

CITY OF COLUMBUS
PUBLIC HEARING IN INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY MEETING FORMAT
STATUTES SECTION 13D.021
24-32-22-11-0008, LOT 1, BLOCK 1 NE QUAD 35 SECOND ADDITION,
E & R INVESTMENTS VARIANCE REQUEST – PC22-104
02-02-2022

The 02-02-2022 Public Hearing to consider a variance request from the required 80% masonry design standard to approximately 30% and to vary from the required earth tone color requirements. Further, the variance is requested to consider the installation of decorative lights without the need to meet the requirements of Section 7A-813 (B) in the Mixed Use High-Density (MUHD) district. The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm by Chair Ron Hanegraaf at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Kris King, Barb Bobick and Bob Berens, City Associate Planner Ben Gutknecht and Permit Coordinator Carissa Kranz.

In attendance via interactive technology were City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, and City Council members Rob Busch, Shelly Logren and Sue Wagamon.

Also, in attendance in person were Residents Cindy and Myron Angel, Betty Hanegraaf, and City Council member Janet Hegland and Mayor Jesse Preiner.

The meeting was held in an interactive technology meeting format.

Hanegraaf: Item number 14. On the Agenda. Public Hearing and Discussion 24-32-22-11-0008, Lot 1, Block 1 NE QUAD 35 Second Addition, Variance Request, E & R Investments Greg Hayes, Agenda Pages 1-27 and Enclosure Pages 1-2 and Handout Pages 1-8. At this time, Carissa, would you read the notice as published?

Notice was read at this time by the recording secretary.

Hanegraaf: Thank you Carissa. At this time with the record would Greg Hayes, the applicant representing E & R Investment, acknowledged their presence and state their name and current address. If you could have a seat up there by the microphone.

Hayes: Good evening Planning Commission Chair, members. Greg Hayes representing E & R Investments 23350 County Road 10, Corcoran, Minnesota 55357.

Hanegraaf: Well, thank you Greg it's great you're here tonight. We received your application concerning the two variances or three variance issues regarding your Caribou Cabin site plan application. As a normal protocol and for the record, could you brief us a little about these issues for these variance issues.

Hayes: Yes, I'm here this evening, requesting the variance for the items outlined, which is the less than 80% stone, the Color, the corporate color and the there's a little bit of conflict in the ordinance about the wall mounted coach lights that we discussed quite a bit at the last Planning Commission. So a variance was recommended for those because they're a decorative light, to not have a cut off fixture on them and that's why I'm here tonight. The Caribou Cabin is a corporate design, corporate colors, corporate image, and it's a real, as mentioned before it's a very high quality, very durable

material. Material supplies and product information has been supplied to staff, and it's not a cost structure. It actually costs the same or more to build this design than the ordinance. So that's why we're requesting the variance. I'm happy to expand on any of that if any of the members of Planning Commission so choose.

Hanegraaf: Thank you Greg. Also, for the record, the City Associate Planner Ben Gutknecht prepared a report dated February 1st, 2022, concerning the variance request. Did you receive a copy of this report, and do you have any questions or comments concerning the staff's variance findings or recommendations on page 2 through 6 of the report?

Hayes: No, I do not.

Hanegraaf: Thank you well then, we're going to open up the floor to the Commission members if they have any comments or questions about this variance. Kris?

King: Yes, hi Mr. Hayes. You know, I read your letter and your answer to the questions, and I think one thing I would really like you to address in order to grant a variance you have to meet the practical difficulties. And when I read just your response on those special conditions and circumstances and that. I'm not getting enough feeling of what difficulty there really is there. I think part of it is you're claiming the corporate look at that, but I would really like you to articulate what these difficulties are if we don't pass this, in order to pass this variance.

Hayes: Sure, from a corporate standpoint, it's brand and brand image and the design with the 80% stone would not reflect that brand image and Caribou corporate as you heard at the previous Planning Commission and Council meetings has a lot of branding and efforts and time into their image, so to convey that and project that people see that from a ways away and say "oh, that's a Caribou. Let's go there." I believe the spirit of a variance always is, is does it detract from quality? Does it detract from similar quality facilities and maintain a high vibrance, active commercial area for a City? And this product does that. I don't know if I'm answering that directly?

King: Well, I think you're answering in the fact that it's the Caribou corporate look that you're trying to convey. You know the funny thing is yesterday and I don't know if all you guys had sat through that webinar or if you looked at, it was on, a lot on variances and I think every time we sit through this, we realize sometimes variances are misused. So, for us as a City to grant a variance and I think the City Staff did a very good job of putting together their documentation. But to me the important thing is that our applicant really stresses what the difficulties are. And why we should grant the variance. Because typically, from what I've understand variances are more set with setbacks and in certain things that it really isn't the quality of products, more so it's meeting the difficulties. So again, I think your big thing is you want the corporate look of Caribou. The Caribou Cabin is kind of a new concept that you're going with, and in that, so that's kind of where I'm at.

Hayes: Sure, sure. I think the hardest part for cities is they don't know what every corporation brand or image or materials are, and cities being flexible by offering a variance opportunity allows cities to review and consider that option. I too believe and so does Caribou believe that it's maintaining the highest quality materials and the highest quality design, which then carries through to their product, branding and image. So, you go to Caribou and you're going to get a high-quality product. You know that when you drive through and cities are always concerned about maintaining good buildings, good images

because that projects on everything else that happens in your City and reflects on everybody in the City and the other commercial businesses too.

Hanegraaf: Is that all you have Kris?

King: For now.

Hanegraaf: Bob, do you have anything you want to ask?

Berens: I'm going to pass for now.

Hanegraaf: Barb?

Bobick: Well, my concern is that we created these three mixed use zoning areas to have the highest standards in performance standards and operating early late hours and lighting restrictions. And to me it just doesn't fit, so that's my concern.

Hanegraaf: Do you have any questions for Greg?

Bobick: No.

Hanegraaf: Okay, we'll have that in a discussion afterwards. If nobody has any other questions for Mr. Hayes, we're going to open up the public hearing to the public. Anyone who has an interest in this matter and wants to represent testimony as evidence on the issue, please acknowledge themselves by stating their name and address. So, this goes for everybody present in the Council Chambers here and anybody who may be online or zooming in. So, you have the floor. Anybody who wants to stand up and announce their name and address and speak. Well, having no one coming forth will close the public hearing and open up for discussion by the Planning Commission.

At this time Chair Hanegraaf closed the Public Hearing. Hearing closed at 6:44pm.



Respectfully submitted: Carissa Kranz, Recording Secretary