

EXCERPTS

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

MARCH 10, 2016

V) PUBLIC HEARINGS

MR. REICHLIN: Okay. Now we'll get into the public hearing portion of our meeting.

Case No. 15-199

A request by the City of Columbia to amend Chapter 29, Sections 16 and 20 of the City Code (Zoning Regulations) as it pertains to self-service storage facilities. (This item was tabled at the February 18 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.)

MR. REICHLIN: May we have a staff report, please.

Staff report was given by Mr. Clint Smith of the Planning and Development Department. Staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendments to 29-16 and 29-20.

MR. REICHLIN: Are there any questions of staff? Ms. Burns?

MS. BURNS: Mr. Smith -- and I apologize if you showed us this in the work sessions. But is there a map that shows us C-3 and M-1 zoning where -- do you have it handy?

MR. SMITH: I do not have it handy.

MS. BURNS: Okay.

MR. SMITH: But we did look at that map. That is correct.

MS. BURNS: Okay. I -- I was hoping to look at it again, but -- all right. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. I can kind of tell you from that. There was -- there was generally, there wasn't a high amount of C-3 properties that were adjacent to residential.

MS. BURNS: Okay. I was just thinking about what our previous topic that we just talked about, and so there's more coming all the time. All right. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: You're welcome.

MR. REICHLIN: Any other questions of staff? Seeing none. We'll move into the public hearing on this matter.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

MR. REICHLIN: Anybody interested in helping us with our understanding of this storage unit amendment, feel free to approach the podium. We'd appreciate your name and address and try and keep your comments to three minutes.

MS. LUEBBERT: My name is Christina Luebbert; I am a registered professional engineer, owner of Luebbert Engineering, offices shared with Baysinger Surveying at 914 North College here in Columbia. Kind of coming from this on a couple of different perspectives. One, is this initially started because we laid out a potential self-storage site on an existing C-3 piece of property, ready to start putting plans together, and I happened to notice the 14-foot height restriction and it -- I hadn't -- I had only looked at the height restriction within C-3 zoning, which was, you know, the -- the 45 feet with extra with the setbacks,

and I thought, oh, we've -- we're fine, and then I caught that it had special rules for self-storage. So one point I would like to make is the fact that I can built pretty much whatever I want at this height as long as I don't put self-storage in it, and I can do it right on the piece of property I was looking at. So with no restriction in building material, with no restriction in color, with no restriction really of anything other than the -- the basics of -- of the C-3 zoning. So I think some of the pictures he showed you also shows you that the self-storage industry has changed dramatically since the original zoning code was written. Back then, everything was glorified metal garages, big roll-up doors, and driving right up to it and dropping your stuff off outside in the elements. I had the opportunity to work for two years in-house for a self-storage company that built storage facilities all over the country -- Chicago, New York, Miami. We even built a ten-story self-storage facility in Miami because land was at a premium, and that was the amount of land we had available, and so we went vertical because you start looking at the way that planned communities work, we have to start using more vertical space because otherwise we're using up our valuable resource of land for -- for no reason. So I think you're starting to see more climate-controlled storage where you walk in and it's nice. It's air conditioned so that you don't have to worry about things melting. I lost every candle I owned in my last move because I had it in a self-storage facility and hadn't paid for the climate control. You're -- you're seeing people getting off of -- you know, away from these old, ugly garages and moving on to much nicer facilities. I think you look around Columbia at some Storage Marts facilities and some of the other nicer facilities, and they're very attractive. They aren't necessarily all brown and gray. They aren't necessarily all short, and sometimes they used the terrain to get a little bit more of a visual look without breaking the rules of -- of height. But it's just a different industry that we're in today versus when these codes were written. So that -- I think the two main points are that the storage industry has changed. We're going to stuff that's more about being aesthetically pleasing to the customer, drawing them in with, you know, nice windows and doors and things that they can see this is where I want to put my things and where I know my things will be safe and stored well. And also that if I was doing any other use in C-3, I could make it look however I wanted within a pretty wide range. I could make it neon green and no one could stop me. So I'm a little bit leery of why we're putting all these architectural rules on it. So I'd be glad to answer any questions based on both my experience in the self-storage industry in-house and -- and on how I'm looking forward to doing a project with some of these amended rules.

