

EXCERPTS
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
COLUMBIA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER
701 EAST BROADWAY, COLUMBIA, MO

JULY 23, 2026

Case Number 174-2026:

Simon & Struempf Engineering (agent), on behalf of Judy Dothage, Trustee of The Dothage Family Trust (Owner), seeking approval of M-C permanent zoning upon annexation of a 3.78-acre parcel, located at 7208 I-70 Drive SE.

MS. GEUEA JONES: May we please have a staff report?

Staff report was given by Mr. Rusty Palmer of the Planning and Zoning Department. Staff recommends approval of the proposed M-C zoning.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Before we go to questions for staff, if any of my fellow Commissioners have had contact with parties to this case outside of a public hearing, please disclose so now. Seeing none. Are there questions for staff? I have a question. The parcel that is to the east that runs between the two city boundary lines; is that C-G as well? I have not seen the label on it.

MR. PALMER: Sorry. Immediately to the east here?

MS. GEUEA JONES: Yes.

MR. PALMER: I believe it's R-S. It's all included in this label, so -- and it is hard to read those -- those county zonings. But I'm assuming you're asking because it's a different types of use on that site; is that right?

MS. GEUEA JONES: Well, no. I'm just trying to -- this -- this property seems like an outlier to me, and while it is a long-standing commercial use, it's also not taking up the bulk of the -- of the property either.

MR. PALMER: Uh-huh.

MS. GEUEA JONES: And I'm just a little bit hesitant with most of what's around it being residential, it being designated a residential district. And really the other light commercial uses are also on residential properties, although in the county.

MR. PALMER: Yeah.

MS. GEUEA JONES: I'm -- I'm just curious as to how we got to the most intense commercial designation for this property outside of the current business would either need that or special permission.

MR. PALMER: I mean, I -- I'm evaluating the request that was submitted, of course, but there is also some other examples along the corridor which you don't see on this map. But basically, the I-70 Drive corridor is a smattering of uses and zonings, and, you know, my evaluation was really based on the fact more so than it's the existing zoning is consistent, but also just that in both directions there are heavily intensive uses that probably wouldn't fit even into M-C. And so that, generally, the corridor is probably more appropriate for this type of use. So, you know, M-C might be too much in this location, but overall, I think that -- that outer road, you know, in general is appropriate for more intensive uses.

MS. GEUEA JONES: The properties closest to this one are not that.

MR. PALMER: I mean, yeah. There's a mix of zoning there obviously, but, you know, if you're looking long-term, you know, just generally the outer road is a place where we would see a corridor business district.

MS. GEUEA JONES: And a lot of residential uses off of it.

MR. PALMER: Uh-huh.

MS. GEUEA JONES: I just -- I'm -- okay. I'm just curious if there's anything other than the current use of the property as commercial that leads you to think this is appropriate for M-C.

MR. PALMER: Yeah. Like I said, I think the -- the corridor in general is -- is an appropriate place to put just general commercial uses, and it's -- it is somewhat incongruent with what is there now, but if we're thinking long term, then I don't think it's out of the question that, you know, we're expanding the existing commercial uses into these types of areas, because the rest of the corridor is much heavier uses.

They -- especially on either end of the corridor --

MS. GEUEA JONES: Well, the other end of the corridor is not around here and so it doesn't need a residential in Columbia Imagined.

MR. PALMER: Well, we've also talked about the kind of error in the ways of Columbia Imagined designations, and this is another scenario where, you know, the broader district was named a residential district, but this property was already zoned for general commercial in the county. So --

MS. GEUEA JONES: I think I see where you're thinking.

MR. PALMER: Uh-huh.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other questions for staff? Commissioner Gray?

DR. GRAY: Sorry. Could you clarify the corridor that you're talking about is not imagined to be residential in Columbia Imagined? What is that designation?

MR. PALMER: Well, so Columbia Imagined based heavily their designations on the existing zoning at the time.

DR. GRAY: Sure.

MR. PALMER: This is actually an outlier where it was zoned commercial, and it was called residential on Columbia Imagined. Normally, it would just have been called commercial, but because it is a bit of an outlier, I'm assuming it would have been removed from that and the broader residential district was laid on it. So again -- I'll just leave it there. I don't know where I was going, so --

DR. GRAY: Got it. Thank you.

