MINUTES
BLOOMINGTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING - 4:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
109 EAST OLIVE STREET
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

Members present: Mr. Terry Ballantini, Mr. Michael McFarland, Mr. Tyler Noonan, and Chairperson Victoria Harris.

Members absent: Mr. Michael Rivera Jr, and Mr. Richard Vitengruber

Also present: Mr. George Boyle, Assistant Corporation Counsel
Ms. Casey Weeks, Assistant City Planner
Ms. Katie Simpson, City Planner

Ms. Harris called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Ms. Simpson called the roll; with four members present, the Zoning Board of Appeals established a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

MINUTES: The Zoning Board of Appeals reviewed the July 17, 2019 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Ballantini motioned to approve the minutes as corrected. Seconded by Mr. Noonan. The motion to accept the minutes as amended, was unanimously approved, 4-0 by voice vote.

1. **REGULAR AGENDA**

   A. **SP-03-19 Consideration, review and approval of a petition for a special use permit for a Sports/Fitness Establishment in the D-2 Downtown Transition District at 216 E. Grove Street, submitted by Axe Social LLC. (Ward 6).**

   Ms. Simpson gave the staff recommendation in favor of the petition and presented findings. Staff reports how the application applies to the zoning ordinance and whether it fits with the comprehensive plan. Staff is recommending in favor for the petition for the sports and fitness establishment. The primary use would be for ax throwing, but the special use would also allow for dart throwing, badminton, other sports and recreational activities. The property is in the Downtown Transition District. The building was built in the early 1900s and has had various uses including storage, and auto parts sales. The building has been vacant for a few years. Staff is encouraged at the interest in reusing the building and bringing it back to life again. The Sports and fitness use is considered with a Special Use Permit. The Parking lot that serves this building is only half of the lot next door to the building with cross-easement access from US 51. There is also on-street parking on Gridley and Prairie. The Lincoln Parking Deck is within 500 feet to the building with free parking on nights and weekends. The petitioner is only developing a portion of the building. The total parking required is 36 spaces on site and 3 bicycle spaces.

There are established ax throwing leagues with as throwing establishments in Peoria and Chicago. There are established safety regulations, rules, and guidelines with the various sport leagues. Offices buffer the building to the east from residences. The *Bring It On Bloomington* Comprehensive Plan suggests that the City encourage development downtown and reuse of existing structures. It encourages business retention and recruitment in the downtown with a variety of uses and amenities for downtown residents and workers. The Standards are met with access to utilities and no new infrastructure. The owner will need to get a building permit to make sure the codes are met.

Petitioner was sworn in, Daniel Kelley with Grove Street Social. (Emailed exterior image for the record. Exhibit A)

The demographic is young to old multidimensional entertainment venue. An arena sport area with tailgate games like corn hole, 10 pin pigskin, and others. There are 5 spokes within the space: Ax throwing, arena games, karaoke rooms and virtual reality pit. We are applying for a beer and wine only liquor license to have a bar as well. It will take up about 12,000 square feet of space. We hope to have business hours Tuesday through Saturday at first then to expand. The closest ax throwing facility is in Peoria. There will be exterior site improvements including landscaping by the building owner.

There will be a closed toe shoe policy and the ability to rent shoes if needed. We will follow most industry standards with additional standards. Most facilities have fenced off lanes with an open front. We will have the lanes closed off like batting cages. Each minor will have to be accompanied by an adult. Another industry standard will not allow intoxicated individuals to participate. There will be a two drink maximum. We hope to be open by early January. The facility provides all the equipment with a total of ten targets. There are number of different games that are played by the different leagues.

Zoning Board will give a recommendation to City Council. Vote on the findings:

1. that the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the special use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare; Amended that the industry standards including The World Ax Throwing League and the National Ax Throwing Federation will be followed. Mr. Terry Ballantini - Yes, Mr. Michael McFarland - Yes, Mr. Michael Rivera Jr - Yes, Mr. Tyler Noonan - Yes, Mr. Richard Vitengruber - Yes, and Chairperson Victoria Harris – Yes, approved 6-0.

2. that the special use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood; Mr. Terry Ballantini - Yes, Mr. Michael McFarland - Yes, Mr. Tyler Noonan - Yes, and Chairperson Victoria Harris – Yes, approved 4-0.

3. **that the establishment of the special use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the zoning district;** Mr. Terry Ballantini - Yes, Mr. Michael McFarland - Yes, Mr. Tyler Noonan - Yes, and Chairperson Victoria Harris – Yes, approved 4-0.

4. **that adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or will be provided;** Mr. Terry Ballantini - Yes, Mr. Michael McFarland - Yes, Mr. Tyler Noonan - Yes, and Chairperson Victoria Harris – Yes, approved 4-0.

5. that adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets; Mr. Terry

Ballantini - Yes, Mr. Michael McFarland - Yes, Mr. Tyler Noonan - Yes, and Chairperson Victoria Harris – Yes, approved 4-0.

6. that the special use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may be modified by the Council pursuant to the recommendations of the Board of Zoning Appeals. (Ordinance No. 2006-137). Mr. Terry Ballantini - Yes, Mr. Michael McFarland - Yes, Mr. Tyler Noonan - Yes, and Chairperson Victoria Harris – Yes, approved 4-0.

Vote on condition to add that the Grove Street Social will adhere to the industry safety standards established by The World Ax Throwing League and the National Ax Throwing Federation will be followed. Mr. Terry Ballantini - Yes, Mr. Michael McFarland - Yes, Mr. Tyler Noonan - Yes, and Chairperson Victoria Harris – Yes, approved 4-0.

Vote to approve the Special Use permit with the safety condition. Mr. Noonan made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Ballantini. Mr. Terry Ballantini - Yes, Mr. Michael McFarland - Yes, Mr. Tyler Noonan - Yes, and Chairperson Victoria Harris – Yes, approved 4-0.

2. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Sign Ordinance revisions/update - Joint meeting on September 11th. The sign ordinance survey will be online by the end of the week with a copy of the draft ordinance and sign presentation.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Introduction of New Commissioner – Michael McFarland recently moved back to Bloomington from Normal where he served on the Normal Planning Commission for almost ten years.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ballantini motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Noonan. The motion was approved by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 4:44 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Casey Weeks
Assistant City Planner