MR. REICHLIN: Any questions of this speaker?

MS. BURNS: And I appreciate you discussing the visual aspect of it and how it would incorporate in with existing landscape. Can you share with us where you were potentially going to put this building, and that might help us visualize how the changes that we're talking about here would affect existing landscapes?

MS. LUEBBERT: The project that this all came from was a piece of land owned over near Texas Avenue and Providence Road. So there's a Rent-N-Go Auto there now. They have, I think, a gray and white building now. So, I mean, we're probably not looking at putting some hideous, ugly color there. However, there's also a lot of things it -- it didn't -- the Code, as they have it written, said -- does not say

sheet metal. It says prefabricated metal panels. Well, there's a lot of range of what I can buy in prefabricated metal panels, some that look like stucco, but yet they're metal, which makes them cheaper to erect and less structural. They're not as heavy as maybe putting block up, so I have less structural cost, but yet I can create a look that's very attractive. I don't know if that's what he would want to put up there or not for sure. We haven't -- we kind of stopped in the middle of the road because we realized we had this problem we needed to -- to address first. But, you know, that's -- it's a very commercial area, you know. You still have to make it visually appealing so that people will come in.

MS. BURNS: And we saw that it was a commercial area. I'm just thinking about others that are listening about this and maybe learning about it for the first time.

MS. LUEBBERT: Sure. Sure.

MS. BURNS: So thank you -- thank you very much.

MS. LUEBBERT: No. No. No problem.

MR. REICHLIN: Any other questions? Ms. Loe?

MS. LOE: It sounds as if you haven't had requirements for architectural accoutrement when you've done high-rise storage in other locations; is this correct?

MS. LUEBBERT: Sometimes yes and sometimes no. I think in Denver, we ended up having some requirements as far as colors. They -- but they had that on all product -- all buildings. It didn't matter what the use was. I'm trying to think. In all of the various suburbs of Chicago, I don't remember ever having -- running against -- and a lot of times, we were doing conversions of existing buildings and make them look a lot better.

MS. LOE: Okay.

MS. LUEBBERT: We were doing a lot of renewal in urban areas, so --

MS. LOE: Well, and C-3 doesn't allow anything to be built there, so there are some limits on what uses can go in those locations, which may --

MS. LUEBBERT: Sure. The use -- the use is regulated.

MS. LOE: Right.

MS. LUEBBERT: But the aesthetics isn't.

MS. LOE: No. So, you can build an ugly bakery.

MS. LUEBBERT: Sure. I don't know why you would want to.

MS. LOE: Or an ugly assembly hall.

MS. LUEBBERT: Well, and then --

MS. LOE: Yes. I think there's fewer concerns about that than there are about self-service storage.

MS. LUEBBERT: I guess. Except for I go back to there's a lot of -- I'm trying to bring customers in. I want it to be attractive. However, there are some regulation or franchise agreements if you are doing business with somebody like U-Haul or whatever, that there has to be certain colors incorporated, you know. I've seen a lot of blue standing seam roofs that look perfectly fine, but under this, that would

possibly not be allowed because it's not an earth-tone color, you know. There's -- I -- I'm a little -- I'm a little leery of just blanketly saying this has to be done. And I understand I can go through the conditional-use process.

MS. LOE: Right.

MS. LUEBBERT: But that puts me at risk. Anytime -- and I could build a 14-foot, you know, building, as well. But anytime I have to go through an additional approval process, and I'm at risk of not being able to move forward, but spending a whole lot of money to get -- to find that out, I -- I'm not a big fan of having to -- to not know if I'm going to be able to do it. And I do like that they've tried to give us some kind of use of right, but I think that there's maybe some -- a happy medium in there.

MS. LOE: No. I think that's a valid point. How much to they have to invest to find out what options they might get permitted under the conditional-use permit? I mean, how far down the road do they have to go if they don't want to use earth tones?

