

Village of La Grange
Plan Commission
Regular Meeting of November 9, 2021

A regular meeting of the Plan Commission for the Village of La Grange was held at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 9, 2021, on the second floor Auditorium Room of the Village Hall, 53 S. La Grange Road, La Grange, Illinois.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF THE PLAN COMMISSION

Chairman Paice called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Verify Quorum

Upon roll call the following were:

Present: Mosher, O'Connor, Schwartz, Paice

Absent: Egan, Hoffenberg, Wentink

Community Development Director Charity Jones and Village Trustee Beth Augustine were also present.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - OCTOBER 12, 2021

Commissioner Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor to approve the minutes from October 12, 2021, with no changes. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. PC CASE #261 – TEXT AMENDMENT, SPECIAL USE, AND SITE PLAN APPROVAL, FUEL STORAGE AND DISPENSING, PARK DISTRICT OF LA GRANGE

Chairman Paice asked anyone in the audience that was planning on speaking in regards to this case to please stand and raise his/her right hand. He then administered the oath.

Staff Presentation

Mrs. Jones said staff does not have a presentation, but the Park District staff came prepared to provide a presentation regarding the revised proposal. She did speak with the Commissioners who could not be in attendance this evening and Commissioner Hoffenberg provided some written comments which she will read later during the Plan Commission discussion.

Applicant Presentation

Jenny Bechtold, Executive Director for the La Grange Park District, stated after the last meeting she went back to the Park District and they looked at alternative locations for the proposed fuel tanks. They would still like to install two 560 gallon double-walled above ground tanks. They want to be environmentally proactive by removing their underground tanks. By removing the tanks they will be able to connect the parking lots which will improve the flow of the parking. She showed on the screen where the current tanks are located.

Ms. Bechtold stated that the Park District has 12 vehicles and a variety of maintenance vehicles. As far as fuel consumption, they did look at the last year and there was savings from having an on-site fuel source. The estimate of the savings was \$1,150.00. By having fuel on the site, it not only saves them money but also saves staff time which saves taxpayer dollars. An outside fuel source would take time out of their day to go off-site and obtain fuel. Not all gas stations carry diesel and their highest consumption is diesel fuel. The closest gas station that carries diesel and that is truck and trailer accessible is about 1.8 miles away. That is 3.6 miles round trip every time they need to get gas.

Chris Finn, Superintendent of Facilities, stated several pieces of their equipment is diesel and the equipment would have to be loaded up on a trailer and then taken to the site to get fuel. Most of their equipment needs 15 to 30 gallons of fuel apiece.

Ms. Bechtold said she did talk with the Director of Public Works for La Grange and they might be open to sharing fuel. There is a concern that they are barely able to keep up with the demand currently. Public Works has two 2,500 gallon tanks and they are filling them up weekly with all of the demands. The Director also stated the Park District would have to invest capital money for maintenance and repairs. One of the things the Park District is doing is not investing capital dollars into their gas tanks as they are leasing them. They will be using the vendor's gasoline and service. If they were to buy the tanks it would be a significantly larger cost.

Ms. Bechtold explained that the District did find a new location for the proposed fuel tanks near the northeast corner of the parking lot and pointed to the location on the screen. They eliminated all six parking spaces near the tanks so there will be no more cars or pedestrians nearby. By blocking off all the stalls adjacent to the tanks, staff will be able to pull right up and fill up. There will be a fence with a deadbolt, and it will be monitored by their security cameras. It will also have a fitted key system to power on and off the tanks. They feel this north parking lot will have reduced traffic when the new lot is opened. The new traffic pattern will push the cars the other way and push them in the new south lot.

Mr. Finn stated the new parking lot will also be closer to the entrance of the Park District's building.

