

Minutes of the meeting of the
Planning and Zoning Commission (P&ZC)
City of Belton
333 Water Street
Tuesday, July 18, 2017

The Planning and Zoning Commission met at 5:30 P.M. in the Wright Room at the Harris Community Center. The following members were present: Chair Brett Baggerly, Rae Schmuck, Dave Covington, Joel Berryman and David Fuller. The following members were absent: Eloise Lundgren, Ben Pamplin, Jason Morgan and David Jarratt. The following staff members were present: Director of Planning, Erin Smith, and Planner, Kelly Trietsch.

Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Fuller led all present.

Invocation – Mr. Covington gave the Invocation.

1. Call To Order.

Chair Baggerly called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

2. Minutes from the previous Planning and Zoning meeting.

Mr. Berryman made a motion to approve the minutes from June 20, 2017. Mr. Covington seconded the motion to approve the minutes with 5 ayes, 0 nays.

3. Z-17-09 Hold a public hearing and consider a zoning change from Planned Development Office-1 to an amended Planned Development Office-1 Zoning District for a small event venue at 320 South Main Street, located on the northwest corner of West Avenue C and South Main Street.

Ms. Smith presented the staff report.

Chair Baggerly opened the public hearing. Ronnie Schoepf, the applicant/owner of Schoepf's Barbecue, said Staff knows how excited they were when they came with the idea of Estacia's retail store and they received a lot of good feedback. It was exciting, he said. With the restaurant, we are able to see the needs in the city, we really don't have another place to meet, Mr. Schoepf said. The City itself is looking at bringing in a hotel to have meeting space because we don't have any. We don't have a venue that allows for that type of thing, Mr. Schoepf said. No, it may not be ideal, he said, and it may not have a parking lot like we have outside of this building here but there is some parking there. Based on the guidelines that have been presented, Mr. Schoepf said there are some other opportunities in that area, that if needed, they could park in the area and still attend the venue. There are some stairs, different things, and parking lots around it, he said. Hopefully it will offer something and get used and often. Or if not, we will be looking to do something else, Mr. Schoepf said. He said he believed based on the restaurant and the response we have had, there are a lot of people coming into the community for rehearsal dinners and similar gatherings which are around that size (30-person capacity), where the food may not even be included it could just be a meeting

space. Mr. Schoepf offered to answer any questions that the Commission may have. Chair Baggerly closed the public hearing to start discussion between the Commission and applicant

Mr. Covington asked if the neighbors had any concerns about if there might be loud music or things such as that. Mr. Schoepf said he did not speak to any neighbors about this. In the past at Schoepf's Barbecue they have not gone around to the neighbors to ask about live music. When they first opened with the Chamber of Commerce they brought in a loud mariachi band and no neighbors came over to say "that's bothering us," Mr. Schoepf said. He agreed and said, you're right, it could be a concern but because of its location near the creek and all the other things that go on across the creek, he didn't believe it would create any more disturbance to anybody who might be bothered by what might be going on at his location, especially with a small group. Mr. Covington said he's trying to predict what they might run into and fortunately for Mr. Schoepf, no one responded to the letter that was sent out. Mr. Schoepf said it wouldn't be the first time he would have to address questions from someone who might be disturbed. Hopefully, the advantage to the community might be bigger. Mr. Schoepf said, and hopefully we will have to expand and do something different which might include the property owners in the area. Mr. Schoepf said you never know what's going to happen. If there was an issue, he said they would address it based on how the property is classified by the City and utilize the rights given to them, but they would also be respectful to their neighbors, Mr. Schoepf said.

Ms. Schmuck said four parking spaces just seems like very little. Mr. Schoepf said he agrees. Ms. Schmuck asked if people will be parking on Avenue C. According to what was just read to him, Mr. Schoepf said, they are not supposed to park on Avenue C. In the past, the neighbors across the street have a large, paved parking space and have allowed us at times to park there if that was available, he said. There might be an opportunity, because many of these events will be taking place in the evening time for gatherings such as a wedding rehearsal or birthday party, and so the map shows a very large parking area that's hardly, or never, ever used much except for special events that are going on, Mr. Schoepf said. There is a staircase that leads up the side of the bridge, he said; it's a lot of stairs, there's no doubt about it, but it is an avenue they could walk up. In addition, there is also a gate, for the adventurous ones, Mr. Schoepf said, in the back of their property about 20 yards from the picnic table that is next to the parking lot, but that's not the general idea. To address Ms. Schmuck's question, he said there are opportunities and there are people who park up and down the street but that wouldn't be what they suggest, he said. Ms. Schmuck said OK, she was just curious. Mr. Schoepf said Ms. Schmuck is right, there is not a lot (of parking). If they were located in the downtown area on the other side of the creek, it wouldn't be a discussion about parking because certain businesses have zero parking, and they are a lot bigger business than what is proposed. Mr. Covington said that is different zoning as well, not requiring parking.