MR. SMITH: Well, if they're going to -- their first step would generally be to submit building plans to us. And at that point, we could determine whether or not the -- if they're going above 14 feet, we -- we determine if the architectural are consistent with basically the architectural that are in the Code. Now, if they aren't and we determine that, then they would go to the conditional use. So either way they're going to have to produce architectural plans to basically build higher than 14 feet prior to or during that construction, and they may not need to be the final architectural, but I think we need to have some general idea of the types of materials being used and the percentage on the building if we -- if we look at some sort of percentage, but we'll need to know at least building materials. And that's really -- as far as the architectural standpoint, that's -- that is -- that's really all architectural plans would be required for. And really in essence they could just say we -- we intend to use brick for the whole thing, we wouldn't need to see architectural. We would review them when they came in, obviously, but if -- if they wanted to do that. It's really going to come down to whether or not they feel like they're going to be close enough where it's going to have staff's determination whether or not they -- they meet that architectural standard or not. So -- but they're going to need to have a pretty good idea of what their architectural design is coming in.

MR. ZENNER: And I would also add to that, if you're dealing with a national -- if you're dealing with a national construction -- a national company that is in the business of storage, cut sheets as well as examples of what they have used in other markets and locations from a graphics perspective would be able to be submitted. Percentages of the building that would specific to the site here in Columbia would be something that they would have to investigate to begin with to ensure that they met our other dimensional standards. So I mean you're going to have to produce a site plan at a minimum for us to review at any point in the review process, and that's likely a prerequisite of even pulling the plan ID out of the box. You're going to have to make sure the site fits. And then if you want to go up four or five stories, you're likely going to be able to use an example of what you've previously built elsewhere as the justification of here's the color scheme that we want, these are the scheme colors that we use within our

company, and then they may have to do some type of sketch. I wouldn't even say final architectural plans. They can basically -- a block sketch may be enough for us to just see proportion and where the building colors may go. Final design, it's not a bar -- this is not a bar napkin sketch that we would want, obviously, but the actual investment of significant resources into final engineered plans or final architectural drawings, I don't believe that's what we need at a minimum. I think the other aspect to hear, if you're renovating existing buildings and you may not be touching the exterior of the building to do a conversation, that's a totally different story versus new construction. So just to ensure that we're not getting confused as to how you keep the vernacular of a neighborhood that's got existing derelict or unused buildings that you want to convert versus building brand new, which is what this ordinance, in essence, identifies as the need and what is desired, is a totally different discussion. So I did -- let's not potentially get confused by that, that other communities don't seem to have standards. You may be developing something differently as well, and using existing infrastructure to do it with, which, from our perspective, is great adaptive reuse at that point.

MS. LOE: No. I was simply commenting that the speaker appeared not to have run into this scenario at all, and I was surprised by that. Thank you.

MR. REICHLIN: Any other questions of this speaker? Seeing no one. Thank you very much. Is there anybody else who cares to comment on this matter? Seeing no one.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

MR. REICHLIN: Open it up for Commissioners' comments. Ms. Burns?

MS. BURNS: I guess I was interested when Mr. Smith was talking about some discussions about materials that might be used, or percentages that might be used in constructing a self-storage facility. Can -- would those be something that we would amend -- change what we have here?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. BURNS: Okay. I guess I -- I think we spent a lot of time on this. I'm comfortable with what we have here as far as making any changes.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. You could make that in your motion to adopt the proposed changes with the following amendments and you could like add, like I said, I think the applicant was requesting possibly to, instead of prohibiting certain materials, prohibiting their use or allowing their use up to a certain percentage. So that would be something you could do in your motion at that time.

MS. BURNS: Thank you.

MR. REICHLIN: I had a question of staff as well with regard to reference to earth tones.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. REICHLIN: Perhaps its omission would be something worth of consideration?

MR. SMITH: Are you asking me if I support the omission of that section?

MR. REICHLIN: Well, I'm just -- what would staff's position be with something like that?

MR. SMITH: Staff's position is that is a requirement we saw in several different codes. It's designed to kind of limit that kind of the garish appearance of buildings which, once you go from fourteen

feet to four stories can be amplified if you have a whole building that's -- that's painted bright red or bright blue or whatever franchise that specific commercial developer has. So we felt fairly -- or at least I felt fairly confident that that's a reasonable request. Again that could be something open to a percentage-type issue to, you know, address, Ms. Luebbert's concerns with franchise colors, but I think in general I'm still comfortable with -- with limiting the overall design of the facility to -- to those types of colors. Again, that -- that represents only the kind of the high bars requirements for -- for going in as of right. They can come back and request to basically get relief from that requirement through the conditional-use process.