MR. ZENNER: And I would suggest, Dr. Gray, that when you look at Sunrise Estates, which is to the south, or which is to the southeast, that has been connected into the sewer line that will serve this property. It was a pre-existing county residential subdivision. You look at the development that is off of North Webster Lane, North Easter Lane, all of that is residential. And so in the process of identifying future land use in 2013, we were looking at what the majority of that particular environment was. That does not necessarily mean, however, that the existing commercial uses that were along in the corridor that were outliers that were in the County, so the two C-G properties that you see here, the incongruent land uses that are in the R-S immediately to the east, as well as the MLP as you move further east towards Route Z, those were going to convert over at any time to residential. And so I think what Mr. Palmer has done in his analysis is looked at, well, what is along the corridor, and how would that property most likely be converted from a County zoning classification as intensification of development was desired by the use of sewer. And so the commercialization of the outer road is something that provides -- I think from a planning perspective, we'd say a buffer. You're going to have a strip along the outer road, and behind that strip, you may have a step-down then in intensity of residential uses leading back towards the existing residential. The land-use patterning that we did in 2013 wasn't perfect, and so these incongruencies and disconnects, we come up along roadways that are growing up now, and as a result of that, what we're seeing is we're seeing applicants wanting to take what they have in their County zoning and be able to convert that to a comparable City zoning classification. The capacities within the zoning districts do allow for some transitioning, which is something that we have to also acknowledge. So if they decide they want to remove the golf cart repair facility and replace it with multi-family, that would be an allowable use, maybe not the highest and best use, but the most allowable use in the M-C zoning classification, and it would still fit into the residential character.

MR. PALMER: And I would add, too, there -- the option does exist that if you believe M-C is inappropriate, and you would wish that they move forward with M-N and then have to seek a conditional use permit to legitimize the existing business, that -- that is an option. But I'm not sure exactly -- law may need to weigh in on what that process would look like, but it does remain an option for sure.

MR. ZENNER: That would require re-advertising and re-notice in that agreement by the actual applicant before we would vote to downzone the property. It is in the same class, same commercial classification, so a recommendation of downzoning, if I recall correctly, based on past practice, we would allow. But again, when you look at what the corridor is transitioning into, and the corridor we're referring to is the I-70 Drive outer loop, I believe, after having been here for 18 years, and watching this land use pattern develop, the improvements that we are going to see will not be residential. They will probably be more service related, interstate visibility type uses that you just have to come around to get to, and that's just the course of the land-use pattern I think that's evolving, and has evolved over time with the County. Because the County did not necessarily have -- you know, while they have had zoning, I don't think that they looked at it as closely as we may have as a City, and how we integrate residential and that commercial land use interface.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Do you have any follow-ups, Commissioner Gray?

DR. GRAY: No. That was illuminating. It seems like you're talking more about this land-use pattern of commercial, like, corridor as like the character of the neighborhood broadly.

MR. ZENNER: I would say to a depth off of the frontage road, I think that that's something that we have to give consideration to, especially as you look further to the east where we get closer to Route Z, and where we have all of the other activity around Tradewinds Industrial Park, that that's on the perimeter of the park itself. We have some retail commercial, as well as we have the other more intense development for Equipment Share that's right up along the frontage road that relies on that access -- in-bound/out-bound access.

DR. GRAY: Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Are there other questions? I just have one more. Is there any platting action in the works for this almost four-acre parcel?

MR. PALMER: Not at this time, no. There's no indication of that.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Anyone else? Seeing none, I will -- oh, sorry.

MR. STANTON: I'm okay.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Are you sure?

MR. STANTON: Yes, ma'am.

MS. GEUEA JONES: I will open the public comment period.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any members of the public who wish to speak on this case, please come forward. Name and address for the record. Six minutes for the applicant and groups; three minutes for individuals.

MR. ASCHE: Tyler Asche, with Simon and Struempf Engineering, 404 Steinbrook Terrace just representing --

MS. GEUEA JONES: Can you pull that up a little bit? Thank you.

MR. ASCHE: Just representing the owner, and hopefully answer any questions you guys might have for me.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any questions? Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: Is your intent to continue the operation that exists right now or are you just swapping out, just housekeeping?

MR. ASCHE: The owner's intent is to keep the business up and running.

MR. STANTON: Okay. Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other questions? Do you use the entire four acres, or is everything kind of up towards the road and the rest of it is --

MR. ASCHE: Everything -- the building is up towards the road, every -- there's no use, I guess, behind the building that I'm aware of.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Anyone else? Seeing none. Thank you.

MR. ASCHE: Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other members of the public to speak on this case, please come forward. Seeing none. I will close public comment and go to Commissioner comment.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any Commissioner comments? Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: I look at this like a housekeeping action. They're getting it zoned for particular - I mean, future annexation. It's already commercial use. Let's say we -- let's say we satisfy everybody's fears that are up here -- right -- and they knock that down and they try to build something else. Now they fall into buffering against residential. They fall into all the other guardrails that are in place. It's a unique - it's a unique mix of uses there, but I think they're okay. I mean, I'm -- that's where you want those kind of places to be along those -- along those corridors like that. And to the left and right, you know, you've got a solar farm. You've got all the other stuff in there. You know, it -- I think it works and I plan to support it.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Grabau?

