

MEETING: Site Review Committee
SUBJECT: Brass Valley
ADDRESS: 1354 West Morthland
PRELIMINARY SITE REVIEW

LOCATION: Zoom
DATE: April 14, 2022

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

PRESENTERS:

Jeff Yates
(574)265-6874/jyates858@yahoo.com

The following is a summary of discussion at this meeting.

OPENING: The Site Review Committee met to discuss the Vape Store proposed to be located at 1354 West Morthland. 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 the site review or to seek other approvals.

EXPLANATION OF PROJECT: Yates explained he wants to open a vape shop in Valparaiso. They would be selling vape and vape supplies. The building is what they want. They are not looking to make any modifications. They anticipate three free standing show cases. They will apply for a sign permit later. There will not be any smoking in the store.

STAFF COMMENTS:

LAIRD: Laird mentioned that he saw a reference to an ADA parking space. How will this be accomplished? Yates conveyed he was going to paint stripes and put a sign up.

McGINLEY – It appears there will be no external changes to the water service or sewer lateral. Yates conveyed that is correct. McGinley stated the backflow prevention will need to be tested. That can be done through the Metering Department. Metering Department Contact: Shaun Shifflett; Phone: 219-462-6174, Ext. 1322; Email: sshifflett@valpo.us

STITES - Stites asked what the building was before this. Yates answered one side was a doctor's office and the other was J & J Pizza Shack. There will be fire extinguishers. They will install smoke detectors but no fire alarm. There will not be a sprinkler system. Stites stated all initial inspections must be scheduled and coordinated through the Building Department. After occupancy is granted, the facility will be subject to annual fire inspections. Stites asked if they offer smoking cessation classes. Yates replied the vape cuts back on nicotine until you are off nicotine.

FAHEL: Given the nature of the business and the fact they are not changing the plumbing Water Reclamation has no comment on this project.

THRASHER: Thrasher asked if the construction inside is complete. Yates replied the floor plan as existing is fine with them. They do not need to change anything. Thrasher stated the last time the City was in this building it was gutted. They pulled a permit in 2019 to improve the space. If all the work is done, it was done without inspections. A proper inspection will have to be done before they can occupy the building. The restrooms need to be ADA compliant. Yates replied restrooms will be for employees only. Thrasher replied that does not waive the ADA compliant requirement. The parking lot is in poor condition. She asked if there is a plan to resurface it. Yates replied he has not talked to the landlord about it. He is leasing the property, not buying it. Thrasher explained parking lot improvements will be necessary if they are going to be having public access to the space. At a minimum, the spaces will have to be striped. The asphalt is in poor condition and would need to be resurfaced before it is striped. Yates conveyed there are no outside lights. If needed, they can install them. Thrasher reiterated, first thing to be done is determining what was done during the improvements.

SHRADER: Retail is a permitted use in the Commercial General zone. Yates conveyed they are leasing both suites. Shrader asked if they will be subleasing Unit A or will they keep it empty. Yates replied he thinks they will keep it empty. Suite A was a doctor's office. Suite B was a pizza place. Shrader explained the way they determine parking space is by useable floor space. It would be helpful for him to provide what he determines to be useable floor space in the unit he is going to use. Before anyone occupies Suite A he needs to provide the useable floor space in that unit. Useable floor space excludes bathrooms, storage, water heater and furnace area. It looks like his requirement is going to be five spaces for every 1,000 square feet. Yates conveyed he believes there are five parking spaces now and two in the back. Shrader asked if there is a dumpster on site. Yates replied there is. It is freestanding in the parking lot behind the building. Shrader stated the maximum signage permitted is based on the lineal feet of building frontage. She estimates 75 lineal feet. Both units would have approximately 225 sq ft of signage allowed. Yates conveyed they are getting quotes on a lit sign that hangs off the building. Shader stated

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there are specifications on lit signs. She will make sure that code reference gets into the minutes so it can be relayed to the sign company. Signage: Refer to Article 11, Division 11.300, Section 11.305. Yates conveyed there is a post on the property where there used to be a monument sign. He was thinking of doing a monument sign but now he thinks they will put a sign on the building. Shrader explained if they do a monument sign, this is a signature corridor overlay district which means there are rules about how things must look and a maximum height of 6'. No pole signs are allowed. If a monument sign is installed there must be landscaping for 3' in every direction. The Planning Department needs useable floor space and striping plans to ensure the parking that is on the site meets the design standards. Yates stated he believes his useable square footage is 1,000 square feet including the excluded areas. Shrader replied that is what she estimated it to be, and five parking spaces is sufficient. She thinks he might be able to squeeze more spaces in if it is well striped. Yates conveyed he feels they can get seven in front and two or three in back. Yates asked who inspects the parking lot. Thrasher suggested he contact a paving contractor. He will have to make sure the size of the spaces meets City requirements. If he puts together a plan, she can review it before he does the work. Yates asked about inspecting Suite B. He asked if that was something the owner should be doing or him. Thrasher replied the last time she was inside the building there was nothing in it. The entire building was gutted. All the remodeling was done without inspections. They will have to contact her office to see what must be removed for an inspection. No occupancy was granted for the building. They can email the information to Vicki and then she will have to have a conversation with the owners.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED:

Inspection
Useable floor space
Striping plan