MR. REICHLIN: Any other comments? Mr. Stanton?

MR. STANTON: The speaker brought up some good points. I -- I generally like what we have available here. Can I ask a question of the speaker?

MR. REICHLIN: Feel free to approach the podium again.

MR. STANTON: I believe in win-win, so you -- you've reviewed this language. Correct?

MS. LUEBBERT: Sure.

MR. STANTON: Ideal world, what would you change? What don't you like? Outside of the earth-tone issue, what else bothers you?

MS. LUEBBERT: I mean, originally, when I looked at what the consultant who is working on the UDO recommended, all he -- all he recommended was to remove the height restriction. There's already other restrictions about what kind of activities can go on and what kind of things that can happen and can be stored there and so forth. You know, that made complete sense to keep a lot of that text in there, and all it was doing was saying let the height restriction within the C-3 zoning that's already there, let that stand. I didn't see why that wasn't sufficient, why we went to all this extra rigmarole when I just didn't think that was necessary. I think there -- what I want, customers to come in and rent from a self-storage facility, I'm going to make it aesthetically pleasing because I want them to come in. So I think that all these architectural standards are just unnecessary.

MR. STANTON: Well, do you kind of -- are you a -- how long have you been in Columbia? Let me ask that.

MS. LUEBBERT: I have lived in central Missouri since I was seven.

MR. STANTON: Okay. Okay.

MS. LUEBBERT: And so numerous years, and I lived in Columbia for 11 of that and I live in Jefferson City now.

MR. STANTON: Well, I stay that to say have you kind of been watching the revolution that's kind of going on in Columbia about we're really taking --

MS. LUEBBERT: Yes.

MR. STANTON: -- we're really taking serious consideration of how we want our city to grow? We're -- we're getting past 100,000 population.

MS. LUEBBERT: Sure.

MR. STANTON: We're -- we're moving forward. We're really trying to take control on how our

city looks, feels, operates, and that's where a lot of this is coming from because we don't want a Wild West roaring mentality which we kind of already have and we're trying to kind of shape that for the future. So that's kind of why we're addressing this kind of form --

MS. LUEBBERT: Well, I -- I come from a --

MR. STANTON: -- base stuff. We're kind of going towards downtown maybe, you know.

MS. LUEBBERT: And you've seen it go very vertical, haven't you?

MR. STANTON: Yeah.

MS. LUEBBERT: I mean, you've seen that we are using our land, our precious resource, more suitably to -- to protect how sprawled we've become.

MR. STANTON: Right.

MS. LUEBBERT: And -- and you're seeing more and more things going up instead of out. And I think from a planning standpoint, that makes perfect sense. So I've -- I mean back when I reviewed the original 2020 plan that they wrote when I was first an engineer, and I -- I said we need to be taking out these height restrictions. We -- we should be encouraging people to build up, use the air space instead of using all this extra land which is hard on our watersheds, it's hard on our environment, you know. I've always thought that height restrictions -- you know, it's one thing if I'm -- I understand if I'm next to, you know, Grandma Smith's house, that's one thing, you know. She doesn't want something towering over her and, you know, blocking the shade to her flower garden. But in a commercial district, I don't understand the value of height restriction, so that's --

MR. STANTON: Thank you for your comments.

MR. REICHLIN: Thank you for your time.

MR. STANTON: Thank you.

MR. REICHLIN: Do we have any other comments? Ms. Burns?

MS. BURNS: I have one question quickly for staff. If we -- if we would move for approval of this as it is presented and an applicant came back with a variance request, could that be discussed in a particular situation?

MR. ZENNER: Variance in what respect, Ms. Burns?

MS. RUSHING: A conditional-use request.

MS. BURNS: A conditional use. I'm sorry. As far as a -- I'm sorry. A conditional use. If there was a color that was not an earth tone --

MR. SMITH: Uh-huh.

MS. BURNS: -- and then they could come back and discuss it case by case, issue by issue?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. BURNS: Okay. Then I'm comfortable again as this is written and that we would handle case by case with the conditional use.

