

**MEETING:** Site Review Committee  
**SUBJECT:** Golden Leaf Cigar Bar  
**ADDRESS:** 11-1/2 Lincolnway  
**PRELIMINARY SITE REVIEW**

**LOCATION:** Zoom  
**DATE:** March 24, 2022

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Beth Shrader, Planning Director  
(219) 462-1161 / [bshrader@valpo.us](mailto:bshrader@valpo.us)  
Bill Laird, Engineering Dept.  
(219) 462-1161 / [blaird@valpo.us](mailto:blaird@valpo.us)  
Tim Stites, Fire Department  
(219) 462-8325 / [tstites@valpo.us](mailto:tstites@valpo.us)  
Matt Zurbriggen, Engineering Dept.,  
(219) 462-1161 / [mzurbriggen@valpo.us](mailto:mzurbriggen@valpo.us)  
Nate McGinley, Water Dept.  
(219) 462-6174 / [nmcginley@valpo.us](mailto:nmcginley@valpo.us)  
Tony Fahel, Water Reclamation Dept.  
(219) 464-4973 / [tfahel@valpo.us](mailto:tfahel@valpo.us)

**PRESENTERS:**

John Rogers, Owner  
(219) 241-8440 / [aporkypig@aol.com](mailto:aporkypig@aol.com)

The following is a summary of discussion at this meeting.

**OPENING:** The Site Review Committee met to discuss the proposed Golden Leaf Cigar Bar to be located at 11-1/2 Lincolnway. Shrader stated that site review is not an approval. Rather, it is a preliminary discussion of the requirements and issues to be considered by the developer or owner. It is possible it will need to come back before site review or to seek other approvals.

**EXPLANATION OF PROJECT:** Rogers shared a video to give the committee an idea of what the interior of the cigar bar will look like. The site will have two ADA bathrooms. Beer, wine, soda, coffee, and tea will be served at the Valparaiso site. Rogers will be selling cigar products. There will be no cooking. Food items will be pre-packaged. Shrader requested a written copy of the menu. Rogers said there will be a convection oven, panini press, micro-wave, and refrigerator.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

**LAIRD:** This appears to be an interior buildout/remodel. Are there any revisions being proposed to sidewalks, asphalt, etc.? Rogers stated the only exterior work being proposed is to remove the display window. Rogers said if this is done, it will be necessary to install a footing. He will also be installing a rooftop A/C and furnace unit. Laird stated that if new foundation is being installed that disturbs the existing sidewalk, Engineering will need to see the plans. This may also trigger

the need for a Site Work Permit. The Site Work Permit will be submitted at the same time the Building Permit application is submitted. Laird asked about the anticipated opening date. Rogers said he is hoping to open within two to three months. However, if there are any issues with the building he will not proceed. **FAHEL:** Submittal of a floor plan and internal plumbing plan will be required. Fahel is aware there will not be any cooking at this facility. However, it may be necessary to go through the waiver process for the kitchen. Fahel will need to look at the proposed menu and contact Rogers concerning the waiver requirement.

**MCGINLEY:** McGinley asked if this project is moving into the old Temptations locations. Rogers confirmed it is the old Temptations site. McGinley asked if this building shares a master meter with the Butterfield Law Offices. Rogers does not know the answer to this question. Rogers stated that the new owners were not aware that the sewage from Temptations goes into Blue Point's sewage. Rogers said this issue needs to be corrected. McGinley advised that it appears one water service feeds both the old Butterfield Law Offices and the old Temptations site. This needs to be clarified. Rogers conveyed that there are two water service meters inside Temptations. McGinley stated if there is ever a time that these two buildings are sold separately, there will be an issue because there is only one water service from the main feeding both facilities. Even if there are two meters, there is only one service. This is okay if one owner owns both buildings but if this ever changes it could be an issue for water service. McGinley conveyed that he would like to hear more about how the sewer exits the facility. The sewer main is actually in the alley on the north side of these buildings. If they are combined into one lateral for a couple of facilities, VCU may want/need to look at this as well. Rogers asked if there was a way for VCU to contact the new owner. McGinley said most of the time people come to them to tell them what they want to do with the building. McGinley recommended the building owner contact VCU directly. Rogers indicated he will let the broker know to contact VCU.

