

Conditional Use Hearing
34 North 6th Street
Council Chambers
Tuesday, December 17, 2013
5 p.m.

Mr. Acosta called the Conditional Use Hearing to order and explained the purpose of the hearing.

The City of Reading is divided into zoning districts which regulate the use of property. Certain types of uses may impact surrounding properties or their neighborhoods. Each zone is designated with certain permitted, conditional and prohibited uses. A "conditional use permit" provides special consideration of certain specified uses which may or may not be compatible with an area depending on the specifics of the particular project.

The City uses the Conditional Use Public Hearing to evaluate whether a proposed use is appropriate for a particular property and neighborhood. The property is located within a Commercial Core zoning district. The applicant wishes to expand the use of this grocery/deli use to allow the property to be rented out for events and to expand the hours of operation.

Attending: City Councilors Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, City Clerk Kelleher, City Solicitor Younger Esq., Zoning Administrator Peiffer and City Planner Miller

A copy of the agenda packet and copies of the recommendations from the Zoning Administrator were provided to the applicant and made a part of the record.

I. Testimony from Applicant

Gabriel Quezada, applicant, 1537 Farr Road, Wyomissing, 19610

Mr. Acosta asked Mr. Quezada to step forward. The court reporter administered the oath to Mr. Quezada.

Mr. Quezada stated that he submitted an application to convert a portion of the restaurant to a banquet hall and extend the hours of operation. He stated that currently the business only has permission to operate as a deli/lunch during the daytime hours. He stated that he received inquiries about renting the space for after hours events, which has worked out well. He stated that he is now seeking permission to continue to expand his hours of operation and use.

In response to a question from Mr. Acosta, Mr. Quezada stated that he opened in March 2012. The establishment is located across from the courthouse and former bank building. He stated that he gutted and renovated the interior of the property. He explained that the interior space

is “L” shaped with the deli in the front and the middle and rear are used as the event space (excluding the kitchen area). He stated that he is currently open during regular business hours but would like to stay open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday for weekend events.

In response to a question from Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz, Mr. Quezada stated that the event space can hold 10 round tables with seating for 7-8 people. He estimated that the event area can comfortably hold approximately 100 people. He stated that evening curbside parking is not a problem and that parking challenges end around the time when the courthouse closes.

In response to a question from Councilor Reed, Mr. Quezada stated that he is planning to operate a BYOB. Ms. Kelleher noted that special permits are required for BYOB establishments.

Testimony from City Staff

Mr. Acosta asked the Zoning Administrator to step forward. The court reporter administered the oath to the Mr. Peiffer, Zoning Administrator. His report and recommendation was distributed to all. The report states that this property is located within the Commercial Core zoning district and that off street parking is not required within the Commercial Core area. He stated that the property has zoning for commercial use on the first floor and a one unit rental above. He stated that enforcement for the event use began after a complaint by the Police Department. He stated that Mr. Quezada attended a one-stop meeting in July 2013 to learn what was required to have an event space. He stated that the establishment can accommodate 92 people. He suggested approving the application with conditions.

Mr. Acosta asked the City Planner to step forward. The Solicitor administered the oath to Mr. Miller, City Planner. He stated that the Planning Commission reviewed the application at their November 26th meeting and stated that the Commission recommends approving the application with conditions.

Mr. Acosta stated that events at the Santander Center or the Performing Arts Center could negatively affect curbside parking and he suggested that Mr. Quezada utilize the parking garage for the events. He also suggested speaking with surrounding churches to inform them about the new event space.

Public Comment

There was no public comment from anyone attending the hearing.

Applicant's Rebuttal

Mr. Quezada provided copies of two (2) recommendation letters from neighboring properties.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz commended Mr. Quezada for renovating this space, which is the

former Square Deal deli.

Mr. Acosta stated that City Council is required to approve or deny the application within 45 days of the hearing. He stated that the decision will be made by resolution at Council's regular business meeting on either January 13th or 27th.

The hearing adjourned at approximately 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk