along the Antioch curve. She thought the parking of recreational vehicles was prohibited on driveways but has noticed many of them still about. Mr. Wingerson explained that while there was discussion of disallowing parking them on driveways, the policy was set aside so that the Council could tackle some larger issues. There may be more discussion about the subject in the future.

Ms. Alexander also expressed her displeasure about the number of vehicles parked at Larry Whitton's facility at 72nd & N. Broadway. Mr. Wingerson explained Mr. Whitton has not yet received his final inspection yet, but will within the next 30-60 days. Compliance should be achieved by then.

Ms. Newsom mentioned although the rebuilding of the Amphitheater is proceeding, donations are still needed. The insurance coverage lacked and the redesign includes more amenities. While the Capital Improvements Committee agreed to contribute half of the difference, the fundraising committee needs to find

the other half. There are a variety of activities they have planned to raise money, including golf, dinners and more. The next event is a cookout at HyVee where attendees can get a meal for \$5.00. She encouraged anyone available to help out to contact her. It is all for a good cause.

Mr. Steffens referred to The Betterwash on N. Oak and said the driveway entrance looks different than he anticipated. It seems very difficult for traffic to get in and out of the facility. Mr. Wingerson agreed with the observation of traffic difficulty and stated 3,500 cars used the wash over the weekend. Although the plans showed a shared drive between the carwash and its neighbor to the north, this did not take place due to McIntire Mann’s complete lack of cooperation and willingness to negotiate. In order for the development to move forward, the drive was constructed as is today, but the process is not over yet. The City Council is comfortable with staff using the City’s authority to make the change happen, but first will give the owners of McIntire Mann another chance to negotiate.

Mr. Dillingham also welcomed Mr. Revenaugh to the Commission. He said it is nice to see such a high level of attendance.

Mr. Steffens asked if staff could revisit the issue of the banner sign at China King Buffet on Antioch Road. The banner seems to cover most of that side of the building. Mr. Wingerson will look into the matter.

8. Other Business: Detached Building Ordinance Update

Mr. Wingerson said he would like to summarize the status of the proposed ordinance. The draft was presented to the City Council in a study session, and they arrived at three themes: 1) Staff should look again at ways to regulate the size of buildings; 2) Staff should look at the side yard setbacks as they relate to paving for driveways; and 3) Staff should refine the language of the ordinance. Currently staff is researching other communities’ policies regarding detached buildings. In the future, other alternatives and new draft language will be brought to the group for discussion.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Recorded by Kelli L. Behr

Approved as submitted _____

Brian Hill, Chairman

Approved as corrected _____