

**Minutes
Plan Commission Meeting
February 13, 2017
7:00pm**

Acting Chair Holmquist called the meeting of the City of Monona Plan Commission to order at 7:05 pm.

Present: Acting Chair Alder Brian Holmquist, Mr. Griff Dorschel, Mr. Robert Stein, Mr. Chris Homburg, Ms. Kathy Thomas, Ms. Susan Fox and Mr. Dale Ganser

Excused: Chair Alder Jim Busse and Mr. Griff Dorschel

Also present: City Planner & Economic Development Director Sonja Reichertz

Approval of Minutes

A motion by Mr. Stein, seconded by Ms. Fox, to approve the minutes of January 23, 2017 carried with one correction.

Appearances

There were no appearances.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

A. Public Hearing on Request by Summit Credit Union for a Zoning Permit, Site Plans, and Building Elevations for a new Branch Bank Location at 5809 Monona Dr.

Peter Tan, Strang Inc. described the revised site plan for the new Summit Credit Union based on feedback from the last Plan Commission review in 2015. The building has been rotated so it is longest in a north-south direction, there is now a right turn only exit on to Monona Drive, bike stalls have been added, the drive-thru canopy was placed in the back of the site, and there is a pedestrian walkway from Monona Drive to the main entrance (near the parking lot). Mr. Tan explained that this plan includes three more parking stalls than the minimum required because of the number of employees and potential customers. Mr. Tan described the building materials, architecture of the main building and drive-thru, site elevations, building setbacks, and signage. He stated that for safety reasons the night drop is the only feature on the site that requires the car to drive up right next to the building. The drive aisle in front allows traffic to circulate from the drive thru to the front of the site, to exit at the north driveway and head north. There were no other appearances and the public hearing was declared closed.

B. Second Prehearing Conference on Request by Summit Credit Union for a Zoning Permit, Site Plans, and Building Elevations for a new Branch Bank Location at 5809 Monona Dr.

Planner Reichertz described the two biggest changes since the last meeting which were the building reorientation and moving the canopy to the back of the site. Reichertz explained that a lot of the adjustments she recommends in the staff report have to do with the Monona Drive Design Guidelines. First, she recommends a consistent setback with the building to the south. Regarding

the south driveway access proposed, Staff stated that the Police Department suggested closing the south exit and widening the north entrance for two way traffic. Reichertz also stated that the proposed site plan meets the minimum requirement for 30% green space, but it seems like there is an excessive amount of paved surface that could be scaled back. The drive aisle in front of the building is inconsistent with the Design Guidelines, and it detaches the building from its relationship to the street, does not create a pedestrian friendly environment, and does not adequately screen a vehicle circulation area. She recommends removal of this drive aisle. If it were necessary to keep the drive aisle in front of the building, the Guidelines recommend additional landscaping or other features like a low decorative wall, fence or planter bed.

Ms. Thomas asked why the entrance on Monona Drive does not connect with the sidewalk. Mr. Tan explained that the doors closest to Monona Drive are a service entrance and emergency exit and not customer entrances. Mr. Tan stated that in order to have the building next to the street, the site was designed to have the parking in the back of the building. He said that due to security reasons, the financial institution can only have one entrance and that they decided to place the entrance closest to the parking lot for customers driving to the site. Reichertz asked what the proposed material is for the service door. Mr. Tan said the service door is glass and looks like a normal door to the building.

Mr. Ganser stated that he likes the concept of bringing the building closer up to Monona Drive, and asked if there was any situation to make the night drop part of the drive thru canopy instead of attaching it to the main building. Jeremy Eppler, Summit Credit Union, explained that the night drop must be attached to the main building because of safety concerns.

There was discussion of the building setback. Mr. Tan said Frost Woods Retail Center is 25' feet back, the proposed bank is 36' back and the Silver Eagle is 65' back. Mr. Ganser said the Silver Eagle and Angelo's setbacks should not be considered for the long-term redevelopment vision. Mr. Homburg stated that removing the drive aisle in the front could help improve the site's curb appeal. He said that if someone is using the night drop, they could take a right onto Monona Drive instead of using the drive aisle in front. The drive-thru traffic in back can be routed through the parking area instead of up and around the front of the site.

Jeremy Eppler said that from a safety standpoint they would prefer not to have the drive-thru exit through the parking lot, but agrees that removing the front drive aisle will help with curb appeal. Mr. Homburg also said that some of the asphalt in the back of the site could be removed in order to incorporate more green space and that the right turn only exit would help relieve the stress on the northern entrance.

Ms. Thomas said that she thinks most banks have a driveway that goes all the way around the building. Planner Reichertz stated that the Monona Drive Urban Design Guidelines were adopted in 2010 and many of the existing banks were built before the Guidelines were adopted.

There was further discussion about the possibility of removing the front drive aisle and adding additional landscaping features. Mr. Stein said that this site has a great opportunity to incorporate a robust landscape and reduce the amount of asphalt in the back of the building. Mr. Homburg stated that if the building is moved closer to the street, that could allow for a wider parking lot to help cars safely maneuver.

Planner Reichertz showed a photograph of the adjacent Frost Woods retail building to illustrate its proximity to Monona Drive and decorative elements that create a pleasant environment from the street and for pedestrians. Staff stated that the proposed drive aisle is the most impactful in terms of disrupting the relationship of the building with the street.

Ms. Thomas asked if Brink's truck needs the front drive aisle for parking; Mr. Tan said no. Brink's can pull up in front of the night drop and exiting cars will have enough room to pass on the right.

Ms. Fox stated that she thinks it is fine to remove the front drive aisle.

Mr. Homburg provided feedback on wall signage. Normally only one sign per building is allowed unless it fronts on more than one street and there seem to be a lot of signs proposed. Mr. Tan said he would like to explore what latitude they have for additional signage. He stated that what they have proposed is proportional to the building and you would never see all four signs at once. Mr. Homburg pointed out that the sign on Monona Drive may be considered a roof top sign which is a prohibited sign type in Monona.

Ms. Fox said that the roof signage looks nice and wanted to confirm that it is a violation to the code. Staff stated that she would double check on this requirement.

Mr. Ganser and Mr. Stein said the sign on the drive-thru canopy will be a hard sell.

Commissioners thanked the applicant for making the requested revisions and stated that this use is an appropriate destination type use for Monona Drive.

Reports of Staff and Commission Members

A. Staff Report Regarding Status of Development Project Proposals.

The next meeting is February 27, 2017. Staff has been informed of a new project which would create two new parcels about an acre in size on the existing Shopko parcel. Reichertz has not received a formal application but the owner intends to schedule this item for some time in March. Mr. Homburg stated that Commissioners should review if there is enough parking to support the new parcels as well as the Shopko Lot and its ancillary uses like the Garden Center.

B. Plan Commission Requests for Information Concerning Development Projects.

Alder Holmquist asked Staff what the standards were for number of vehicles and signage at DiMaggio's Tire on Broadway. Reichertz stated they are allowed three vehicles and signage could be standard DOT sales on the car and price tag, but no banners, flags, or balloons. Alder Holmquist said that there might be more than what is currently allowed.

Alder Holmquist stated that there is a store on Monona Drive that is using their front lawn as a storage space for storing goods overnight. Staff explained that nothing in the code explicitly says that overnight storage is not allowed and that outside storage in terms of construction can be outside for up to 12 months. Staff stated that there has been communication with the business owner because it is not consistent with what other retail businesses are allowed, and we are asking him to remove the items being stored outside overnight.

Mr. Ganser stated that whoever purchased the computer tech store on Monona Drive seems to be using the city property for storing couches and junk.

Adjournment

A motion by Mr. Stein, seconded by Mr. Ganser, to adjourn was carried. (8:05 pm)

Respectfully submitted by:
Sonja Reichertz, City Planner