Mr. Covington asked if across Avenue C, just to the south, if that is that the location of the little parking lot they are thinking about using? Mr. Schoepf said yes. In the past, he has spoken to the owners about it, and he doesn't know that anything has changed. Mr. Covington asked if it's zoned Residential? Or is it zoned Office? What is there? Ms. Smith said it is zoned Retail, but it is a residence. Mr. Schoepf said he believed the gentlemen who lived there had been ill. Ms. Smith said he had passed away. Mr. Schoepf said he had thought that had happened and that they wrote books

there. The building is classified as an historical building, but they would not be solely dependent on that parking area, Mr. Schoepf said. Depending on the type of event, we would encourage more use of the parking at the bottom of the hill in the park if the city isn't using the area at the same time, he said, calling it a good idea. And if there are opportunities to acquire things in the area to use for parking based on their finances, they would try to do that, Mr. Schoepf said. We have inquired about that already, Mr. Schoepf said, but one has to acquire the properties and that requires funds and the right opportunity, so hopefully they are able to set themselves up for that by creating a demand for the product.

Chair Baggerly said he noticed in the notes it mentioned a taxi/shuttle system they are thinking about doing. Mr. Schoepf said yes sir, there are several different ideas. He needs to speak with Belton Police Chief Ellis to maybe discuss and completely understand all the methods we could use in that condensed area to transport people up and down the hill. There are certain things he thinks he is aware of but he will confirm with Chief Ellis. For example, on a slow-moving vehicle you can place a triangle sign and it gives you the right, or the opportunity, to drive something that wouldn't be considered the right vehicle to drive up and down I-35. So, we are going to see what Chief Ellis has to say about those ideas to be able to transport folks from there to there to help make parking not really a question, Mr. Schoepf said. But you are correct, he said. That resource is there and if it's not being used during that time then he said he feels it would be in an opportunity for the community to use for parking, Mr. Schoepf said.

Mr. Covington asked if there would be signage on the back of the fence facing the public parking to direct people to the staircase. Perhaps something like that could help with getting some foot traffic instead of walking back to Pearl Street. If someone is going to park in Yettie Polk Park to come to your event at your place, instead of wandering back the way they drove on foot, there could be a sign back there directing them to the staircase, Mr. Covington said. Mr. Schoepf said with the groups being so small, because of the criteria that was set forth, if they can focus on a few phone calls to those people when they're setting that up, they might be able to make sure everyone is aware of it. They could definitely put a sign, Mr. Schoepf said, or something to show them where to park. Mr. Schoepf said hopefully they have such a demand for the use of the venue that all is something they have to develop and get further into and they haven't tried to rent it or told anyone about it, so he said he can't tell the Commission the demand and he wouldn't do that until they received the OK and not take the position and just assume the Commission would approve it.

Mr. Covington suggested lighting along the staircase. During the day it's fine, but at night – if you're going to transport people with a golf cart – but if people are using the staircase your property is close enough you could cast some light there from your property, Mr. Covington said. The city does have some light poles there and along the creek, Staci Schoepf said. The plan, she said, is to wrap the trees with white lights and she has illuminated balls to hang. Mr. Schoepf said it will be enhanced even more than it already is, but Mr. Covington is correct there are opportunities to improve that walkway.

Ms. Smith answered Mr. Schoepf that the bridge is owned by TxDOT, so any approval of lighting would need to come from TxDOT. Mr. Schoepf said the suggestion was that they would shine lights from their property in that direction. Mr. Covington asked if they could put lights on their property,

then they wouldn't have to worry about getting TxDOT involved? Ms. Smith said yes. Mr. Schoepf said he doesn't see that being an issue.

Mr. Covington said the limited on-site parking is concerning to him especially with on-street parking not being an option, but he would like to see stuff start to happen on the south side of Nolan Creek. If there's anyone who can pull off a venue like this, it's the Schoepfs, Mr. Covington said. With the Yettie Polk parking in the proximity there, he said he thinks he can be OK with just the four on-site parking spots. Mr. Schoepf said they agree with him; they are not ignorant to the limitations or the hurdles they may have to overcome in getting folks to use the venue, but until they have traveled that road it's hard to say how difficult it will be. It may be really easy, he said, people may dig walking up the creek but hopefully it will give people a chance to see the park too, Mr. Schoepf said.

Mr. Fuller asked about handicap accessibility? Mr. Schoepf said with the four parking spaces up front that would allow for people to be dropped off at the front. There are cement sidewalks and stairs and a ramp there, he said. Because the venue will be for a small party, Mr. Schoepf thought those conversations will come up right off the bat. As soon as we know we can, we will make adjustments to make sure they get right up front, Mr. Schoepf said. It's a neat venue with a lot of different uses and we will only know when people start asking, and we hope we have another meeting and add more property and do different things on that side of the creek because you're right there's many things that could be done there, Mr. Schoepf said. He said he hopes the changes in Downtown Belton over the last few years continue to benefit the community and the businesses.

Ms. Schmuck made the motion to approve Z-17-09. Mr. Covington seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously with 5 ayes, 0 nays.

4. Discuss the Comprehensive Plan update process and schedule.

Ms. Smith presented the staff report, explaining the timeline for the Comprehensive Plan.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:53 P.M.

Chair, Planning and Zoning Commission