

1 ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING: City of Pontiac Zoning
2 Board of Appeals Meeting Minutes on Tuesday, March 21, 2017;
3 Pontiac City Hall, 47450 Woodward Avenue, Pontiac, Michigan
4 48342

5

COMMISSIONERS:

6

Chair Ahmad Taylor

Lucy Payne

7

Sam Anderson

Laurie Bishop

8

Elcine Kirkendolph

Carlos Bueno

9

FROM THE CITY: C. James Sabo, City Planner

10

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 7:06 P.M.

11

ROLL CALL:

12

PRESENT: Chair Taylor, Comm. Payne, Comm. Anderson,

13

Comm. Bueno, Comm. Sinclair

14

ABSENT: Comm. Bishop, Comm. Kirkendolph

15

Mr. Sabo reported a quorum present.

16

COMMUNICATIONS: None

17

MINUTES FOR REVIEW: 2-21-17

18

COMM. SINCLAIR MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES

19

COMM. ANDERSON SECONDED

20

VOTE: AYES: Payne, Bueno, Anderson,

Taylor, Sinclair

21

NAYS: None.

22

ABSTAIN: None.

23

Vote 5-0-0 motion carries.

24

OLD BUSINESS: NONE.

25

1 NEW BUSINESS:
2 PUBLIC HEARING/USE VARIANCE FOR MENAGERIE ANIMAL EXHIBITION
3 ZBA-17-05
4 PROPERTY ADDRESS: 71 W. Huron
5 ZONED: C-2, Downtown Business District
6 APPLICANT: Loren Guzik
7 Presentation of facts given by Mr. Sabo.
8 Mr. Loren Guzik, Applicant/Property Owner, 1767 N. Hoyne,
9 Chicago, Illinois, wanted to point out that this tenant has
10 been around for twenty years and has longevity and will be
there a long time and has gotten national attention, being
aired on TV.
11 Mr. Rob Mias, Executive Director, Co-founder of the
12 Organization for Bat Conservation, 2314 Golfview Drive,
13 Troy, Michigan, indicated that they wanted to be a part in
14 rebuilding a community and provide free education in the
15 area of bats to the schools. He gave some facts about bats,
16 what they pollinate and also that they have beekeepers and
17 professional gardeners and that it's really about a healthy
18 ecosystem.
19 CHAIR TAYLOR OPENED THE HEARING UP FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS.
20 Christian Marcello, 100 Newberry, Pontiac, Michigan, had a
21 lot of good things to say about the organization and owner,
22 feels it's a great opportunity for Pontiac if the Board sees
23 fit to approve.
24 Glen Konopaskie, Executive Director of Downtown Business
25 Association, 100 Newberry, Pontiac, Michigan indicated he is
in full support of this.
21 Kyle Westberg, President and CEO of West Construction,
22 79 Oakland Ave., Pontiac, Michigan, indicated that he moved
23 here eleven years ago with the hopes and dreams of being
involved in the renaissance of Pontiac and feels this is an
amazing opportunity.
24 Mike McGinnis, Pontiac School Board Trustee, 26 Union
25 Street, Pontiac, Michigan, indicated he shared this concept
with the board at a meeting last night and received a very

1 positive response. He stated that, from an educational
2 perspective, this would be a great asset to the Pontiac
community and he strongly encourages approval.

3 Tim Travis, 3050 Harrison Place, Waterford, Michigan, owner
4 of Golden Walsh Garden & Home, 559 Orchard Lake, Pontiac,
Michigan indicated the he has known Rob for a long time and
5 feels that he touched on the smaller benefit of education
opportunity this would provide but it also has not only
6 ecological benefits but economical benefits in the long run.
He feels it would be a great value to the community.

7 Renae Voight-Morath, 145 Illinois Ave., Pontiac, Michigan,
8 Chair of Pontiac District Two Community Group, indicated
that she is a 23-year resident of Pontiac, she is a member
9 of the Pontiac Arts Commission and is active in several
other groups. She feels that, along with the arts, it would
10 be great to bring some science to Pontiac and that this
would be a win/win situation.

11 Linda Porter, 215 Tilden Street, Pontiac, Michigan, a
12 long-time supporter of the OBC, indicated that she was first
introduced over 15 years ago while she was a teacher at
13 Le Baron Elementary in Pontiac. She feels this would add a
great value to the community.

14 Claudia Voight, 163 N. Berkshire, Bloomfield Township,
Michigan, indicated she was a fellow scientist at Cranbrook
15 (where OBC is moving from) so she witnessed firsthand the
positive attributes they brought to Cranbrook and feels that
16 it will add to the positive changes going on in Pontiac.

17 Mona Parlove, 170 Erie Road, Pontiac, Michigan, long-time
resident and member of Planning Commission stated that
18 having this potential in Pontiac is phenomenal and that she
is in support of the project.

19
20 Mr. Sabo read a letter from a Tim Greimel from the Michigan
House of Representatives in favor of the project which
encourages the Board to support the request.

21
22 CHAIR TAYLOR CLOSED PUBLIC COMMENT AND TURNED TO THE BOARD
FOR QUESTIONS AND/OR COMMENTS.

23 COMM. ANDERSON STATED THAT HE THINKS THIS WOULD BE VERY
24 EDUCATIONAL AND ENCOURAGED THE APPLICANT TO BRING MORE TO
PONTIAC FROM CRANBROOK.

25

1 COMM. BUENO ASKED THE APPLICANT IF THEY DO ANY RESEARCH WITH
2 THE BATS AND MENTIONED THAT THERE IS A DISEASE KILLING
3 MILLIONS OF THEM.

3 Mr. Mias answered that they host scientists to come and help
4 with the White-Nose Syndrome and they do behavioral studies
5 on the bats as well.

5 COMM. BUENO ASKED THE APPLICANT WHAT THEIR GAME PLAN WAS FOR
6 PARKING.

6 Mr. Mias answered that behind the building there is enough
7 parking for their employees and that across the street there
8 are 60 available spaces.

8 COMM. BUENO INQUIRED OF THE APPLICANT IF THEY WERE GOING TO
9 BE BREEDING THE BATS.

10 Mr. Mias answered that the bats do that on their own but
11 encouraged the placement of bat houses and indicated that
12 they will donate some to Pontiac, so that the bats have a
13 safe place to take care of their babies, as opposed to
14 people's attics and added that bats only produce one
15 offspring per year.

13 COMM. PAYNE INQUIRED IF THEY WERE SHOWCASING OR
14 RE-POPULATING BATS.

15 Mr. Mia indicated that they are a wildlife sanctuary for
16 injured, orphaned and elderly bats.

16 COMM. PAYNE ASKED IF THERE WAS A REASON THEY WANT TO CHANGE
17 THEIR LOCATION.

18 Mr. Mias indicated that the main reasons are that they've
19 grown so much and that they were just renting at Cranbrook.

19 CHAIR TAYLOR ADDED THAT HE THINKS THIS IS A GREAT
20 OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH AND EDUCATION.

21 COMM. BUENO MOVED TO CONSIDER APPROVAL CONDITIONS TO ALLOW A
22 USE VARIANCE REQUEST FOR 71 W. HURON, ZBA 17-05, AS THE
23 PROPOSED USE APPEARS TO MEET THE STANDARDS FOR SECTION 6.408
24 OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE FOR A USE VARIANCE.

23 COMM. ANDERSON SECONDED.

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1 VOTE: AYES: Payne, Bueno, Sinclair,
Anderson, Bueno

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NAYS: None.

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ABSTAIN: None.

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Vote 5-0-0 motion carries.

5

CHAIR TAYLOR OPENED UP THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

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7 Linda Porter, 215 Tilden Street, Pontiac, Michigan, spoke of
8 how, when she was a teacher at Le Baron, the students
decided to and raised enough money to sponsor a vampire bat
and how much they loved it.

9 Glen Konopaskie, Executive Director of Downtown Business
Association, 100 Newberry, Pontiac, Michigan wanted to
10 salute the Board for their foresight and consideration and
thanked them for their decision.

11

12 Mr. Gusik wanted the record to reflect he thanks his father
for helping him take walls down and his mother for bringing
food.

13

14 Tim Travis, 3050 Harrison Place, Waterford, Michigan, owner
of Golden Walsh Garden & Home, 559 Orchard Lake, Pontiac,
Michigan asked how long it would be before they moved into
15 the building, to which someone answered June and he
indicated that his business is thrilled to have OBC here and
16 thanked the Board for thinking outside the box and stated he
feels they will need to be doing that a lot more because
17 there is so much creativity in Pontiac.

18 Christian Marcello, 100 Newberry, Pontiac, Michigan,
indicated that, as a promoter for the Main Street Pontiac
19 Program, he is looking forward to presenting more items to
the Board for variances as the community continues to grow.

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CHAIR TAYLOR CLOSED PUBLIC COMMENT.

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MISCELLANEOUS: None.

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CHAIR TAYLOR MOVED TO ADJOURN.

23

24 VOTE: AYES: Payne, Bueno, Sinclair,
Anderson, Bueno

25

NAYS: None.

1 ABSTAIN: None.

2 Vote 5-0-0 motion carries.

3 ADJOURNMENT: 8:02 P.M.

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