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Akron City Planning Commission

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Agency: Akron City Planning Commission

Date: Feb. 16, 2024

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Summary

At the Feb. 16 meeting of the Akron City Planning Commission, three conditional use permit applications were considered. All three were unanimously approved by the commission, with one raising some opposition and discussion. The commission also voted on permit renewals.

- The [Bath Manor Special Care Center](#) at [📍 2330 Smith Rd](#) in Northwest Akron was granted approval to install two hard surface parking lots to replace existing gravel lots. The lots will need a stormwater handling plan.
- [LKQ Corporation](#) (auto salvage and recycling) was granted approval to install a 50 to 75-space parking lot at [📍 1483 Triplett Blvd](#) in East Akron. This lot will connect LKQ's current operations to their recently purchased property at [📍 1480 E Archwood Ave](#). Ward 10 Council Member Sharon Connor appeared in person to speak in favor of this request. A resident who lives nearby and his father raised general complaints about noise and the appearance of the scrapyard. These complaints were outside the scope of the application for the parking lot, according to officials. Commission members advised the residents to share their noise complaints with their council member.
- [Summit Toyota](#) (on [Vernon Odom Boulevard](#)) applied to replace their existing sign at [📍 1570 Frederick Blvd](#) in West Akron with a larger but lower sign. The new sign is comparable in size to the recently approved sign at the nearby [Van DeVere dealership](#). (City Zoning Manager Mike Antenucci noted that there are no plans to approve signage any larger in the future.)
- Lastly, five renewals were voted on by the commission. The petition numbers were not provided in the meeting packet or read during the meeting. All were approved unanimously.

Follow-Up Questions

- How can a resident lodge an objection to a permit request if they're unable to attend the meeting where the petition is under consideration?
- Can city staff provide a list of renewals in the meeting notes so the audience can see what is being considered?

Notes

[Agenda can be found here.](#)

Akron City Planning Commission meeting

Feb. 16

Start time: 9 a.m.

Adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Location: City Council chambers, [166 S. High Street](#)

In attendance: 11 audience members, four commission members, city staff: Kyle Julien (director of planning), Mike Antenucci (zoning manager) and three others

1. Read out the meeting procedure, swore in anyone planning to speak.
2. Petition of Alzheimer Special Care Center, LP, for a Conditional Use to construct additional parking for [Bath Manor Special Care Center](#) at [2330 Smith Rd](#) in Northwest Akron.
 - a. Presentation by city staff: Replace two existing gravel parking lots (18 and 22 parking places) with an asphalt hard surface.
 - i. Lots have existed for at least 10 years (2005 and 2011) but were never submitted to the city for zoning approval.
 - ii. No complaints in those years.
 - iii. Requesting formal approval for conditional use now because of plans to install asphalt. Currently zoned for single-family residence.
 - iv. Planning staff recommends approval with conditions, particularly related to stormwater treatment.
 - b. In favor:
 - i. Chris Schmit, Copley resident, engineer on behalf of applicant
 1. Gravel now, looking to improve with asphalt.
 2. Schmit had a question regarding stormwater management condition. Are they looking for a basin?

- a. Zoning Manager Antenucci responded that they will need to follow all the building codes that will be reviewed when they submit that plan.
 - c. Opposed: none
 - d. Questions from commission: none
 - e. Move to approve. Unanimous yes votes to approve.
- 3. Petition of [LKQ Corporation](#) for a Conditional Use to expand an auto salvage business at [1483 Triplett Blvd](#) in East Akron.
 - a. Presentation by city staff: install parking lot with 50 to 75 spaces on land currently occupied by blighted structures.
 - i. Recently, LKQ received City Council approval (Ordinance No. 21-2023) to expand their auto salvage business onto the former Goodyear research site at [1480 E Archwood Ave](#). LKQ is leasing the present strip of land to consolidate operations and provide access to the former Goodyear site. While the buildings have not yet been demolished there, LKQ's environmental compliance team is working with that lessee and Ohio EPA for approval of the reuse plan, with an anticipated completion date in April.
 - ii. Planning staff recommends approval with standard conditions regarding landscaping, stormwater management planning, signage and others specified in the [meeting notes](#).
 - b. In favor:
 - i. Brian Bigler, representing LKQ
 1. Question regarding the conditions that this petition be renewed every year for the first three years. This wasn't a requirement for the former Goodyear property. LKQ is investing \$4 million, so they need to know what conditions would cause revocation. Can this be removed?
 2. Antenucci said the renewal is a standard check. Each year the city will check on conditions and report to the commission. ("It's a driveby" with status updates he said.)
 - a. These renewals are rarely a problem, and usually because of a bad actor he said.
 - b. If a renewal was voted down, the conditional use process would restart, he said.
 3. Bigler said he understood but wanted this conversation on

