

**AGENDA REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
March 10, 2016**

SUMMARY

A request by the City of Columbia to amend Chapter 29-16 (C-3, General Business District) and 29-20 (M-1, General Industrial District) of the City's Zoning Regulations as it pertains to self-service storage facilities (**Case #15-199**)

DISCUSSION

Staff previously received correspondence (see attached) from Christina Lubbert, Lubbert Engineering, on behalf of Dan Burks, who owns property located at 206 Texas Avenue, requesting that the City consider a potential text amendment to Section 29-16(b), which lists the permitted uses in the C-3 zoning district and specifically establishes performance standards for "self-service storage facilities."

This request was discussed at a concept meeting that included plans prepared by Ms. Lubbert for a multi-story storage facility in C-3. Ms. Lubbert is requesting that the permitted use "self-service storage facilities" be amended to remove the current maximum height limit of 14 feet established by the performance conditions associated with the use. On October 19 the City Council directed staff to review and prepare revisions to Section 29-16 of the City Code related to the permitted principal use "self-service storage facilities" in C-3 (General Business District).

Self-service storage facilities are currently allowed as conditional uses in C-1 with the same conditions as listed in the C-3 (see below), as a conditional use in C-2, although with more stringent conditions, and as a permitted use in M-1 with the same conditions as C-1 and C-3.

The zoning ordinance defines the use as: ***Self service storage facility. A building, or group of buildings, with controlled access containing separate storage spaces or compartmentalized units of varying sizes, with no unit exceeding six hundred (600) square feet, that are rented or leased to tenants, with no tenant leasing more than two thousand (2,000) square feet, for the storage of goods.***

More specifically, Section 29-16(b) (C-3; Permitted Uses) permits self-service storage facilities as a principal use in C-3 with the following conditions:

1. *All storage shall be kept within an enclosed building, except recreation or other oversized vehicles, compressed flammable gas tanks, or gasoline containers in excess of two (2) gallons, which shall be stored only in exterior areas screened from the view from any street frontage.*
2. *Where the site is adjacent to residentially-zoned land, a permanent screen shall be required and shall conform to the provisions of [section 29-17\(d\)\(6\)](#).*
3. *Storage of feed, fertilizer, grain, soil conditioners, pesticides, chemicals, explosives and other hazardous materials, asphalt, brick, cement, gravel, rock, sand and similar construction materials, inoperable vehicles, or bulk storage of fuels shall be prohibited.*
4. *The use of power tools, paint sprayers, or the servicing, repair or fabrication of furniture, boats, trailers, motor vehicles, lawn mowers, appliances and other similar equipment shall be*

- prohibited.*
5. *The sale of any item from the facility or the conduct of any type of commercial activity at the facility shall be prohibited.*
 6. **Building heights shall be limited to fourteen (14) feet.**
 7. *Loading docks shall be prohibited.*

The request to amend the existing ordinance focuses on condition #6, which limits the height of storage buildings to 14 feet. The originally proposed amendment would remove the specific height restriction on storage facilities in the C-3 district. The height restriction is likely included as a condition due to the aesthetic nature of the specific use. Historically, storage facilities have provided a service that could be considered a commercial use, but the facilities constructed as storage units were not constructed to the same standard of appearance that is typically associated with commercial buildings. For example, many storage facilities are constructed with materials more associated with industrial buildings (sheet metal paneling) and include little architectural details (e.g., windows, articulation, etc.). For this reason, height was likely restricted to mitigate the aesthetic impact that these types of storage facilities had on commercial districts while still allowing them to be located outside of industrial districts, and also so that any adjacent residential property could be adequately screened with landscaping or fencing.

While the request would remove the specific height limit for storage units, it would not affect more general requirements for uses within the C-3, or that apply to all development in the City. For example, Section 29-16(d) (C-3; *Height and Area Regulations*) includes a maximum height of 45 feet for buildings built up to the required setback; however, it does allow for buildings to exceed that height if the building is setback an equal distance from the setback line as the height of the building in excess of 45 feet (e.g., a 50-foot building would be required to be setback an additional 5 feet).

It is important to note that the City is in the process of a comprehensive zoning ordinance revision that will result in a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The most recent draft by the City's consultant includes a revision similar to what was originally requested by Ms. Lubbert – the removal of the height restriction (see UDO pages 149-150). The consultant notes that the removal of the height restriction is appropriate due to the wider availability of higher quality, multi-story self-service storage facilities. It is worth noting that the UDO also includes additional buffering requirements that may require higher standards of screening than is currently required. The draft UDO includes a revision to the districts where self-service storage would be permitted (see UDO page 125). Storage units would no longer be allowed in M-N (C-1) if the proposed revision is adopted.

The Planning and Zoning Commission heard presentations by staff (which included examples of other municipal codes that address storage facilities) and considered the requested text amendment at their December 10, 2015 and January 7, 2016 work sessions. Following discussion at their January 21, 2016 work session, the PZC directed staff to produce a draft text amendment for consideration at a public hearing that included allowing taller self-service storage facilities in the C-3 as of right, but only if certain standards are met, standards that are meant to ensure that taller facilities are appropriately integrated into the neighborhood using design and bulk standards. In addition, a conditional use is included that would permit buildings to exceed 14 feet in C-3 with relaxed standards, and remove the height restriction in M-1. The primary revisions are explained in more detail below:

1. Revised Section 29-16(b) (permitted uses in C-3) to allow buildings in excess of 14 feet **as of right** if they can meet certain design standards. Those standards include restrictions on

building materials, colors, location near residential property, landscaping, and a maximum number of stories.

2. Revised Section 29-16(c) (conditional uses in C-3) to allow buildings in excess of 14 feet as a conditional use, with the same design criteria required for the permitted use serving as the initial requirements for approval. These criteria can be waived, but only if the applicant provides sufficient evidence that the design criteria are not necessary to ensure the visual compatibility of their proposed building with the surrounding developments. The conditional use process may be appropriate in certain situations where no design controls are necessary.
3. Revised Section 29-20(b) (permitted uses in M-1) to remove the 14-foot height restriction, while retaining the other conditions that storage facilities are subject to. Staff also included an additional condition (#3) that includes a minimum setback of 25 feet if the property is adjacent to residentially zoned property, and that requires additional setback for buildings that exceed 45 feet in height. This offers additional protection to adjacent residential properties while still allowing the flexibility to construct taller storage units in the M-1 without the limitations of design standards. Currently, properties zoned M-1 only have a 10-foot setback when adjacent to residential.

Since the originally scheduled public hearing on April 18, 2016, staff has met with the original text amendment petitioner to further discuss the proposed text amendment. Following those conversations, the petitioner submitted correspondence (see attached) that includes possible revisions to the draft ordinance that is being presented. These additional comments can be discussed at the public hearing.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the proposed text amendments to 29-16 and 29-20.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (ATTACHED)

- Draft text amendment
- PZC Work Session minutes
- Report to Council on proposed text amendment
- Text Amendment Request Letter
- UDO Excerpts (pages 125, 149-150)
- Public correspondence

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Approved by Patrick Zenner