

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
PLAN COMMISSION

BOARD MEMBERS

Val Gomez, President
Anthony Serna, Vice President
Lilia Ramos, Secretary
Monique Kurmis, Commissioner
Joanne Moricz, Commissioner
Douglas Sloss, Commissioner
William Allen, Commissioner
Lydia Lopez, Commissioner
Stacy Winfield, Commissioner

Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 3, 2020 @ 4:30 p.m.
Reported for Fissinger & Associates
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 4:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: Val Gomez, Lilia Ramos, Monique Kurmis,
Joanne Moricz, Douglas Sloss, Lydia Lopez, Stacy Winfield.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of Tuesday, January 21, 2020

Comments/Questions: None

Motion to approve January 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes made by
Monique Kurmis. Second by Joanne Moricz.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": Lilia Ramos, Monique Kurmis,
Joanne Moricz, Douglas Sloss, Lydia Lopez Abstain: Val
Gomez, Stacy Winfield Opposed: None Motion Carries.

NEW BUSINESS:

MR. GOMEZ: Under New Business we have the Introduction
of Our New Commissioner, Stacy Winfield. I think everybody
knows. Welcome.

MS. WINFIELD: Thank you.

CITY PLANNER'S REPORT:

1 MR. GOMEZ: We'll move on to City Planner's Report. We
2 have Tierra Environmental & Industrial, Approval for
Maintenance Building Phase 2. Mr. Morrisroe.

3 MR. MORRISROE: Good afternoon. I apologize for talking
4 to our troopers, Mr. Jeff Brant who is the Developer and
Mr. Al Schilling who is the Plant Manager of Tierra
Environmental.

5
6 This is the environmental firm. It's just north of
the Fire Station at Indianapolis and Exchange Drive and
catercorner from the golf course.

7
8 Mr. Brant, do you want to present first?

9
10 MR. BRANT: Sure.

11
12 MR. MORRISROE: Mr. Brant is experienced. Has worked a
lot in East Chicago and is a welcomed person.

13
14 MR. BRANT: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Jeff
Brant. I am with Brant Construction Management. I am here
15 tonight to present the second phase of Tierra Environmental's
desire and need to add the other half of their building that
16 this Plan Commission previously approved I think in 2017.

17
18 And the building is just going to be another
engineered metal building just like the existing one that we
19 put up in 2018. The exact copy just for adding the other
half to the building.

20
21 We'll have four overhead doors. And it's going to
be primarily used for storage.

22
23 They use their existing building for storing of
trucks and equipment that need to be out of the weather
24 during the wintertime. And there will be nothing different
from this structure than the one that we finished in like the
end of 2018.

25
26 I am here to answer any questions. And
Mr. Schilling is here also to answer any questions that you
might have regarding the project.

27
28 MR. SLOSS: What's the cost of the project and the time
frame?

29
30 MR. BRANT: This building project would be comparable to
their last project. And it was about \$364,000. And the time

1 frame would be probably to start construction late spring and
2 be done by October. Probably it will be about four months of
3 construction time.

4 MR. SLOSS: Thank you.

5 MR. GOMEZ: Mr. Morrisroe, there weren't any concerns
6 Tech Review related?

7 MR. MORRISROE: There was no concern about the building.
8 However there was some concern about the environment at
9 Tierra Environmental as to the fencing and the view. And for
10 that we invited Mr. Schilling to speak and perhaps answer
11 some questions about it. It's not part of the plan.

12 MR. BRANT: It was quoted as being a good neighbor. The
13 word was being a good neighbor. And I mean I can speak for
14 Al. If Al wants to talk --

15 MR. MORRISROE: Let's invite Al up to give us a little
16 background. He was giving me some as I was sitting talking
17 to him, the scope of their work and the market that they
18 serve.

19 MR. SCHILLING: Well, we serve the metropolitan area all
20 the way from the north side of Chicago, out west of here,
21 east of here. We do roughly right at 100 mile radius.

