



Meeting Minutes
Planning and Zoning Commission

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

5:00 PM

Council Chamber

4:30 - 5:00 PM - Work Session for Agenda Review

Chairman Mercer opened the work session at 4:30 p.m.

City Planner, Jessica Rees, presented Case PZ 25-002 via PowerPoint. Applicant Laura Lee Gunn, with Masterplan, representing deBoulle Diamonds requesting the creation of a Planned Development District with a detailed site plan for the property located at 6821 Preston Road. An image was shown of the two hundred (200) foot buffer around the property. Property owners within this buffer received notice of the public hearing by mail. Of twenty-two (22) notices mailed out, six (6) responses were received back. Four (4) were in favor and two (2) were opposed of the creation of the Planned Development District.

Mrs. Rees displayed the current structure's height, the ordinance's max height and the proposed height of the new addition to the structure.

Call to Order

Chairman Blair Mercer called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

Introduction of Commission Members

Present: (7) Chairman Blair Mercer, John Walsh, Rusty Goff, Steve Hudson, Thomas Russell, Brian Smoot and Duncan Fulton

Seated: (5) Chairman Blair Mercer, John Walsh, Rusty Goff, Steve Hudson and Thomas Russell

Excused: (3) Ben Biddle, James Bristow and David Delorenzo

City Council Liaison: (1) Melissa Rieman

Staff in Attendance

Jessica Rees, City Planner
Mary Oates, Community Development Technician
Rob Dillard, City Attorney

[PZ 25-002](#)

PZ 25-002: Applicant Laura Lee Gunn, with Masterplan, representing Deboulle Diamonds requesting the creation of a Planned Development District with a detailed site plan for the property located at 6821 Preston Road.

Chairman Blair Mercer read Case PZ 25-002

City Planner, Jessica Rees, presented Case PZ 25-002 via PowerPoint. Applicant Laura Lee Gunn, with Masterplan, representing deBoulle Diamonds requesting the creation of a Planned Development District with a detailed site plan for the property located at 6821 Preston Road. An image was shown of the two hundred (200) foot buffer around the property. Property owners within this buffer received notice of the public hearing by mail. Of twenty-two (22) notices mailed out, six (6) responses were received back. Four (4) were in favor and two (2) were opposed of the creation of the Planned Development District.

Mrs. Rees shows an aerial view of the property explaining that there is general retail to the north and the south and the current property is also general retail with residential behind it. The renderings of the proposed modifications was shown as well. The next rendering shows what is happening to the site. The existing building that sits at 12,017 square feet. The second story expansion over the existing parking lot, the exterior demolition that will be done to the structure and then the rest of the modifications that they are proposing. The building will increase to 16,552 square feet.

There were a few issues that staff has that were brought up by the opposition letters that staff did receive. The height is the first one. The general retail zoning ordinance does have a max height of forty (40) feet. The existing structure which is legal nonconforming, sits at forty-six (46) feet and the proposed addition will increase that height to forty-nine (49) feet. The existing structure does meet setbacks that as called out in the general retail zoning ordinance and is even set back even further than some of the requirements. The rear setback for the existing structure is roughly 54.5 feet. The zoning ordinance requirement is 12.6 feet and the proposed addition rear setback would be two (2) feet from the rear property line. Regarding parking, the existing structure totals 12,017 square feet requiring fifty-two (52) parking spaces by code. The property currently only has eighteen (18) parking spaces on site. The proposed structure will increase to 16,552 square feet requiring sixty-seven (67) parking spaces. The addition to the building will eliminate on site parking spaces, reducing from eighteen (18) to thirteen (13). So the addition to the building will eliminate some existing parking spaces on site. They will also have to do some re-striping in the parking lot because some of the existing parking spaces do not meet city standards today. So, with making those all fit correctly, there will only be thirteen (13) parking spaces on private property. We did briefly discuss the parking spaces that are in the right of way over on Grassmere and Preston. Since those are not fully on private property, those are considered public parking spaces that the city has and those are available to anyone in the public. Therefore, those spaces would not be included in the parking calculation.

Staff has voiced the concerns with this item based on those comments that

were received from the neighborhood. Staff recommends that the board conduct a public hearing, hear those comments, have a discussion and forward a recommendation onto City Council.

Dallas Cothrum with Masterplan representing the DeBoulle family addressed the board stating that if there are small things that are wrong, they would rather take the time to get everything right. This started because the owner has outgrown the building in terms of the back office people. He also stated that the DeBoulle family wants to keep their business in University Park so he started in Snider Plaza in 1983 and has stayed here. Mr. DeBoulle is the second best sales tax payer in University Park. Having Mr. DeBoulle stay and bringing with him this new Patek boutique which will help expand his business were the driving forces. Dallas showed a parking count of parking spaces being used and different times of the day. Dallas showed a slide comparing the current DeBoulles, Snider Plaza and the proposed DeBoulles with Patek sales tax per acre. He also showed the tax increase with the City Property tax and the HPISD Property tax.