MR. ZENNER: Right. And I would suggest to you, based on what testimony Ms. Luebbert has provided to you, that may be a deterrent because of the time and the uncertainty of that which what is

proposed and what staff may, if the Commission is interested in so doing, is adjusting what is written to allow for some added flexibility. I mean, I think that that is something that, realizing that not -- that restricting everything as it's written, while that may be the preferred and what has been reviewed by the Commission, it does create additional regulatory barriers. And if, to Ms. Luebbert's point, we want to encourage people to be coming in and better utilizing our land by going vertically with these types of structures, it may be advantageous to consider adopting relief within the Code before we move it forward. Otherwise, we do stand to perpetuate a horizontal environment, not a vertical one which, to be quite honest, the current comprehensive plan would support better use of your land mass and going vertically does support those goals and objectives. I point that out. Commission, it's your decision as to what you would like to do, and if you would like a recommendation from us as it relates to what Ms. Luebbert submitted, we'll be more than happy to give that to you if you ask. I think we -- we can.

MS. LOE: Yeah.

MR. REICHLIN: Ms. Loe? Ms. Loe?

MS. LOE: Mr. Zenner, correct me if I'm wrong, but we are removing the 14-foot height limit in the M-1 without the design criteria. Correct?

MR. SMITH: Correct.

MR. ZENNER: That is correct. We have added, however, as a result of removing it, the conditions associated with M-1 adjacent to residential with a setback standard that did not exist in the M-1 zoning district, and it is specific to this particular type of use. And that would go to Ms. Luebbert's point, as well. Why would we be singling out this type of use only to adjacent residential development? That may be an advancement that we make within the Code, the UDO before it's adopted. That may be a point that gets raised as we go through the Commission process of the UDO adoption. However, that's not how it's proposed at this point. What we're trying to do is just address the issue at hand with this one specific use.

MS. LOE: Right. So M-1, we're removing -- we're allowing it up to 45 without design criteria, and C-3, we had determined that we wanted some criteria in place; Correct?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. LOE: Okay.

MS. RUSHING: And --

MR. REICHLIN: Ms. Rushing.

MS. RUSHING: Yeah. I don't like the idea of making a percentage requirement, so if you say, well, 25 percent of it has to be earth tones, can the other 75 percent be bright red. I mean, that just doesn't make sense to me to put in percentage requirements. Either you want earth tones or you don't. And the same, I think, with regard to the materials. I understand her argument with regard to prefabricated metal panels, but putting in a percentage requirement there also, to me, does not make sense. I think I would rather either adopt it as it is and allow them to use a conditional-use permit, or if we need to make changes, then go back and make changes that are appropriate.

MR. REICHLIN: Ms. Russell?

MS. RUSSELL: I just -- I don't think that Ms. Luebbert has anything bad that she's going to build in Columbia, but she's not the only one. The next one down the line might want to build something that's 80 percent neon green.

MR. STANTON: Push the limit.

MS. RUSSELL: So we need to write this and adopt this for everybody, not just directed because of one engineer's talents, so --

MR. REICHLIN: I would suggest at this time that we're at the crossroads of we either -- if somebody wants to -- what motion does somebody want to make and then take it through that process. I see the two possibilities, the motion for approval as written or a motion for tabling for further review. So I think that's the crossroads we find ourselves at at this point. So, Mr. Stanton, what's your --

MR. STANTON: Well, I'm going to pull the trigger and as it relates to Case 15-199, I recommend approval of proposed text amendments to 29-16 and 29-20.

MS. RUSHING: Second.

MR. REICHLIN: Ms. Rushing. May we have a roll call, please.

MS. LOE: Yes. Case 15-199.

Roll Call Vote (Voting "yes" is to recommend approval.) Voting Yes: Ms. Russell, Ms. Burns, Ms. Loe, Mr. Harder, Mr. Reichlin, Mr. Stanton, Mr. Strodman, Ms. Rushing. Motion carries 8-0.

MS. LOE: The motion carries 8-0. Recommendation to approve the text amendments will be forwarded to City Council.

MR. REICHLIN: Thank you very much, Ms. Loe. At this time, in deference to our sign language participant, we're going to take a ten-minute break. I realize some of us have been here waiting for the last item on the agenda, but we're just trying to be considerate of her efforts, and we'll be right back.

(Off the record.)

MR. REICHLIN: We'll try and start this back up a little early; is that all right? Can we have everybody's attention, please.