



CITY OF VALPARAISO

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MEETING: Site Review Committee
SUBJECT: Hilltop Soup Kitchen
ADDRESS: 608 Union Street
PRELIMINARY SITE REVIEW

LOCATION: Zoom
DATE: September 29, 2022

IN ATTENDANCE:

Beth Shrader, Planning Director
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Jessica Gage, Associate Planner
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Vicki Thrasher, Building Commissioner
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Bill Laird, Engineering Dept.
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Matt Zurbriggen, Engineering Dept.
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Tim Stites, Fire Department
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Nate McGinley, VCS
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Tony Fabel, Water Reclamation Dept.
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Hannah Seats, Pretreatment Coordinator
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Mike Jessen, City Administrator
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PRESENTERS:

Jennifer Wright, Hilltop
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The following is a summary of the discussion at this meeting.

OPENING: The Site Review Committee met to discuss the proposed Hilltop Mission Kitchen to be located at 608 Union Street. 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: Wright explained that Hilltop Neighborhood House is purchasing the lot next door. There is an existing house on the property but it is in pretty bad shape. This house will be demolished and a new building will be built. Wright stated that the new building will be called the Hilltop Mission Kitchen. They will be serving hot meals a few hours a couple of nights during the week. About 90% of the clients they serve do not have cooking facilities. Right now they are given food that does not need to be cooked, or something that is microwaveable. The building will be a small café-style restaurant and it will seat approximately 50 people. Wright mentioned that with the green space requirements parking will be limited. Most of the clients will not have cars. They will be using the V-Line, walking or biking to the facility. McAlpine conveyed that this will be an FBI building. FBI is working through the zoning requirements. McAlpine is facilitating permitting, variances and utility connections. McAlpine said Torrenga did the Engineering Site Plan. The plan shows the existing house that is to be demolished. The plan also shows the two-car garage which fronts the rear alley. The garage will be demolished as well. The intent is to begin demolition within the next three or four weeks. There is water along Union Street and the sewer is in the rear alley. The kitchen will be at the southern end and that is where the water will come in. The sewer will come to the south into the alley. There will be a cleanout outside the building. Some variances may be needed. The property is not zoned for this use. The greenspace is small but they had to create some parking spaces. McAlpine said the northwest corner is closer to the right of way. The food pantry satisfies the standard setback requirement; however, McAlpine was unable to do that with the soup kitchen so that he could create some space at the southern end for

parking. They would like to share the dumpster used by the food pantry. The location is good and it works well. The dumpster is serviced by a private waste hauler. They anticipate being able to save the blue spruce tree southeast of the building. They also plan on doing some landscaping in the front.

STAFF COMMENTS:

SHRADER: Shrader feels a restaurant can be an appropriate use. In looking at what that does in terms of development standards and how the mission operates, in some ways it is like a restaurant and in many ways is very similar to the food pantry which is categorized as service. Shrader has a couple of things she would like Hilltop to consider. It will involve changing the site plan and making some adjustments to the building. However, the changes could possibly make it so that variances could be avoided. This is always the goal. Shrader asked if they have considered joining the parcels. Wright said if that is allowed, they would absolutely consider it. Shrader stated that this does not require anything from the City. It is a process that is done with the County. It will allow more than one non-residential building on a lot. All calculations would be together. Switching from a restaurant use to a service use causes the parking requirement to go down. Shrader will need the calculation for useable floor space for both buildings. Some changes need to be made to the building and that could change the usable floor space. The service use category will be used for parking. The calculation is five spaces per 1,000 sq ft. Shrader conveyed that she did a rough calculation and arrived at six spaces for both buildings. The parking can line up in the back and they can reclaim space that will help meet the 60% landscape ratio requirement. This would eliminate the need for a variance. A restaurant use does not have any special use standards other than it cannot be over a certain size and it appears they are way under. When it is a service use, making the entrance look more like a single-family home is the standard for service here too. To avoid all variances, Shrader believes they should bring the size of the building down slightly. Shrader stated they are tenths of a point away from being able to meet the gross and net FAR standards. With some minor modifications they could meet it and not require a variance. Shrader asked if Hilltop felt this seemed achievable? Shrader suggested that FBI contact Planning directly to get more details on the standards they need to meet in terms of the size to avoid variances. Shrader conveyed that she talked to the City arborist about possibly planting some street trees in this area. The requirement for these sites is parking lot landscaping and on-lot landscaping. Once the number of parking spaces is determined, that determines the number of trees and shrubs required around the parking lot. On-lot is based on the area of the size that is left over after you exclude the landscape area that is dedicated to the parking lot. At this point that is not known; however, Shrader thinks this is achievable. This will be a very different site plan than what they are looking at right now. She asked McAlpine if he had any questions about the suggested changes and if he thought it was achievable. McAlpine said it might be achievable. Linking the parcels is not something he thought about and he thinks this is a simple process through the Auditor's Office without needing a plat. Shrader advised that the City does not require anything for joining the two parcels. If anything, they may be more compliant. Shrader mentioned that once the parking spaces are removed from the rear, the building can be moved back, so it is at the same setback as the food pantry. This is what Shrader is recommending. The setback was met for the food pantry. If the building was any closer a variance would be required. Shrader would like to avoid this. Shrader conveyed that once the lots are joined there is no side yard setback required in this area for zoning purposes. McAlpine asked if the posts and overhang for the covered porch can encroach into the building setback line. Shrader said they may be able to encroach a little but she will need to check on this. Shrader conveyed that in the zone for service the front yard setback is 25' and the rear yard is 30'. This will pinch things down because of the odd shape at the back. Staff will work with them if there are any issues. The side yard setbacks are 6' on either side. The side yard setbacks go away if the lots are joined. It looks like there are exceptions that allow you to have a front porch intrusion into the setback of 4' for residential. There is nothing that allows it. Patios and decks can do this. This might have to be looked at further to see if it is an issue. McAlpine is envisioning this building rotating 90 degrees clockwise. The building will stay 6' off the east property line. The home is beyond that property line, so the building will be further away from the fire rating that Thrasher just mentioned. 10' will be the dimension they will hold so they do not have to modify anything with the food pantry. The building will slide until the building line gets lined up with the 25' and it will extend out towards the road. McAlpine believes this will satisfy the requirement to make the front of the building look like the front. The entrance will face Union Street. As the building slides to the south, the parking can be adjusted. Shrader is aware that the dumpster is not enclosed. We can look at the whole site together and figure out the best location for the dumpster. The dumpster will need to be enclosed. To avoid variances the building will need to shrink a little bit. This is to avoid setback variances and floor area ratio variances. McAlpine asked if this is under the service category zoning. Shrader confirmed. Shrader indicated that a Zoning Clearance will be necessary to ensure all elements are hit before permits are issued.