Ms. Bechtold stated they did explore other locations. She showed on the overhead three other locations that they looked at. To maximize their landlocked parcel, they are proposing to put in pickle board courts in the new parking lot so they have a multi-use space. Parking demands are not always high all the time. They have tried to maximize the space and still keep some green space as well. Two of the other locations they looked at, they feel would not work well because the areas will be really busy. There will also be a walking track on the outside of the lot so there will be pedestrians walking in the area. It will also be very difficult to navigate trucks back there. The third location, even though it will be away from the pickleball courts, there will still be pedestrians walking by. They have worked really hard to maintain the mature trees in this area for stormwater management and keep green space. Also, by putting the tanks anywhere on the south lot they would be without a fuel source for several months. They would have to remove the old tanks and wait until the parking lot was finished to put in the new tanks. They will also be installing permeable pavers on the south lot and they would be concerned that some of their equipment can damage the pavers over time.

Ms. Bechtold explained that there was consideration given to having the tanks at one of their off-site locations, but they felt none of them would be suitable or safe. These locations draw families year round and some of the parks are smaller parcels. The larger parks are utilized by hundreds of people during the peak seasons. These off-site locations would require their staff to travel and they would not be monitored by cameras. They have had several contractors out to examine the new location and they have determined it as safe. They ask that the Commission approve the text amendment and special use permit for the above ground tanks so the Park District may continue to serve the community in the safest, efficient, and most cost-effective manner.

Chairman Paice asked if any of the Commissioners had any questions for the applicant.

Commissioner Mosher asked if they can tell them more about the proposed fence.

Ms. Bechtold said it is a chain-link fence with slats inserted. They are open to changing the fence, but they were trying to match the fence that they currently have surrounding their dumpster.

Commissioner O'Connor asked if they had talked with the Village of La Grange's Fire Chief about the location.

Ms. Bechtold stated they have not but she did speak to the State Fire Marshal, who provided them with the applicable requirements. The contractors that they are working with do this every day and know those codes. They also work with the State Fire Marshal and feel confident that this location is the best.

Mrs. Jones said she spoke with the La Grange Building Official who is also a certified Fire Inspector and Fire Marshal locally. He had reviewed the plans and had no objections. However, above ground tanks are regulated by the State Fire Marshal so they are the authority and have jurisdiction.

Chairman Paice asked what the Park District used before they had the underground tank that they currently have.

Mr. Finn stated he came to the Park District in 2004 and they would purchase fuel from a local gas station.

Chairman Paice asked if it was necessary to have the fuel tanks.

Mr. Finn said it is more time and wear and tear on the staff and equipment.

Ms. Bechtold stated they feel it is imperative for their operations to function efficiently and cost-effectively. They are mowing 30 hours a week during the summer so having to go and fill up the tanks at another location will add on time.

Commissioner Schwartz thanked them for their presentation. He feels they answered most of the questions the commission had. He suggested that when they go before the Board they bring some type of picture to show what the fencing will look like.

Commissioner Mosher said as part of safety and security she had read that no additional lighting is proposed. She asked if there will be adequate lighting for safety and security for staff.

Ms. Bechtold stated there is a light post directly across the drive aisle in the parking lot.

Mr. Finn said most of the staff does not arrive until 7:00 a.m. There will be enough adequate lighting during the winter months for staff.

Commissioner Mosher asked if there is camera coverage out that far.

Ms. Bechtold stated yes there is. Mr. Finn pointed out the locations of the security cameras on the overhead.

Chairman Paice asked staff if any of the non-attending Commissioners had any questions or were they just statements.

Mrs. Jones said they were mostly statements. The only question was from Commissioner Hoffenberg who asked if the Park District explored or had any conversations with the Village. She noted that Ms. Bechtold addressed this in her presentation but that she had spoken with the new Public Works Director as well. During the winter the tanks the Village uses are filled up almost weekly. The primary concern with sharing with the Park District would be that they can't increase the capacity of the tanks much more to serve both organizations. If they were to share then there would likely be new infrastructure needed. The public works yard is also limited on space so there could be some operational challenges there.

Chairman Paice asked if any of the Commissioners had any further questions for staff or the applicant. None responded. Since there is nobody in the audience he then called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Mosher made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Schwartz to close the public hearing for PC Case #260 and PC Case #261. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

Plan Commission Discussion

Chairman Paice asked staff to read any comments that were submitted from the Commissioners.

Mrs. Jones said Commissioner Hoffenberg would like the enclosure to be an iron fence. He is in support of the text amendment being a special use permit as discussed last month, so the Plan Commission can review every application for these kinds of facilities in the future. He expressed his support for the safety features that the Park District included in their revised submittals. He agrees that the tanks should not be located in the new parking lot at 610 East Avenue.

Chairman Paice thanked the Park District for providing more detail in this presentation.

Commissioner O'Connor stated he does not agree with having the gas tanks in an area where there are children. Even though it is convenient, he feels it is irresponsible to put tanks at this location. He understands that there are tanks currently there. He feels that the new location is better and has a better flow, but he has an issue with the safety.

Commissioner Mosher said looking at the previous proposal she would be in favor of this new location. She likes that they are getting it away from the building. She has concerns as well with safety but feels they have done their due diligence looking through the economics and logistical issues on running the Park District.

Commissioner Schwartz stated he is more in favor of this location. He asked staff if they are aware of any other tanks in heavily populated areas like this one.

Mrs. Jones said she does not have any other examples. Tanks are regulated by the State Fire Marshal in regards to safety, which includes requirements like the double wall and impact barriers. Since it is a special use the Commission can request additional measures like a specific type of enclosure besides fencing. Commissioner Hoffenberg requested an iron fence, but that is see through. Sometimes for a dumpster, a wooden fence or a masonry style enclosure is required.

Chairman Paice stated he is concerned about safety, but also the necessity. He does feel the Park District has done their research and has provided them with a plan as good as

they can get. He asked Commissioner O'Connor if there was anything like enhanced security that would alleviate his concern.

Commissioner O'Connor said he thought about this and read the application very carefully but feels it is irresponsible.

Commissioner Mosher stated she thinks they should look at the enclosure itself to further screen and protect the tanks from people.

Commissioner Schwartz asked Commissioner O'Connor if his concern was the proximity to the building.

Commissioner O'Connor said he is concerned about the proximity to the building and the wear and tear of the tanks over time. He feels you should not have these tanks located next to the highest density park. He thinks there is a better solution.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if where the current gas location is for the Village, is there space on that property to locate this as a separate fueling station. He feels that the location might be a safer area.

Mrs. Jones stated it was not part of the conversation that she had with the Public Works Director. She would speculate that he would find that challenging since the facility is very old and the yard is small.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if they knew what other surrounding Park Districts do for their fuel.

Mr. Finn said he knows that a lot of other Park Districts have them on their property and they use above ground tanks.

Ms. Bechtold stated the Village has its tanks in a residential area and they are not locked up. She did ask public works if they had faced any challenges with anyone messing with their tanks and the Director had stated they did not.

Commissioner O'Connor said he is not concerned with someone messing with them but rather explosions. It is good for an industrial area but not for a high-density area or where there are children.

Chairman Paice asked if there were any further comments or questions. None responded.

Plan Commission Recommendation

Chairman Paice called for a motion for a recommendation.

Commissioner Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mosher to recommend to the President and Board of Trustees approval of PC Case #260 and PC

Case #261 of the requested text amendment, special use, and site plan approval with the following condition:

1. Modified fencing or decorative landscaping should be added to the north side of the tanks.

A roll call vote was taken:

Ayes: Schwartz and Mosher

Nays: O'Connor and Paice

Motion fails

IV. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mrs. Jones said the holiday wish book is out and online featuring all the local retailers.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Paice called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Mosher made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Schwartz to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

Minutes prepared by Peggy Halper