22 We go do go out farther than that. But that's
23 only on special projects and so forth.

24 We're a State licensed facility. We have a
25 solidification process. We solidify waste, landfill it. And
then we also provide grease trap waste removal which goes
into digesters, food digesters. And they're turned into
electric power.

What was brought to my attention at the Tech
meeting is that they were looking for us to be a good
neighbor and to maybe improve on some curbside appeal to the
front of our facility which I have talked to the owner.

I got quotes, getting quotes from a fencing
company. I had them in today to come in and look at it so
they can give me an estimate. And we can see about getting
the necessary repairs done to try to make it a little bit
more appealing as you enter East Chicago.

The addition to the building is just to expand what

1 our original idea was. We did it in two phases just so we
2 can spread the cost out over a couple of years.

3 A lot of our equipment deals with water. So when
4 it comes to wintertime, it tends to have a pretty hard toll
5 on us if we can't protect it from the weather. And we've
6 managed to do it in the past, but not without some aches and
7 pains. This will make it much more easier, much more
8 efficient.

9 Is there any other question that I can answer for
10 you?

11 MR. GOMEZ: Anymore questions? So it's identical to the
12 other one?

13 MR. SCHILLING: It's basically identical. The only
14 thing is that there will not be an inside wall constructed
15 because the wall is already there.

16 When we installed the first section of the
17 building, we installed the footings for the second phase to
18 where it attaches to the existing building. So there's just
19 going to be a small rollup door in between the two sections.

20 The wall is already there. So it's basically going
21 to be a three-sided construction with the roof.

22 MR. GOMEZ: Does it tie into the sewers or anything?

23 MR. SCHILLING: We don't have outpour. We don't have
24 any outpour on our site whatsoever. Everything that comes
25 off of our site is trucked out.

MR. GOMEZ: So it's basically just a building?

MR. MORRISROE: Correct. And this was acknowledged.
It just looked like an opportunity to point out some
opportunities for Tierra Environmental.

MR. GOMEZ: Any other questions or comments?

Comments/Questions: None.

Motion to approve Tierra Environmental & Industrial
Maintenance Building Phase 2 Plan made by Lilia Ramos.
Second by Monique Kurmis.

1 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
2 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

3 MR. GOMEZ: Thank you.

4 MR. BRANT: Thank you very much for allowing us to make
5 our presentation today.

6 OLD BUSINESS:

7 MR. GOMEZ: Now we have Old Business. We have an
8 Information Item, Signs located on Columbus Drive.

9 MR. MORRISROE: I believe you have those in your packet.
10 You remember we were questioning the fact of giving
11 authorization for a somewhat larger sign for a medical
12 practice on Columbus Drive.

13 And Courtnee Dinkins took the pictures. She was
14 our staff. She has been promoted or transferred to the Fire
15 Department for the time being, at least the next four to six
16 weeks. But she went out and took these pictures to show how
17 so many of the signs are larger than what the Ordinance calls
18 for and that in fairness it seems we should grant
19 authorization for the applicant.

20 So this was just kind of a follow-up on what we
21 were discussing at the last meeting. Any questions about
22 this?

23 I think the ordinance would call for 16 square
24 feet. And this is 30 square feet. But it's comparable to
25 these others which have outlandish signs.

MS. WINFIELD: That's what I was going to ask.

MR. GOMEZ: Where is the location for this new sign?

MR. MORRISROE: 1600. I don't have that exact number.
But it's on the 1600 block across from Washington High I
believe between Parrish and Hemlock.

MR. GOMEZ: So it's almost by where these are?

MR. MORRISROE: Yes. When the application came in, my
first thought was to strictly apply the 16 feet limit.
However I thought in fairness I should look at what the
practice had been on that block or those few blocks really
from Euclid to Elm Street. And Miss Dinkins took these

1 pictures. And it kind of supports my decision to allow the
2 larger sign.

3 MR. GOMEZ: Anymore questions?

4 MS. RAMOS: So then this is an application that the
5 business or the resident is applying to put up a sign?

6 MR. MORRISROE: That's correct. And that's required for
7 fences and for signs. There's a requirement that they
8 present. Before they get the Building Permit they present it
9 to Planning Department.

10 MS. MORICZ: So the pictures of the other signs, when
11 was the Ordinance for those established?

12 MR. MORRISROE: I'm not quite sure frankly. Probably
13 many years ago. Most of our Ordinances are 60, 70 years old.

14 And again the Ordinance was put in place. Some
15 communities, some on the Illinois side, Munster, Crown Point,
16 are very picky, very much by the book in terms of how their
17 signs go up and where they go up.

18 We have not been. And in fairness it just seemed
19 the difference between the Ordinance and what this sign is is
20 not gross. And it's a fairly attractive sign. It's a
21 professional sign. And so we authorized it. And then they
22 get a permit from the Building Department.

23 MS. RAMOS: I have a question. So do you think is it
24 something that we should revisit, look at the Ordinance to
25 maybe update it or revise it? Is it our responsibility or is
it Council's responsibility?

MR. MORRISROE: Yes. I am not positive. But I think
that's a C1 which is a tighter commercial category than a C2.
We also have a C3 which is a very tight ordinance that goes
on Main Street and Broadway from 140th to Broadway and then
Broadway from roughly Guthrie to Euclid. And that has some
very strict requirements.

Mr. Allegretti at times would point out that it was
kind of tripping in terms of hoping the quality of what we
would put on Broadway, that we had to have so exacting an
Ordinance that we're not getting a lot of development.

The major development on Broadway has been the two
buildings that the City constructed along with the senior

1 housing which did not have a problem and the proposed housing
2 from Pulaski to Alder on the south side of the street across
3 from the present senior building, the new senior building.

4 MS. RAMOS: So is that something that this Body or this
5 Board will do or is that something that the Council needs to
6 do?

7 MR. MORRISROE: Usually for that this Board has certain
8 powers, certain activities. However certain proposals do
9 have to go through the Council. We can look into that.

10 MS. RAMOS: I'm just thinking maybe like we did with the
11 mural signs that we can put together an application.

12 MR. GOMEZ: I know sometimes Lawrence will give the
13 Planning Commission the authority to act on it. Have you
14 reviewed that Ordinance recently?

15 MR. MORRISROE: No. But we can.

16 MR. GOMEZ: Maybe at the next meeting we can have a copy
17 so we can look at the Ordinance.

18 MR. MORRISROE: As far as the sign requirements, signs
19 and fencing because they go together as far as the
20 Administration and what Belinda and Courtnee and Esperanza
21 do, the three people that have been helping. Mostly Belinda
22 and Courtnee I believe. Esperanza does some other contract
23 duties.

24 MR. GOMEZ: I was just wondering if we had an Ordinance
25 and these signs obviously are bigger then these firms didn't
come to the Plan commission?

MR. MORRISROE: They probably did, but perhaps not all.
I mean I am not even sure what condition our records are in.
It would depend on when they went in. If they went in the
last couple of years, we probably have a record. If they
went in sometime longer, we may not.

MR. GOMEZ: I think these have been on these buildings
for quite awhile because I know since I have been on the Plan
Commission and that's since 2012 we never had any use come
in.

MR. MORRISROE: Usually they don't come to the Plan
Commission. This one did because they were just talking
about different things. And I used this as an example as of

1 something where the Ordinance strictly tells me one thing.
2 My sanity and review of what the conditions are told me look
at something else.

3 MR. GOMEZ: I understand how you made the decision
4 because all the other ones are bigger. I'm just a little
concerned that we do have an Ordinance. And I don't know if
5 we have to talk to the Council and see about --

6 MR. MORRISROE: Reviewing it?

7 MR. GOMEZ: Reviewing it and what authority the Plan
Commission has in relation to the Ordinance.

8 MR. MORRISROE: And it may be that we would simply
9 expand it to the C2 category and what the C2 allows as far as
the size of the sign.

10 MR. GOMEZ: Well, maybe in this case they can amend it.
11 It doesn't say that we have some authority to change things.
And I'm a little concerned.

