

CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE

*803 Joliet Road
Countryside, IL 60525
www.countryside-il.org*



Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Plan Commission

Zoning Board of Appeals

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

7:15 P.M.

City Hall

Board Members

**Chairman Robert Schwarz, Secretary Tina Grotzke,
Bryan White, Marco Gutierrez, Ronald Ward, Steve Kehr,
Tom Geraghty, Danielle Edenfield, Jonathan Gertsmeier**

Meeting called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Acting Chairman Gutierrez

Roll Call: Secretary Grotzke called the Roll of Members physically present as follows:
Present: Ronald Ward, Danielle Edenfield, Tina Grotzke, Marco Gutierrez, Tom Geraghty, Bryan White
Absent: Chairman Schwarz, Jonathan Gertsmeier, Steve Kehr
Also Present: Attorney Erik Peck, Planning Manager Richard Trent

Approval of Minutes -- The Regular Meeting Minutes of November 1, 2022 were previously distributed to Board Members. There being no corrections or additions to the minutes, motion made to approve the minutes as presented.

A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Ward that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 Ward, White, Edenfield, Grotzke, Gutierrez, Geraghty
Nay: 0
Absent: 3 Schwarz, Gertsmeier, Kehr

Chairman's Comments - None

Action Items

- 1. CASE #PPUD22-0002: Consideration of a Business PUD (Special Use)**
 - a. To consider approving a Preliminary/Final Development Plan for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) in order to create a business development of commercial uses (automobile rental establishment, automobile retail sales dealership – used, automobile service use, and automobile parts/accessory store) in the B-3 Zoning District at the subject property of 6420 Joliet Road.**

Ms. Edenfield moved to open the Public Hearing in this matter, seconded by Mr. White and carried by unanimous voice vote. The Required Proof of Notice has been received by the Building Department. PM Mr. Trent made the Staff presentation: The Applicant, Mr. Mohammad Ihmoud, with Drip Drop Exotics, requests a Special Use to purchase the property at 6420 Joliet Road to establish a one-stop shop for high end car collectors and enthusiasts in the car community at the subject property. The site was formerly the Ettleson Hyundai Annex selling new and used vehicles. The site is approximately 138,000,651 sq. ft. or 3.1 acres in size, consisting of two (2) parcels (Parcel 2 is mainly for detention/retention of stormwater).

The request is for a Business PUD specifically to allow the following uses:

- 1) A high-end car rental facility;
- 2) A high-end used car sales facility;
- 3) A car wrapping, tinting and dealership facility; and
- 4) A custom parts and accessories store.

Mr. Trent presented the following elevation views: the north elevation at the front of the building; the south elevation from the rear (note the light poles on site which were updated recently swapping out the halogen lights for LED lights in 2019); the east elevation has two (2) entrances; and the west elevation also has an entrance with a bicycle rack installed in 2019. Mr. Ihmoud has provided a

breakdown of approximately the number of proposed vehicles on site. Luxury rentals would be on the south – southeast side (of the building) with 30-40 spaces devoted to those vehicles. Short-stay parking would have approximately 19 spaces devoted to it on both the east and west sides of the building. The rental pick-up and returns area would be in the northwest corner of the property with 10 spaces devoted to that area. Long-stay customers would park their personal vehicles behind the building (approximately 12 spaces). The east side of the property would hold approximately 70-80 spaces for **used** auto sales (Note: the site plan provided is not entirely accurate). The property owner resealed, resurfaced and restriped the parking lot and rearranged the configuration of the parking spaces. The stalls were originally in a north – south direction (as opposed to east – west); spaces were removed and other spaces extended, so the configuration is slightly off on the site plan, resulting in a reduction in the number of stalls. The Plan submitted indicates approximately 209 stalls, where there are now 206 stalls -- noted upon Staff inspection. The proposed employee parking area would have approximately 30-32 spaces. The showroom in front of the building would be used for the same purpose, spotlighting 4-6 parking spaces for their vehicles in that area. Additional parking would be available in the southeast corner, approximately 22 spaces.

In reviewing the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, this area falls under the Joliet Road Subarea Plan, which recommends ROW Parkway Improvements and Parking Lot Landscaping Improvements. Staff recommends that a Landscape Plan be submitted to address the parking area, perimeter, and parkway landscaping along Joliet Road.

The Site Plan shows two (2) ingress/egress drives on Joliet Road, approximately 31' in width; those would remain as is. Any improvements to the access drives would require a Variance; Joliet Road is under IDOT jurisdiction.

The old Floor Plan for Airway Acura was presented; the Applicant has indicated that no changes would be made to the interior (of the building) and plans to keep the current configuration. The Proposed Floor Plan shows the current building, approximately 18,760 sq. ft. The proposed luxury car rental space would consume approximately 9,380 sq. ft. The proposed Auto Sales space would consume approximately 9,380 sq. ft., all other proposed uses would fall under the "Motor Vehicles Sales" category.

Interior/Exterior photos were submitted by Mr. Ihmoud which illustrate the property and current state of the building. The first four photos showed the exterior elevations. The next four show a combination of the interior/exterior elevations. The next seven photos showed the interior elevations. The remaining photos revealed the bathrooms, hallways, lobby – showroom area, and finally, the interior of the garage areas with bays from various elevations.