**THRASHER:** Per Will Rose, Engineering Department, the correct address for this site is 11-1/2 Lincolnway and not 13. (13 is the address of the building to the east with a different owner.) A Construction Design Release from the State of Indiana is required. A local Building Permit is required. Submittal of a set of existing plans and proposed plans is required. A list of contractors working on this project is required, and all contractors must be registered with the City. New signage will require a separate permit. Thrasher recommended Rogers check with the Porter County Health Department for any requirements they may have for this type of business and for the kitchen area. Per State and City regulations, the sale of alcohol is required to allow for smoking establishments. Compliance with State and local smoking regulations is required. Thrasher advised that the

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building façade must be repaired. Complaints concerning the structure of the building have been received from adjacent property owners. Therefore, as part of the Building Permit submittal an engineer's report on the structure's condition will be necessary. Questions concerning these comments need to be directed to Thrasher at either the email or phone number shown above.

**STITES:** All initial inspections required during the construction phase need to be scheduled and coordinated through the Building Department. After issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the facility will be subject to annual fire inspections. Stites needs to know how many people will be allowed into this facility. Stites suggested he talk to his architect. Stites cautioned Rogers about the types of kitchen equipment he will be using because they can trigger the need for a hood system. Stites said microwaves are usually okay, but warmers can sometimes be a little tricky because they can create smoke. Stites asked if the convection oven is ventless. Rogers confirmed it is ventless. Anything that creates grease-laden vapors or smoke can trigger a hood system.

**SHRADER:** The permitted uses are complicated by the inclusion of smoking. From a zoning perspective, Shrader would classify this as either a restaurant or bar. Inclusion of smoking may push it into being a bar rather than a restaurant. Bars are considered a special use in the Central Business District in Valparaiso. This means this would have to go before the Board of Zoning Appeals and it would be necessary to show that it meets the special use provisions. Shrader indicated she would not dive into all of the provisions now because she does not know if a special use will be required. All rules for signage are located in Article 5 of the Unified Development Ordinance, and it is available on our website. Rogers stated he has worked with Simko Signs. Shrader mentioned that Simko is very familiar with the signage standards in downtown Valparaiso. The allowable signage is 3 square feet of signage per lineal foot of building frontage. It appears there is approximately 17 feet along Lincolnway, and this equates to 51 square feet of signage maximum. Projecting signs are permitted. Wall signs must fit in the sign band which is just above the glass store front. Cabinet signs or internal illumination are not allowed in the downtown area. If illumination is preferred, gooseneck lighting that shines on the sign from the exterior is allowed. Planning has also permitted halo lights that are more integrated into the sign. Sandwich boards are permitted. Window signage must preserve required transparency. All of these signs require some level of review. All signs except window signs require a permit; however, Planning will still want to review it for compliance with the required transparency before it is installed. Shrader conveyed that there is a façade grant program available through the City. It is competitive, and applications are taken on a rolling basis. It is a 50/50 matching grant. A grant agreement needs to be approved through the Board of Works before any work

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can be done. Quotes must be provided. Almost all cosmetic improvements to the exterior of the store front are eligible. Structural improvements are not eligible. Awnings, signage, paint, and new façade materials are allowed. Any façade improvements whether through a grant or not need to meet the downtown design standards. These standards are in our Unified Development Ordinance. Referring to Article 11, Section 11.600 will be necessary. Planters with landscaping are encouraged. Awning materials and specs are in Section 11.602A. Façade materials (what is permitted and what is not and in what quantities) are in Section 11.604. If brick is currently unpainted like it appears on this building now, it is preferred to leave it unpainted. Any new colors that are introduced should be neutral earth tones if they are the primary colors of the façade. Brighter colors are allowed if they are accent colors. Shrader wants to meet with the Building Commissioner and City Attorney to understand all the layers of rules and how to move forward with this. Any questions need to be directed to Shrader, otherwise Shrader will be back in touch to try to setup a call to go over issues.

**ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED:**

- Detailed Site Plan
- Submit Plans If Foundation Repair Disturbs Sidewalk
- Site Improvement Permit (may be required for sidewalk)
- State Design Release
- Building Permit
- Provide List of Contractors
- Contractors Registered with the City
- Contact Porter County Health Department
- Provide Engineer Report on Structure's Condition
- Signage/Fencing Permit
- Façade Must Be Repaired
- Submit Floor Plan
- Submit Internal Plumbing Plan
- Provide Written Copy of Menu