

September 13, 2005

To the Honorable Common Council
Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development Committee
City of Milwaukee

RE: File No.'s 050468 and 050469

Dear Committee Members:

These ordinances referred to City Plan Commission relate to the change in zoning from Industrial Heavy (IH) to a General Planned Development (GPD) and the first phase of the Detailed Planned Development (DPD) known as Forest County Potawatomi Legacy District, on land located on the South Side of West Canal Street and West of South 16th Street, in the 8th Aldermanic District. These ordinances will approve zoning standards and buildings for casino expansion and parking facilities for Potawatomi Bingo Casino in the Menomonee Valley.

The existing facility is a 3-story building that houses the casino owned and operated by the Forest County Potawatomi Community of Wisconsin. The facility contains approximately 254,400 total gross square feet and includes casino space, two restaurants, a sports bar, a bingo hall, a theatre, as well as support spaces such as offices, employee spaces, kitchens, storage, docks and warehouses. The existing parking structure is a 4-story concrete structure located to the south of the casino and is currently undergoing renovation to add two more floors, with approximately 600 additional parking spaces.

The first phase of the detailed plan includes new construction on all three levels of the existing facility, which will create additional area for casino space and additional restaurants. A portion of the existing casino will be renovated along with the creation of additional employee and office space. A new 1,900 car parking structure will be located to the south of the casino and will connect to the existing parking structure. A new vehicular bridge will connect the structures to the existing James E. Groppi Unity Bridge (former 16th Street Viaduct). The square footage of new construction will be approximately 518,500 s.f. and the total facility square footage will be approximately 772,900 s.f. (including a below grade valet parking structure).

The proposed addition will be a 3-story building. The floor levels and roof lines will all align with existing floors, which creates a wall height of approximately 65 feet. There will be portions of the new construction that will extend higher than the existing structure to approximately 75-80 feet with the same material scoring pattern and some display window areas. Materials will be brick, pre-cast concrete, terracotta, copper, stone and glass/aluminum, matching the existing facility's exteriors, and will also include back-lighted glass panels, metal panels, sign banners, electronic displays, exterior art and building features, skylights and illuminated advertisement panels and signage, decorative panels/features, and 3 dimensional elements, all designed to create a visually exciting façade that is also compatible with the existing architecture. Portions of the exterior façade of the existing garage will be enhanced with new materials, signage, color and lighting.

Currently, Potawatomi Bingo Casino employs approximately 1,900 people, more than half of which are racial and ethnic minorities. The proposed expansion will add approximately 1,000 more employment opportunities.

The expanded and new parking structures will have a capacity of approximately 3,700 cars with the below grade valet parking structure accommodating 365 additional cars. There are three existing surface lots in the development that will accommodate another 1,400 cars and will be used primarily for employees and some overflow valet parking. The total parking capacity for the development will be approximately 5,400 cars. Bus parking is located to the West of the new parking structure and the loading dock area will be extended to the south property line across from the new parking structure.

Trees and shrubs will be located to the north, west and south of the new parking structure. A portion (84 spaces) of the existing surface lot on the southeast corner of the development will be converted to turf with trees added to the south of the lot. Minimal landscaping is located at the northeast and southeast corners of the casino addition and around the southwest corner of the casino addition areas that will be extended into the abandoned cul-de-sac. The general plan erroneously refers to the zoning code, Chp. 295-703 for landscaping standards.

The general planned development refers to Chp. 295-907.3.I-3, the master sign program section of the Code. While there isn't a limit on the number of directional signs, the master sign program still limits the maximum area. The proposed directional signs exceed the maximum area of 9 square feet. Instead the general planned development should outline the standards for all signage types signage and maximum number on the development site.

The detailed planned development proposes one main Type A freestanding identification sign along W. Canal Street and various directional signs along W. Canal Street, W. Potawatomi Circle, and the 16th St. Viaduct. These range in size from 5.5 feet to 8 feet tall and approximately 2.5 feet wide. Several special lanterns are located along the drop off drive aisle and W. Potawatomi Circle. Two freestanding signs are located along W. Potawatomi Circle indicating the employee entrance and loading dock areas. Parking garage identification signs are located above the garage West, North and East entrances. Details for the electronic sign board above the parking garage entrance at the bridge have not been provided yet. Site signage details include both the new addition and parking garage and the existing facilities. All signs are consistent in design and reflect the design of the casino buildings.

On September 12, 2005, a public hearing was held and at that time there was no opposition to the proposed amendment. During the public hearing, letters of support were submitted to the Commission, the architect provided a presentation, and the civil engineer discussed the consistency with the Menomonee Valley plan. Other items such as bus transit, hardscape to green space and heat recovery units were discussed. Since this proposed zoning change is consistent with surrounding uses and the Menomonee Valley plan, the City Plan Commission at its regular meeting on September 12, 2005 recommended approval of the ordinances with the following conditions: 1. Revise and correct both GPD and DPD Owner's Written Narrative to remove references to the Master Sign Program and Landscape standards and add sign standards to the GPD that are specific to Potawatomi's plan of operation. 2. Revise DPD Exhibit to include sign specifications for the proposed electronic board sign above the parking garage entrance, including dimensions, illumination, materials and timing of display.

Sincerely,

Rocky Marcoux
Executive Secretary
City Plan Commission of Milwaukee