The median value of the proposed used vehicles should be over \$100K so as not to conflict with the City's other car dealerships. A breakdown of the parking calculations for rental vehicles (30-40 spaces) and used vehicle sales (70-80 spaces) with currently 206 stalls (202 regular and 4 ADA stalls) on site would require a total of 171 stalls for the four (4) proposed uses. There would be available an additional 35 spaces.

Consideration of the Special Use request shall be at the discretion of the PC/ZBA. If the PC/ZBA grants the Special Use and the Preliminary/Final Development Plan, Staff would recommend the fifteen (15) conditions as outlined in the Staff Report (dated November 1, 2022) for review and consideration. Ms. Grotzke noted her presence on the Board in 2003 when a similar high-end project was requested and

approved; the end product was not “high-end”. The project did not last long and eventually folded. The building is sprinkled; the Fire Marshal would need to review and approve the entire system.

Mr. Mohammad Ihmoud, founder of Drip Drop Exotics, stated that his family has always been in the auto industry. The goal would be to make this location a one-stop shop to bring their locations in Bolingbrook and in Crown Point, IN and merge them in Countryside. They have many high-end clients who bring in their friends; they do their customization, detailing, selling and renting. The rental business would use Ferraris, Bentleys, Rolls Royces and everything in between. Their website page would show the details. With their rental vehicles, they provide chauffeur services and membership services as well. They also provide vehicles for commercials and music videos. The customization would include wraps, PTFs, tints, detailing, etc. Wraps would start at \$3-10K; same thing for PTFs. The average rents for these high-end vehicles would be \$10-30K; detailing costs would be anywhere from \$250 to \$500. All these services would generate taxes for the City.

Used car dealerships have been a problem for the City in the past. They are trying to bring in high-end vehicles. Mr. Ihmoud provided Board Members with a document entitled, “Countryside Dealership Analysis”. There are nine (9) dealerships currently in the City of Countryside; between new and used cars being sold, there are only 21 vehicles over the price of \$80K; they are all used cars which would not complete with their inventory. They may sell a BMW for \$80K. Their proposed 40 rental vehicles would be worth approximately \$80M. Those vehicles are what they would like to sell. They would also do events which draw visitors from Ohio, Indiana, Michigan – all surrounding states – who would bring their super cars and hyper-cars – sometimes cars valued at \$2-4M come to these events. It attracts a lot of people. For instance, at their last Bolingbrook event, they had 2,000 people, which helped support the local businesses, etc. They constantly do toy drives and many events that would bring scores of people, which would be a huge benefit to the City. They do collaborations with local businesses in Bolingbrook and would do the same in Countryside, once their merger with the Crown Point facility is accomplished. The current owner has kept this building in pristine condition; the building is perfect for their needs. There is nothing on the market that is similar to it. It is very important for their business that they have all four (4) uses with sales and rentals in one facility. Mr. Ihmoud realizes there is an issue with competition, but states they would not be competing with any dealers; their inventory is completely different. They have a large following on social media with many customers coming from all over the Midwest for rentals for various occasions. They are always asked why they don’t sell their rental cars. They are losing revenue by not doing so; their current facilities are not large enough to support sales. They may be competing with Lamborghini of Downers Grove, Chicago Motor Cars in Naperville, Ultimo in Westmont – but not local competitors.

Ms. Edenfield asked about the hours of operation and the timing of special events. Mr. Ihmoud stated that hours would be from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. (perhaps 8 p.m.), Monday-Sunday for rentals and customization. Dealers have a *no* Sunday law. Each use would be treated as a different business; each business would have its own individual employees, its own system and its own payment processor. The special events may include multiple food trucks, VIP parking for super high-end cars for security purposes. Usually 20-25 off-duty police officers from security companies are on site for ground and traffic control. There would be live music; the rental fleet cars would be open so people can take photos and sit in them. For toy drives, they would visit local schools and hospitals with their cars sitting in the parking lots providing toys for children. Other communities may host these events as well. They would hold events in Countryside every three (3) months. Other hosts would hold events twice a year. They adhere to very strict rules of procedure re: audience participation at their events. A question was asked if there would be additional security on the premises due to the high-end nature of the inventory. Mr.

Ihmoud indicated that they have a state of the art system in place, cameras and alarms, etc. Their plan would be to hire full-time security at this facility. Many wealthy celebrities and Chicago sports teams use their services and those individuals would come to Countryside to pick up their rental cars. Mr. Ihmoud discussed their “membership services”.

Acting Chairman Gutierrez has the same concerns as Ms. Grotzke. The dealership analysis does not show their commitment. They are not currently doing sales; they would be doing sales in Countryside. Mr. Ihmoud indicated that they would be strict about trade-ins and would liquidate them to the auction immediately. Discussion ensued re: the parking facility breakdowns; parking spaces would contain a variety of cars. Discussion ensued re: the number of used car parking – 70-80 in number – that is an issue of concern. The City does not want to see lower end vehicles for sale as competition with other City dealerships. Mr. Ihmoud referenced a recent meeting with Mayor McDermott where they discussed that specific issue; Mr. Ihmoud assured the Mayor that their books would be open to the City on a weekly or monthly basis for sales verification purposes. Mr. Ihmoud seeks an \$80K minimum value; many other vehicles are valued between \$80-100K. They would have no problem stating in writing that they would not be allowed to have a car below \$80K on the lot.

