

City of Columbus
Public Hearing – North Metro Harness Initiative (Aces Hotel, LLC) Preliminary/Final Plat
Application (PC-16-120)
(Trinity Business Consulting, Inc. [John Seibert] –applicant)
September 21, 2016

The September 21, 2016 Public Hearing to receive testimony regarding the request for a preliminary/final plat, “North Metro Harness Initiative Plat 2”, creating one new lot was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Garth Sternberg at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Jim Watson, Pam Wolowski, Jesse Preiner, and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, Planner Dean Johnson, Public Communications Coordinator Jessica Hughes, and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were City Council members Denny Peterson and Bill Krebs; John and Julie Seibert, Russ Hanes, Pavel Bodnar, Michelle Mauch, and Mike Hursh.

Sternberg: Next we’ll have a Public Hearing and discussion for the North Metro Harness Initiative preliminary plat request, pages 1 through 9 and enclosures. And, at this time, I’d like to ask the recording secretary to read the notice as published.

Notice was read at this time.

Sternberg: Thank you. And, at this time, I’d like to ask the applicants to please come forward. Thank you, sir. And, if you could, just state your name and address for the record.

Seibert: Happy to. Good evening, uh, Mr. Chairman and, uh, members of the Planning Commission. Uh, this is—I’m John Seibert, and uh, I’m here on behalf of the Aces Hotel group, in an effort to proceed forward with the, uh, plat as well as the, uh, kind of the conditional use permit for the development of the hotel.

Sternberg: Thank you, sir. So, it looks like you’re subdividing basically, platting out a .89 acres lot?

Seibert: That’s correct.

Mursko: (referring to overhead) Right in here.

Sternberg: For the hotel. And that’s right adjacent to the building? You’re going to have it connecting?

Seibert: That is correct. And there’ll be kind of a connecting link between the two properties. Uh, and basically, the intent behind that is to have it a covered walkway between the two facilities, so that during the inclement weather they can go from the hotel over to the, uh, Running Aces casino and, and racetrack.

Sternberg: Okay. Any questions for the applicant?

Watson: No, sir.

Wolowski: A couple. I guess one's for, um . . . Okay, so, um, GrandStay Hospitality, is that a subsidiary of, like, Hinckley? Is that a . . .

Seibert: Uh, no it's not. GrandStay Hospitality, LLC, is actually a franchise organization. They have currently 27 properties that are open, primarily, up here in the Midwest. Uh, they originally started up in St. Cloud. Subsequently now, they've spread throughout the state of Minnesota into Iowa and into Wisconsin as well. So it's a relatively young franchise system, but it is a, definitely, a franchise system.

(Interruption in recording due to a temporary power outage.

Mr. Seibert was asked by Commissioner Wolowski about the language that GrandStay offers extended stays. She asked the length of extended stays.

Mr. Seibert responded that an extended stay is typically three to four nights, sometimes up to a week.

Power was restored and the transcript of the recording continues below.)

Seibert: . . . so within that, why they definitely have that as part of their, um, uh, varying different properties. The, uh, closest GrandStay, if you'd like to take a look at one is up here in Chisago City. It's, um, a beautiful property and our intent is to be able to work between the two properties, and taking care of overflow guests, and that sort of thing. But, if you wanted to get a feel for what a GrandStay was . . .

Wolowski: Yeah. I just hadn't heard of it before.

Seibert: . . . that would be a way you could go about doing it.

Wolowski: And then I had one more question, um, bear with me. Uh, I was reading here that there will be no alcohol served in the facility, correct?

Seibert: Yeah, that's correct. And, and we've addressed that issue, uh, from the standpoint that, uh, we will have it corded off with a fence, and that sort of thing. So that, again, we can keep in compliance the liquor license that currently exists with the casino. So, uh, we do have that all set up, so that the hotel guests would have to leave the hotel and go into the casino in order to be able to receive a beverage. And vice versa, they can't leave the hotel--or the casino without, you know, dispensing with the beverage.

Wolowski: And will guests be allowed to bring in their own alcohol?

Seibert: Into the hotel? Uh, yes, they could end up potentially doing that. Yes.