12 Obviously the previous Plan Commission allowed this
13 for whatever reason. But we do have an Ordinance. So I'd
like to take a look at that.

14 MR. MORRISROE: I will do that if I may with you. And
15 perhaps at the next meeting we can appoint a committee to
look at it more closely.

16 MR. GOMEZ: Okay.

17 MR. MORRISROE: When I find out whether we have the
18 power to do that or whether it would also require Council
approval.

19 MR. GOMEZ: Any other questions or comments?

20 COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

21 MR. GOMEZ: We'll move on to Commissioner Comments. Are
22 there any comments from the Commissioners on any subject?

23 MS. WINFIELD: I have a question. I don't know if it's
24 for me to ask now. I looked at our Minutes. Are these
Minutes public records?

25 MR. MORRISROE: Yes.

1 MS. WINFIELD: Do you ask to make comments off the
record or is everything just on the record as she is typing?

2 MR. GOMEZ: Everything is on the record.

3 MS. WINFIELD: I was reading over the Minutes. And some
4 of the comments on the Minutes are kind of disturbing. And I
5 thought that if someone were to request this they would
probably ask.

6 I know everyone should probably know what I'm
speaking of.

7 MR. GOMEZ: I wasn't at the last meeting. So maybe we
8 can talk off the record.

9 MS. WINFIELD: Okay. Thank you.

10 MR. GOMEZ: Any other comments by Commissioners?

11 PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

12 * Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, February 17,
2020 @ 4:30 p.m.

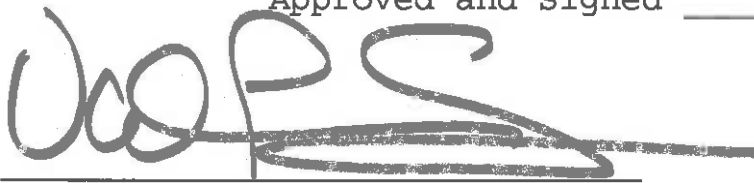
13 Motion to adjourn was made by Monique Kurmis. Second by
14 Joanne Moricz.

15 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
16 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

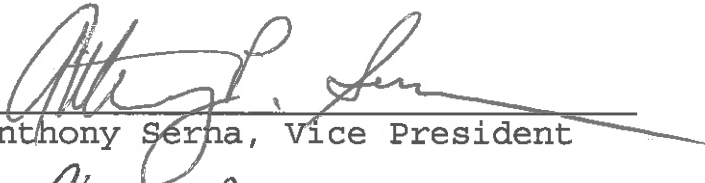
17 * Meeting ended at 4:51 p.m.

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Approval of Meeting Minutes of
Monday, February 3, 2020
Approved and Signed _____



Val Gomez, President



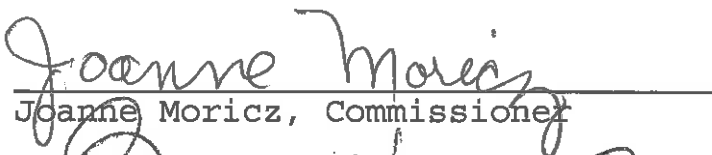
Anthony Serba, Vice President



Lilia Ramos, Secretary



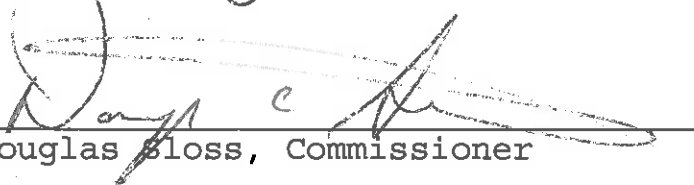
Monique Kurmis, Commissioner



Joanne Moricz, Commissioner



Stacy Winfield, Commissioner



Douglas Bloss, Commissioner



William Allen, Commissioner




Lydia Lopez, Commissioner

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lisa Pena, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Portage, Indiana, this 13th day of February, 2020.



Lisa Pena
Notary Public Porter County
Certified Shorthand Reporter
License Number 084-003483



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