MR. GRABAU: So I want to thank Rusty and Pat for -- for your descriptions of it, and especially in describing the -- and clarifying the buffer on that as well. The current owners' intent to not change the business also with most of that being up towards the -- the front, also eases some concerns about it being close to residential, as well. And so I don't have any concerns.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other Commissioner comments? I don't like this at all. This -- I hear

what everyone is saying about the frontage road. If this were just the acre that the building is actually cited on, that is against the frontage road, I might be there. But I'm looking at neighborhood after neighborhood after neighborhood on both sides of these little outliers with undeveloped land behind it. And if you just look at the closeness of the buildings and the commercial operations to the frontage road, they don't go nearly as far back as this parcel does. So now I'm going to have this entire highest commercial mixed use zone that we've got available in the middle of a bunch of residential development. Everything behind is R-S. Everything around it is developed for essential uses. The more intensive commercial uses are further down the directions of the -- of I-70 Drive Southeast. So I -- I don't think this is appropriate, and I -- I understand that they are trying to connect into the sewer and are being forced to annex, but I've got to think that there's an option other than permanent zoning that puts us in a position where we're going to have a high commercial use four-acre parcel in the middle of a bunch of residential neighborhoods that are pre-existing that doesn't feel like responsible -- a responsible zoning choice to me. I think these two commercial parcels are the outlier in this -- you know, mile plus long stretch of the outer road. So, I -- I can't support it. I -- and even with the future possibility that maybe they could use it for multi-family housing, I hear that, but saying we need to make it commercial because it's already commercial and there's a business on there, that when -- that just doesn't make sense for the long-range plan of everything else around here. Even behind it, you've got houses. So I -- this does not make sense to me. Commissioner Darr?

MR. DARR: I can -- I can definitely see where you're going, especially the back part, the deep -- the deepness of the lot, but man, I really hate to penalize people that are, like, forced into a situation. I don't know if the City Council, if there's an avenue where -- and the reason I think it is is because they're coming forward with this zoning and annexation with no plans for development, so there's no opportunity to try to work the development or, you know, evaluate what the development would be. It's just like it's all or nothing. So I don't know if the City could be, like, yeah, we're going -- we can annex you. We want you. We want to serve you with sewer, but, you know, we're only going to annex the front 400 feet, you know, or something and leave the -- I don't know. You're getting into another -- you're just creating future problems. So I'm going to support it. I mean, I definitely agree that the back part makes me a little nervous, but I just -- I just -- it is what it is, is what I -- boils down to me, I guess.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Well, and I don't know if they could have done a split, that they could have annexed it splitting parcels. I don't know. But it's a permanent decision. Commissioner Gray?

DR. GRAY: I'm curious, based on your comments, if there is a more appropriate zoning to you for this area -- for the entire four acres.

MS. GEUEA JONES: I would say something residential because everything around it is residential. Either R-2, or R-MF, there's a single family residential, but I -- I would -- I would rather see it a residential zone, and I get the problem, and I don't like that that problem exists. And I agree with Commissioner Darr, I hate that the owners are put in this position, but this needs to be -- and I guess because we're annexing it, it can't be a pre-existing non-conforming use, either.

DR. GRAY: And a follow-up. So under residential zoning, could that business continue to operate in permitted use? Okay. So it -- shaking a head, no. Okay. Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Lowe, did I see a hand? And then we have Commissioner Stanton.

MR. LOWE: Yeah. I think one of the things that I think is just important to note here is the presence of I-70 so close to this, and the intensity of use that it effectively represents. I think looking at this, I don't necessarily see as much concern about a higher industrial use nearby residential neighborhoods when you have the highway that close to it, as well as looking at the general kind of character of the corridor outside of -- further to the east and further to the west here.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: We're overcomplicating it. I know people that live out here, and I don't want to characterize, but I'm going to have to kind of get the feel. This is a blue collar county neighborhood. If you really dig into it and look at this in Google Maps, you see there's a fireplace business that's down off the road. These are basically mom and pop stores that were built in the county. These neighborhoods are old. This Sun Valley Drive, I have a cousin that lives out there. This is old neighborhoods that have already been here probably just as long as these businesses are, and they co-exist because this is some good old county -- county property, county that was built back when it was in the county. And mom and pop stores that probably, you know, at the beginning, were close to the houses that they lived in, and we're kicking this owner in the butt. We're kicking them in the butt, real talk, for having four acres.