The service center would not be doing any engine work; they would do wraps, PTFs, tints, rims, oil changes; there would be no major mechanical work or body work done in the shop. A question was asked if they would sell high-end muscle cars. Yes, they would. A concern of noise was expressed – car engine revving – that type of activity is not conducive to the surrounding neighbors. Mr. Ihmoud has given that issue some thought; on the east side of the building there is an interior garage – people could rev the cars within the building. Cars priced well over \$300-400K would be moved indoors at night. Security cameras would be on 24-7. A Landscape Plan per Mr. Trent’s approval would be carried out; that would also buffer the noise especially on the south and around the perimeter.

Mr. Trent had some additional questions: Site events – a “Special Event Permit” would be required by the City Clerk’s Office for any special events mentioned – Mr. Trent asked if Mr. Ihmoud was aware of that. Mr. Ihmoud was aware of that. The food trucks mentioned to be used for the special events would not allowed in Countryside. Also, providing *chauffer and limousine services* -- that particular use would not permitted at this location – Mr. Ihmoud indicated that he was aware of that. In addition, any outdoor speakers facing south would not be allowed since it would be intrusive to the neighbors. The proposed security system could not be employed with outdoor speakers in the manner stated. Landscaping would include parking islands every fifteen (15) parking stalls for the entire west side of the property including the employee parking area in the rear – required by City Code – Mr. Trent read aloud page 11, Item K – Mr. Ihmoud is now aware. A question was asked if the inclusion of landscape islands would reduce the number of parking spaces available. Mr. Trent stated that it may, but they would have 35 additional parking stalls available.

Where is the fuel for all these vehicles stored? Mr. Ihmoud indicated that they currently keep all vehicles stored indoors at less than ¼ tank full of gas. Before cars are typically rented, they are fueled up at the local gas station. There were no comments from Interested Parties. The Applicant made no final statement.

Acting Chairman Gutierrez asked for a motion to CONTINUE this Public Hearing to get further information on the quantity of sales and rental units and the minimum prices (for the sale of vehicles), plus the submittal of a Preliminary Landscape Plan.

A motion was made by Ms. Grotzke, seconded by Mr. Ward that this matter be CONTNUED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 Ward, White, Edenfield, Grotzke, Gutierrez, Geraghty
Nay: 0
Absent: 3 Schwarz, Gertsmeier, Kehr

Acting Chairman Gutierrez stated that this matter will come back before the PC/ZBA at its Regular Meeting on January 3, 2023. Please get the additional information required to Mr. Trent so that he can provide it to the PC/ZBA prior to the meeting. The Applicant thanked Board Members and left the premises.

Discussion among Board Members regarding the entire concept of “used cars” - never previously allowed in the City of Countryside. The City does not have a used car license, only new car licenses.

Other Business

Comprehensive Plan Update

A series of email blasts and social media were used to invite residents to the Community Visioning Workshop scheduled for December 7th, at 6:30 p.m. in the Lower Level (Community Rooms A and B). Mr. John Houseal, with Houseal Lavigne, will lead the discussion re: the Subarea Visioning Workshop. Mr. Trent encouraged all to attend if at all possible.

Parking Ticket Statistics

Regarding enforcement of the truck parking issue -- Police statistics show that during November 2022, 26 tickets were issued. Specifically, idling trucks prohibited – 0 tickets; parking/storing semi tractors/trailers prohibited – 10 issued; commercial vehicles at residences – 0 tickets; and commercial vehicles parked not registered to a business – 0 tickets issued. The rest were miscellaneous tickets issued by the Police Department. The main culprit is still the Holiday Inn/Best Western parking lot. Although, the numbers are coming down.

The Zoning Case Log from 2018-2022 is included in the Board packets and updated monthly. This is a tracking document for Staff and for PC/ZBA members.

Mr. Trent noted that the City has received requests from dealerships in the past who wish to establish an on-site fueling tank. Currently, the City does not allow above-ground tanks on commercial properties. That sort of use is only permitted in the industrial district by Special Use.

Upcoming Cases

There will be three (3) cases on next month’s agenda including the Holiday Inn Business PUD, tonight’s CONTINUED Special Use case and the CONTINUED Variance case from last month for 9738-9740 W. 58th Street.

**The next PC/ZBA Meeting is scheduled for January 3, 2023 at 7:15 p.m.
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL**

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Ward, that this Hearing be ADJOURNED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 Ward, White, Edenfield, Grotzke, Gutierrez, Geraghty

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Schwarz, Gertsmeier, Kehr

Acting Chairman Gutierrez declared the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

APPROVED:

Respectfully Submitted,

ROBERT SCHWARZ, CHAIRMAN

By: MARCO GUTIERREZ, Acting Chairman

/fp