LAIRD/ZURBRIGGEN: How the parking lot may change could impact these comments. Engineering would like to see some proposed topography on how this additional impervious space is going to drain. Engineering does not want any neighbors impacted with any additional runoff. Is there a plan or will there be a plan as to how any additional runoff will be mitigated. Given the current condition of the plan it seems there is going to be quite a bit of additional impervious area which increases storm water runoff. They are curious as to how this will be addressed. McAlpine said now that they are discussing possibly linking the parcels, it opens some options if the west food pantry property can be used. There already is a bit of a low area that is just behind the chiller/outdoor cooler. McAlpine will look for a low point to try to get everything to drain to the internal center of the property and put in a rain garden. Laird indicated that Engineering will be open to working with McAlpine on this issue. Engineering is mostly concerned with runoff due to the additional impervious area. Engineering is not asking for a giant retention pond but a plan to mitigate the additional runoff. Zurbruggen interjected that

a Site Permit from the Engineering Department will be required. Laird stated that the Site Permit application will be submitted at the same time the Building Permit application is submitted to the Building Department.

McGINLEY: McGinley asked if it is the intent to reuse the existing water service and existing sewer tap? McAlpine said if they are in decent condition that would be a great savings on the project. However, it is an old home and he is not sure of the condition. Wright interjected that Hines bid out replacing it all. McGinley advised that a Sewer Permit will be required. Inspections will go through the Collection and Distribution Department for the sewer tie in. McGinley conveyed that the water service is 1" copper. If something larger is needed, they will need to re-tap the main. This will need to be worked out as the design is worked through. The Metering Department requires an RPZ backflow device. If a carbonated soda machine is installed, an additional RPZ backflow will be required before the machine. Wright interjected there will not be a carbonated soda machine. McGinley stated that it will be necessary to coordinate the demolition of the home with the Collection and Distribution Department so they can do a shutoff and disconnect that service. We do not want to take the chance of ripping that service out when the contractor demolishes the home.

FAHEL: Fahel asked if the café will be installing a grease trap or grease interceptor. Wright said it can be installed if required. The café will not have any deep fryers. They will be using a stove, oven, and frying pans. Fahel asked if there will be an under-sink grease trap. Wright confirmed that there will be an under-sink grease trap. Fahel will email some information for properly sizing the grease equipment. Submittal of an internal plumbing plan is required.

THRASHER: Thrasher is glad to see that 608 Union is being torn down. The demolition will require a separate Building Permit and Site Permit. Thrasher stated that she does notify Utilities when Demolition Permit applications come in. However, they need to make sure they contact Collections and Distribution as suggested by McGinley. Thrasher indicated that the new building would require a Construction Design Release before the issuance of the local Building Permits. Submittal of a Building Permit application and a list of contractors is required. All contractors working on the project must be registered with the City. A licensed plumber must be on the job. If there is a sign, it will require a separate permit. Wright stated there will not be any signage. Since there is a commercial kitchen, Thrasher advised that it will be necessary to work with the Porter County Health Department for their approvals. Thrasher asked if a hood system will be installed. Wright confirmed there will be a hood system. Thrasher said if it is a Type One with a suppression, it will have to be submitted to the State for a Construction Design Release. The contractor will need to contact Tim Stites at the Fire Department before installing the equipment. Questions concerning inspections should be directed to Stites at 219-462-8325 or tstites@valpo.us. Thrasher stated that if the lots are combined, they need to make sure the buildings are at least 10 ft. apart. If they are not, it will be necessary to put fire separation ratings along the side.

ON BEHALF OF TIM STITES (FIRE DEPARTMENT): All fire inspections required during the construction phase are scheduled and coordinated through the Building Department. Once occupancy is granted, the facility will be subject to annual fire inspections.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED:

- Joining the Two Lots
- Calculation of Usable Floor Space (both buildings)
- Modify the Size of the Building
- Topography on Drainage
- Plan for Mitigating Additional Runoff
- Site Permit from Engineer's Office
- Sewer Permit
- RPZ Backflow Device
- Internal Plumbing Plan
- Demolition Permit and Site Permit
- Site Permit for New Building
- Construction Design Release (Building)
- Construction Design Release (Hood System – Type One with Suppression)
- Building Permit
- List of Contractors
- All Contractors Registered with the City
- Porter County Health Department Approvals
- Dumpster Enclosure
- Zoning Clearance