Imagine, this is County, so if I'm going to buy two, and I've got an opportunity to buy four, or ten or whatever, it's County. This is -- we're kicking them in the butt. We're kicking them in the butt. We really are. And this is way simple. It's way simpler because if your worst fear is -- like I said before, if your worst fears come true, then all of the guardrails that we fought in the UDC kick in, the buffering you're worrying about, the -- all this you're worrying about would kick in. And I'm going to say this. I'm going to say this. Now we're talking about the parcel where the golf cart place works. Right? If you look at the one next to it that we had asked before, there is a -- around the fire business there that's deep down in the road. There's a Chimney Safe chimney company right there off the road. You slide over. There's a landscape business right there on the road that's right on the -- on the top of the road to Sunny Valley. If there had been major problems and concerns with this issue, you know Columbia. We would have people out here saying something about it, and we don't. Did we get any letters? Did we get any protests? Did we get any of that? Was this stuff advertised? Was all of this done? I think it was. And all I'm saying is we're kicking the owner in the butt. This is good, old-fashioned country county property that was bought back in the day and is used -- how it's been used has been developed organically, how it's been done, period.

MS. GEUEA JONES: I get that, and I'm saying that we are giving them permanent M-C zoning and these folks, I would -- I don't have a problem with them. My problem is when do we make this four acres M-C, it can become anything. And I hear you about buffering, but buffering doesn't change the fact that we're giving up potential residential land in the middle of residential world, and we get -- if it were we're going to do, like, some kind of weird thing that we're not allowed to do, where they get the M-C and if that ever goes out of business, it reverts to residential? Sure. But we can't do that. That doesn't exist. That's not an option. So now we're trying to think, okay, when this company maybe goes out of business, maybe it doesn't, or decides to expand into a full blown car lot, like, there's nothing to stop it once we give them straight M-C zoning. Commissioner Grabau?

MR. GRABAU: In looking at Google Maps, just going a little bit, I guess, it would be west, there's -- and this may be outdated, but there's a for sale sign in front of the property. And I can't quite tell where that is, and does it -- Rusty, do you happen to know in your research, is that -- did that area, is that the next section over, or is that the R-2?

MR. PALMER: I honestly don't know which one exactly you're talking about.

MR. GRABAU: Okay.

MR. PALMER: I didn't notice a for sale sign when I was out there, or when I looked at it.

MR. GRABAU: It might be outdated. It might be outdated. Okay.

MS. STOCKTON: It says March of 2026. Yeah. So it's fairly recent.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Further Commissioner comment?

MR. WALTERS: I'll say something.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Walters, go ahead.

MR. WALTERS: I have a history of developing residential properties in Columbia for over 30 years. This has zero appeal as a residential neighborhood at this -- at the current time. So ditto what Anthony said earlier.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any further comments? Commissioner Gray?

DR. GRAY: Commissioner Stanton, I do appreciate your -- your comments. Your monologue is very persuasive. I am a little reticent, cautious about saying I'm overcomplicating it and that this is eerily similar to something that has happened at my family's property where a residential area was categorized as a corridor, and some things that impacted my family's land and what they can do with their property was a part of this. So I want to go through all of the criteria and -- and kind of balance if it doesn't really align with the Comprehensive Plan, because the people doing the Comprehensive Plan in 2013 could not see into the future of the land-use patterns, and we're not accounting for this, then what are the other kind of criteria that I am weighing my decision on. I hear the larger concern about the surrounding zoning and whether this is compatible, but I think in supporting this decision, I am looking at the larger character of the neighborhood, the fact that we talk about the I-70 corridor, this is corridor zoning, and that I'm not necessarily hearing any particular detrimental effects that impact the neighbors in surrounding zoning outside of what we hear can happen past this particular landowner. I understand their caution and wait alongside the other criteria. I'm not, in my decision, able to see a reason to deny it based on that.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Anyone else? Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: I would like to entertain a motion, if my colleagues are done with the discussion.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any further comments? Seeing none. Go ahead.

MR. STANTON: As it relates to Case 174-2026, 7208 I-70 Drive Southeast, I move to approve the proposed permanent M-C zoning pursuant to the annexation of the property.

DR. GRAY: Second.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Moved by Commissioner Stanton, seconded by Commissioner Gray. Is there any further discussion on the motion? Again, for the record and public edification, this is not about the annexation. This is merely about the zoning, should the City Council decide to annex. Any discussion? Seeing none. Commissioner Stanton, may we have a roll call?

Roll Call Vote (Voting "yes" is to recommend approval.) Voting Yes: Mr. Darr, Mr. Grabau, Dr. Gray, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Stanton, Ms. Stockton, Mr. Walters. Voting No: Ms. Geuea Jones. Motion passes 7-1.

MR. STANTON: We have one nay and one, two, three, four, five, six -- seven yays, Madam Chair.

MS. GEUEA JONES: With a vote of seven to one, the motion carries. That recommendation will be forwarded on to City Council. And as a coda, I would say that we need to look at our four standardization policies.