Wolowski: Okay.

Seibert: We often wonder what they bring into the hotels so . . .

Wolowski: Yeah. Maybe we don't.

(laughter)

Wolowski: I think that's all I had. Thank you.

Seibert: You're very welcome.

Krebs: Mr. Chair, I have a question. Um, had you read all of the findings of facts and the recommendations, um, that were drafted?

Seibert: Yes, I did.

Krebs: Okay. And you're in agreement with all of those?

Seibert: Yes, we are.

Krebs: Okay. I just have one question on the reciprocal easement agreement. Is that something that rides no matter who owns either of the facilities? That'll be indemnified always, through the . . .

Seibert: Yes. That would be definitely the case. And, currently, what happens is, is that the facility now has one lot, and what we're doing is we're going to separate out that lot, so that we have a separate entity with Aces Hotel. And, uh, the easements that will go with Aces Hotel and, and I delivered that this evening, uh, a little later than I anticipated, but I did end up getting it over to the City. And, uh, basically, what that's going to do is that's going to provide utility easements that go to that lot, as well as an access for ingress and egress, as well as, uh, parking. So there'll be across easement parking, across the entire facility. And, so, it does encompass all of that. But the easements, although, albeit that they are kind of private easements, will still continue to stay with the entire parcel, so that, if, at, for instance, some point down the line, they chose to sell that, they could sell that off and it'd be a private entity.

Krebs: Thank you.

Sternberg: Any further questions? Okay. At this time I'm going to open the hearing to the public. Is there anyone here from the public? Anyone from the public? Please come forward and state your name and address for the record, please.

Hursh: My name is Mike Hursh. Um, I am the principal owner and managing partner of the Chisago Lakes GrandStay. And, um, so I have—I'm quite familiar with GrandStay. I've worked with them probably for four years. We opened March of 2014. And, I guess I don't have anything to contribute other than, uh, if you have questions about GrandStay, I think I have, um, I've visited many of them. I know John Kennedy well. Um, and, so we've partnered with them

since we opened. So if you, if you have questions about GrandStay, um, you know, I'd be open to taking any of them.

Sternberg: Any questions about GrandStay?

Watson: No, sir.

Wolowski: I think I'm good.

Krebs: One more question, Mr. Chair.

Sternberg: Go ahead.

Krebs: Um, do any of your hotels have like conference rooms or like party rooms, like, to hold, like . . .

Hursh: We have, um, they're – some GrandStays have event centers. Uh, they're, you know, large, and they host events. We don't. We're a 51 room –which, is typical for GrandStay. They tend to be a little smaller model. I think the one that's being proposed here is larger than that. Uh, we have a small conference room that can handle probably 20 people. And then we have a room that we kind of call a birthday party room, that's right off our pool, where we have kids come in and have birthday parties.

Krebs: Thank you.

Sternberg: Any other . . .?

Wolowski: I just have one quick question.

Sternberg: Go ahead.

Wolowski: Do you have spa services in your . . .?

Hursh: Do we have what?

Wolowski: Spa services: massage or hair cutting or any kind of thing? Any kind of spa service in your hotel?

Hursh: A sponsor?

Wolowski: Spa. S-p-a.

Hursh: Oh, a spa? Um, we had – the birthday party room was supposed to be an exercise facility, but we have a Anytime Fitness right across the street from us, and, so, we uh . . . That's one of the real advantages of GrandStay, is they're very flexible to the local market. Many, if

you put in a major brand, uh, you have no say so at all. They come in and they dictate just exactly how things are going to be. But GrandStay is very amenable to fitting into the local culture, and to the local needs, um, and very responsive to ownership, so . . .we've, we've had a very good working relationship with them. And you're, any of you are welcome to come up and tour our hotel. It's in Chisago City. So, if you want to walk through a GrandStay, uh, we're, we're kind of their prototype.

Sternberg: Any other questions? Well thank you, sir, for coming in. It's really nice that you came in and talked about the hotel. Anyone else from the public that wants to speak? Okay, at this time, I'm going to close the hearing with the right to reopen if it becomes necessary.

Hearing closed at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary