

Town of Griffith
Board of Zoning Appeals
October 17, 2022

The Board of Zoning Appeals meeting was called to order at 6:03p.m. by Chairman John Mowery with all members present, Carl Kus, Theresa Rivas, and Tom Wichlinski. Also present was Attorney; Bob Schwerd, Town Council Liaison; Larry Ballah, and Building Commissioner; Steve McDermott.

The minutes from the August 15, 2022, meeting were approved as written.

OLD BUSINESS

Item #1 Midwest Motor LLC; 510 E Ridge Rd., Public Hearing for a Use Variance to sell used cars.

The petitioner was not present. Mr. Mowery explained that the Public Hearing cannot be held at this time due to the notice being published late. ***Mr. Wichlinski made a motion to continue Midwest Motor LLC; 510 E Ridge Rd., to the November 21, 2022, meeting seconded by Ms. Rivas. All favored, motion carried.***

NEW BUSINESS

Item #1 Griffith Public Schools: 600 N Jay St., Public Hearing for a Developmental Standards Variance for parking.

Mr. Martin Sams, Mr. Stephan Fields, and Griffith Schools Superintendent Ms. Leah Dumezich appeared before the board. Mr. Mowery asked if all the publications were in order. Mr. Schwerd stated yes. Mr. Mowery then opened the Public Hearing portion of the meeting. Mr. Sams stated they are requesting a Developmental Standards variance for their parking at the school due to an addition. Mr. Sams stated the current spaces total 96 but with the current modular they are operating with 78 spaces. Mr. Sams stated they intend to build a parking lot with 20 additional spaces, as well as modifying the straight parking to diagonal. Mr. Sams also said they are proposing to change the basketball courts/asphalt surface area to add parking for evening overflow and for buses to load and unload. The new total is 134 spaces total, they are seeking a variance for the 81 additional spaces needed per ordinance. Ms. Dumezich stated they have around 78 spots but that they do not use all of them and that they would like to keep as much greenspace as possible. Mr. Wichlinski stated they had space available to add the require parking to which Ms. Dumezich agreed. Mr. Wichlinski asked if all was full, what the full occupancy is. Mr. Sams stated the total is 63 staff and 455 students. Mr. Rivas asked how many students there currently are. Ms. Dumezich stated 400-414, and that they will have around 6 empty classrooms. Mr. Kus explained his concerns with the parking during big events and parking in the area that could disturb the neighborhood. Ms. Dumezich stated they plan to use the space where the temporary classrooms are, and they will have the additional lot being built. Ms. Dumezich stated they don't want to take away from anymore greenspace. Mr. Wichlinski expressed his concern with the larger events and parking being an issue during this. Ms. Dumezich stated the only time this happens during grandparents' day, and they stagger the times to prevent that. Mr. Sams stated they also have room for a double stack if needed during these events, he also mentioned a challenge with stormwater mitigation and issues with getting enough detention where they are currently. Ms. Rivas asked which structure is to the left of the 30 spaces. Mr. Sams stated the existing playground. Ms. Rivas asked if those spaces are utilized. Mr. Sams stated it's an open lot and not striped, they intend for this area to be used during the larger events and the buses will load and unload there. Ms. Dumezich stated the back lot and additional parking will be for staff. Ms. Rivas asked if the 30 spaces are being used currently. Ms. Dumezich stated the modular classrooms are there currently. Mr. Kus proposed an area that could be used for at least half of the spaces needed. Mr. Sams stated the challenge is the impervious surface, as they add to the parking the retention pond must change so they want to stay north of the trees in the area and have a concern of taking out the trees in the area currently. Mr. Wichlinski asked if they are trying to avoid taking out trees but that it isn't necessarily a hardship. Mr. Sams stated its an asset. Mr. Wichlinski stated the trees could be replanted, but they have a concern with the limited parking and the overflow issues that may cause. Mr. Sams stated operationally most of the parking lot isn't full. Mr. Sams stated they are going from a current 96 to 174. Mr. Kus stated his only concern is the ordinance, while variances are allowed, this is a large one. Ms. Dumezich stated the green space is also why they do not want to add more. Mr. Kus stated the safety of the children is his concern. Mr. Sams shared a diagram with what it would look like with the 215 spaces, but they will not have enough for the retention due to this. With no one further to speak for or against Mr. Mowery closed the Public Hearing. Mr. Wichlinski asked Mr. Schwerd if they can continue a month to look further into the items. Mr. Schwerd stated yes but they cannot reopen the Public Hearing portion. ***Mr. Wichlinski made a motion to continue Griffith Public Schools; 600 N Jay St., to the November 21, 2022, meeting seconded by Ms. Rivas. All favored, motion carried.***

COMMUNICATIONS

Decorative fencing.

Mr. Mowery asked the board to consider a standardization for fences such as height of fences in the front yard and how far they should be from the sidewalk for variance requests.

Special hearing.

Mr. Schwert mentioned a review of the costs of a Special Meeting

Appointment for Fence Committee.

Mr. Mowery appointed Ms. Rivas as the third member of the Fence Committee.

BILLS AND EXPENDITURES

Mr. Wichlinski made a motion to approve a claim for the meeting held August 15, 2022, in the amount of \$35.00 seconded by Ms. Rivas. All favored, motion carried.

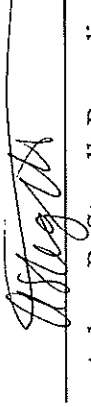
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board of Zoning Appeals, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:36p.m.

Respectfully Submitted



Tom Wichlinski, Secretary



Aubrey R. Stegall, Recording Secretary