

PUBLIC MEETING

Governmental Body: Van Meter Board of Adjustment

Date of Meeting: Thursday, December 19, 2024

Time/Location of Meeting: 6:00pm – 310 Mill Street (City Hall)

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Van Meter Board of Adjustment Public Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm on Thursday, December 19, 2024 by City Clerk Drake. Board Members Present: Dennis Carter via phone, Brian Anderson, Jarin Young, David Lyons and Tony Doremus. Staff Present: City Clerk Jess Drake. Public present: Barb Gronwold, John Gronwold, Rick Wyant, Jesse Maffin, Keri Salancik, Mark Salancik, Paul Scieszinski, Austin Reed and Katey Farrell.

2. Approval of Agenda

Young moved, supported by Doremus to approve the agenda.

Carter – YES; Anderson – YES; Lyons - YES; Young – YES; Doremus – YES.

Motion carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes from November 6, 2024

Anderson moved, supported by Young to approve the minutes from November 6, 2024 as presented.

Carter – YES; Anderson – YES; Lyons - YES; Young – YES; Doremus – YES.

Motion carried.

4. Public Hearing

Doremus moved, supported by Young, to open the public hearing.

Carter – YES; Anderson – YES; Lyons - YES; Young – YES; Doremus – YES.

The public hearing was open as of 6:02pm.

A. Conditional Use Permit Application

A Conditional Use Permit Application has been submitted by Austin Reed, potential buyer of 325 Grand Street, Van Meter, IA 50261.

The potential buyer has submitted an application for a Conditional Use Permit for the property located at 325 Grand Street, Van Meter, IA 50261 to establish a used auto dealership. Zoning districts are defined in the Van Meter Code of Ordinances, Chapter 165 Zoning Regulations. The property is currently zoned “C-1 Downtown Commercial District.” Auto sales are not permitted within the C-1 zoning district. A conditional use permit is a permit that allows an exception to the zoning code.

FOR THE RECORD

Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Des Moines Register on December 11, 2024. The Notice was also posted at the Van Meter City Hall, Van Meter Public Library, Van Meter Post Office and electronically at www.vanmeteria.gov.

CITY REPORT

City Clerk Drake recounted a summary of the application request, a recap of prior discussions with Van Meter’s Planning & Zoning Commission, the City’s Zoning Administrator and Van Meter’s Economic Development committee. As a separate issue, Planning & Zoning is reviewing the permitted uses as well as current uses of existing commercial properties currently zoned C1 in the downtown area. There is a desire to

address existing issues of non-conformance while still encouraging and enabling commercial activities in the C1 district. She also stated that, if approved, the Conditional Use Permit applies to this business run by this business owner only. It does not carry with the property if it were to change hands and the City does have the ability and authority to place certain restrictions or required compliance items within the permit issuance.

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES

Austin Reed provided a description of his requested proposed use of a used auto store, stating that internet advertising is the primary advertising of his business model. He detailed the other auto sales establishments that he owns in both De Soto and Carlisle, along with Hawkeye Auto Salvage in DeSoto. He acknowledged the need to comply with City Code as it relates to building improvements, lighting, etc.

WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED BY CITY PRIOR TO HEARING

The City received 1 written comment prior to the hearing. Iowa Interstate Railroad (an adjacent property owner) stated they take no exception to the proposed Conditional Use Permit as long as there are no impacts to or encroachments on IAIS property. The City received no additional comments after publication and posting the hearing notice.

PUBLIC INPUT

Residents Barb & John Gronwold expressed safety concerns with the structural integrity of the buildings on the western property line and expressed further concerns about the quantity of varmints as a result of the state and vacancy of said buildings. The applicant stated that he too has no desire for varmints or unsafe buildings and would evaluate to determine the structural integrity of the buildings and would be doing overall clean up and upkeep of the property.

Business Owner Paul Scieszinski expressed overall concerns with zoning administration and the need for administration and enforcement of zoning in Van Meter in general.

Resident Marc Salancik requested clarification from the applicant on the customer base he is attracting and type of vehicles to be sold. He also stated the desire to see the lighting standards upheld and expressed concerns about additional foot traffic in the area of potential customers. The applicant stated that the business model doesn't require a "showroom" type of dealership, the internet and word of mouth are the primary selling facets. He described the typical cars to be sold as used, domestic vehicles with less than 100,000 miles. While there will be staff on site, the majority of the customer interactions will be by appointment. He restated the understanding and desire to adhere to city code as it relates to building requirements, site plan standards, etc.

Katy Farrell, who was also in attendance at the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting of which this was a topic, stated that the applicant and realtor both understand the Conditional Use Permit to be a bridge to gap between now & future zoning changes.

APPLICANT CLOSING SUMMARY

Austin Reed stated that he desires to be an asset to the community and believes that he has a proven business model that will work in this space and he wants to be part of the community. He reiterated the acknowledgement and desire to adhere to the City's requirements, rules and regulations.

CITY CLOSING SUMMARY

City staff provided no additional comment.

Young moved, supported by Doremus to close the public hearing. Carter – YES; Anderson – YES; Lyons - YES; Young – YES; Doremus – YES.

The public hearing was closed as of 6:49pm.

5. Discussion & Action by Board of Adjustment regarding the Variance Request as described in Agenda Item 3A

DISCUSSION

Board Members, Applicant Representatives, and City Staff discussed the variance request. Board Member Anderson expressed concerns about the expiration or length of permit if the proposed PUD zoning changes don't pass. He also expressed desire to ensure that certain restrictions are included in the CUP if approved including but not limited to lighting. Board Member Young believes that the proposed conditions of requiring screening along parameter fencing, general property clean up, adherence to parking rules & regulations as well as building codes seems reasonable. Board Member Doremus stated that he understands what the applicant is trying to do and thinks its doable in the location of 325 Grand Street.

Young moved, supported by Doremus, to approve a Conditional Use Permit to Austin Reed for a used auto part store at the property located at 325 Grand Street with the following conditions: requirement of screening on parameter fencing, compliance with the City's codes (specifically calling out parking, lighting & building improvements/inspections) and general clean up & maintenance of the property.

On roll call, the votes were as follows: Carter – YES; Anderson – YES; Lyons – YES; Young – YES; Doremus – YES.

The application for a Conditional Use Permit by Austin Reed for a Used Auto Sales Store at 325 Grand Street is approved with conditions until such a time that overall zoning changes are made to the current C1 zoning.

6. Adjournment

Doremus moved, supported by Anderson, to adjourn the meeting.

Carter – YES; Anderson – YES; Lyons - YES; Young – YES; Doremus – YES.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.

Jessica Drake
City Clerk, City of Van Meter