Dallas shows the renderings from Omniplan for the proposed addition. Including the inside entertainment space that they have already been having events there for private purposes only. Letters were sent out to everyone within 1,000 feet of the property from Dallas and the DeBoulles. The letters sent out were sent out to invite the neighbors to come and hear their proposal and voice their opinions. Only 8 out of 60 or 70 attended the meeting at the store. Additional phone calls have come in to Dallas and Laura Lee and they have sent out the packet and had conversations with them.

Dennis DeBoulle , CEO of DeBoulle Diamonds, addressed Board Member Walsh's question of whether or not they have purposely parked a car on Grassmere to appear open. Mr. DeBoulle stated that they will take his and an employee car and park it in the front so that people will know that they are open because they do not have an open sign on the building.

Chairman Mercer confirmed with Dallas that they will be losing five (5) spots. Dallas confirmed and stated that they would be getting a licensing agreement with the city for the public spots on Grassmere and Preston.

Dallas also stated that they dumpster that they are required to have, they do not need because they do not produce enough trash to need a dumpster and would be able to get one parking space back if a dumpster was not there.

Board Member Goff asked if the neighbor directly behind the property across the alley came to the neighborhood meeting seeing as this neighbor had the most to say as an opposition. Dallas stated that the neighbor did not come to the meeting, however, he did come to the store and meet with Mr. DeBoulle personally.

Dennis DeBoulle stated that during the meeting he had with the neighbor, his main concerns were, the height of the new addition blocking the sun, the top window being able to see into the neighbors window, the turn into the alley

would get tighter and he was opposed to the dumpster being added.

Dallas stated that if they needed to move the windows, they could do that.

William Cravens, the son of William Cravens, came up to speak in opposition of the proposal. Mr. Cravens stated that he and his family owned and developed 4115 Grassmere since 1997. He states that he and his father has two (2) chief complaints. First of which is the parking. Reducing parking but adding square footage does not make sense to him. Also, he states that the parking on Grassmere is already very congested to the point that residents have to acquire a parking permit to park on the street overnight. Mr. Cravens says that as the owner and manager of that property, it is already very difficult to get delivery trucks through that street to accept deliveries of appliances as it is in its current position today. Their feeling is that the increased square footage will further hinder resident's ability to freely move through that street. The other concern is the setback and height of the proposed building. With the building going to forty-nine (49) feet, that will keep the sun from coming onto their property where it is already hard enough to get grass to grow on that property. Regarding the setback, they are proposing a setback of two (2) feet when the standard is 12.5. It would make it difficult for the residents and Mr. Cravens when he is managing the property to make the turn into the garage with that being the only access the residents have to the garage. They also have an issue with construction of the addition and how it will disrupt Grassmere and the alley. There is not any area for staging during the construction. The Cravens were not apart of the meeting that DeBoules held because they discovered an anomaly with their address on DCAD (Dallas County Appraisal District). If they would have gotten the invite, they would have gone to the meeting and voiced their concerns there as well. Mr. Cravens states that they are hoping that the board denies the request.

Dallas states that they will have to shuttle the construction workers during the construction. They do not currently have a plan because they do not have a company assigned yet.

Chairman Mercer summed up the comments made by the board. Windows in the rear will be looked at so that they are not looked on the triplex across the alley. The architect will take a look at lowering the height of the structure. Gather more information about the licensing agreement for the public parking spots. Regarding events, the board will make sure that staff properly writes into the PD that the events are solely in use for the owner. And staff look into a dumpster waiver.

Mr. Rob Dillard, City Attorney, confirmed that the public hearing should be tabled and continued.

A motion was made by Board Member Walsh to table case PZ 25-002 until the next scheduled meeting on April 8, 2025 with the consideration that members expect the applicant to answer the questions that were proposed by the chairman along with any other questions they learn about from neighbors and bring any other materials brought by the architect and regarding parking. The motion was seconded by Board Member Russell. The motion was carried by a

unanimous vote.

Consider the previous meeting minutes with or without corrections:

[25-054](#)

P&Z Meeting Minutes - 01/14/2025

A motion was made by Board Member Hudson, seconded by Board Member Walsh, that the minutes be approved. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT: With there being no further business before the Board, Chairman Mercer adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

Approved by:

Acting Chairman, James Bristow

Date