the record.

4. Updates

- a. LKQ will be purchasing this property, not leasing
- b. They have 215 employees.
- c. Previously [Western Reserve Land Conservancy](#) was opposed due to concerns about the impact to Haley's Run Trail. LKQ is donating a portion of land to protect the trail and will donate \$10,000 for trail cleanup.

ii. Paul Harris, IRG Realty Advisors, Medina resident

1. Look forward to continuing to work on this project for LKQ

iii. Ward 10 Council Member Sharon Connor

1. Expressed support for the project.
2. Has heard concerns from some neighbors.
3. Haley's Run is protected.

c. Opposed

i. Earl Henson, Gary Road resident, son's house is on Salem Avenue.

1. Against LKQ expansion. Activity shakes ground when vehicles are dropped. Not giving consideration to residents. Shouldn't be expanding any further. Hours of operation not considered, 4:30 a.m. It should abide by noise ordinance.

ii. Robert Henson, Salem Avenue

1. Earl Henson's son. In addition to Henson's reasons, no one wants a junkyard out their front door.
2. Will there be a sound wall? Trees? He asked how he'll sell a house by a junkyard?

d. Questions from commission

i. A commission member asked if the current petition was just about parking. The current petition has no impact on his concerns, he said.

1. Robert Henson said he was unable to attend a previous meeting regarding approval of the former Goodyear property expansion.

ii. A commission member advised Robert Henson to bring noise concerns to his council member.

iii. LKQ representative Bigler said the business operates three shifts, 24 hours per day. Not all operations are outside. Expansion plans will not change any operating processes or times. He added:

1. The business has been operating at this location for 40 years.
2. It's a clean business with no fluids in the vehicles.
3. Tires are picked up three times per week. There are no more

than 150 tires on property at a time.

4. The current plan is for a chain link fence. Can add boards to reduce visibility.. However, a solid fence is less feasible because of wind.
5. Haley's Run serves as a buffer too.

- e. Motion to approve was made, and the commission voted unanimously to approve.

4. Petition of [Summit Toyota](#) for a Conditional Use to place an off-premises high-rise sign at 1570 Frederick Blvd in West Akron.
 - a. Presentation of issue by city staff:
 - i. Replace existing LED sign (conditionally approved in 2011) with larger but lower LED sign
 1. Current sign is 15'x15' and 70' high. Replacement sign 19'x20' and 53' high. The new sign has an 86% increase in sign face.
 2. Sign will only advertise dealership.
 3. This request is consistent with recent decisions along that I-77 corridor (comparable in size to recent approval of nearby Van Devere sign).
 - ii. Recommend approval.
 - b. In favor
 - i. Randy Snyder, Stow resident, representing a sign company in Kent and is project lead for Summit Toyota.
 1. Submitted visual plans prior to meeting.
 - a. Two packets were found and shared with the commission
 2. Somebody asked if it's lower because it's heavier.
 - a. Snyder said yes and that Summit Toyota wants to stay in line with competitors. The current sign is too high and bringing it down will make it easier to see.
 - c. Opposed: none
 - d. Questions from commission:None
 - e. Motion to approve was made and the vote to approve was unanimous.
 5. Renewals: Votes on conditional permits with renewal requirements.
 - a. Five renewals were voted on. No details were included in meeting notes or

read out in the meeting. All were approved unanimously.

Adjourned 9:35 a.m. (After the meeting, the two residents who spoke in opposition to LKQ's petition talked with Connor, who listened to their concerns.)

Notes to reader: Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@signalakron.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.