



**Solarium Additions of Permitted Use, PDP190016  
Neighborhood Meeting Summary  
2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting**

**Neighborhood Meeting Date: January 29, 2020**

**City Staff – Attendees:**

JC Ward – Senior City Planner, Neighborhood Services – Meeting Facilitator  
Meaghan Overton – Senior City Planner, Planning & Development Services  
David Betley – Manager, Civil Engineering  
Kelly Smith – Senior Environmental Planner  
Justin Moore – Code Compliance Lead Inspector  
Jay Hernandez – Code Compliance Lead Inspector  
Jason Holland – City Planner, Planning & Development Services

**Owner/Applicant Representative:**

Chelsea Gressman

**Notes on information presented by city staff:**

Ms. Ward began the meeting by providing an overview of the meeting agenda and explaining where the proposal is in the review process.

**Notes on presentation provided by the applicant group:**

- Information was presented about the history of the property by Mr. John Clarke, who built the structure with his wife. The building was constructed in 1978, initially without the atrium space. The property was used as a residence and photography studio business. The property was later sold, and the new owner used the property as housing for foreign students. Mr. Clarke explained that in the 1990's, the property started having weddings. The property was also used as a massage studio and also had weddings. Mr. Clarke noted that when the property was purchased by the current ownership, there were two contracts for weddings, and that it is important to have a management plan in place for weddings.

- Ms. Gressman explained that four Additions of Permitted Use (APUs) were originally proposed at the first neighborhood meeting in June. The first two APUs were dropped. The two APUs still proposed are “Lodging” and “Small Scale Reception Center”. Ms. Gressman presented the City Land Use Code definition of Small Scale Reception Center. Ms. Gressman explained that the goal is to bring the building to its fullest potential and highest and best use, and that that they did not have operational details for the proposed uses with the first neighborhood meeting. Ms. Gressman also explained that because the Land Use Code does not differentiate between small scale reception centers based on the size or frequency of events, the Solarium is being held to the same standards as a large-scale event center like the Hilton or Marriot, which may often host hundreds of guests.
- Information was presented by the Manager at Solarium. He explained that the business was being rebranded from a Hostel to a Boutique Hotel. Dorm rooms are no longer proposed, which were available for \$29.00 per night. With the rebranding, the cheapest room will be about \$100.00 per night.
- Detailed information was presented outlining the operations and restrictions for wedding events in conjunction with the proposed Small Scale Reception Center Addition of Permitted Use. A maximum of 75 people is now proposed for events (previously 150), and the lodging will only be occupied by the event party during the event. Weddings are proposed only on Saturdays, with a maximum of one wedding per week. A detailed schedule was presented for a wedding event day, with the schedule spanning from 10:30 AM to 10:00 PM. The event would move indoors by 7 PM. Rehearsal dinners would be held elsewhere. Neighbors could be notified of the events if requested. An Event Manager would be present at all times. Alcohol would be limited to beer and wine; no liquor, with alcohol sales ending at 8:30 PM. Off-site parking is proposed at St. Luke’s Episcopal for the events.

**Questions/Comments and Answers (answers provided by the applicant group unless otherwise noted).**

- **Are business retreats proposed?**

Considering, but not now.

- **Have the room rate increases been successful?**

Yes, so far.

- **What will have the most emphasis, the hotel or event center?**

- Won’t be able to survive only on lodging
- Lodging is the primary use.
- Both are vital.

- **Can you survive doing one wedding per week?**

Confident, yes.

- **What are the number of hotel rooms? How many are there now?**

There are several vacant/unused rooms now.

- **What are the zoning requirements in the L-M-N zone (Low Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood)?**

Jason Holland, City Planner:

A “Bed & Breakfast” use is permitted in L-M-N which allows a maximum of 6 rooms/12 guests.

This is why they are asking for the APU for the “Lodging” use because there are more rooms than this.

- **How many rooms are there now?**

Response provided: The building has the capacity for, and the Solarium is requesting, 16 lodging units.

- **I have concerns about parking in the area and neighborhood impact – going from 6 rooms to 16.**

- We meet the parking requirement for the lodging use with parking on the property and we’re making improvements to the parking lot.
- There seems to be enough land for the lodging parking on the site. Also, if needed, there’s an easement along the west side of the building on the adjacent property to the west.
- There were overflow parking issues related to yoga use. The yoga instructor was popular. We dropped the yoga use from the APUs proposed.

- **Are these existing rooms or new construction?**

- We purchased the building with 14 rooms.
- We’re not adding to the building.

- **I have a question about the Parking Study that was submitted: premised on 150 guests, data was provided regarding the number of trips that would be generated.**

We’ve reduced the number of guests from 150 to 75 to address neighborhood concerns.

- **The study says that there would be 2.5 guests per vehicle—where did that number come from?**

David Betley – City of Fort Collins Civil Engineering Manager:

Usually the trips are based on standard calculations from the ITE Trip Generation Manual (Institute of Transportation Engineers).

- **The study says ITE standards were not used/available.**

At the meeting, City Planner Jason Holland explained that additional information would be provided in these meeting notes to respond to the is question. The following response is provided by the Applicant group:

Question: Why does the Parking Study indicate that the Owner provided guidance to the consultant on what parking ratio should be applied to model the proposed Small Scale Event Center Use?

Response provided: To clarify, the language in the parking study regarding the Owner providing guidance on the parking ratio was simply indicating that the Owner provided information regarding the

type and size of events proposed at the site. However, and based on this information from the Owner, the consultant relied upon Federal Highway Administration guidance and the City of Fort Collins Traffic Operations Engineer to determine a reasonable parking rate for the intended use. Namely, the City Traffic Operations Engineer supplied the range of ratios typically used for special events. The design reports will be updated to better reflect the analysis and source of the ratio utilized.

- **Parking attendant – will they make sure people don't park where they shouldn't? Can this be added to their duties?**

Yes, referring to slide 19 that was presented, Ms. Gressman explained that this would be part of the parking attendant's duties.

- **What is the buffer area shown along Spring Creek? How much visual buffer from trail?**
  - The "kidney" shaped area to the east would be a buffer separating the event area from the residents to the east.
  - The "kidney" shaped area to the west is the outdoor event area.
  - These areas would be separated from the creek with landscaping. We're working with city staff to determine the requirements.
  - More grasses will be planted, potentially. Adding to the existing separation from the creek, not subtracting from, not removing trees.

Kelly Smith – City of Fort Collins Senior Environmental Planner explained that an Ecological Characterization Study is required (ECS). The ECS requires a buffer from the creek and city staff is waiting for an updated ECS to further evaluate the proposed buffer.

- **Last meeting – said you needed to do something different. What if people want a hotel room on Saturday?**

The lodging rooms would only be for guests on Saturdays associated with wedding events. There will only be Saturday weddings.

- **How will you guarantee 75 guests?**
  - We would count them.
  - The couple signs an agreement with our event company.
  - The event can be ended if the agreement is not met.
  - Clarity with couples early in the process regarding the terms of the agreement.

- **Will there be an event manager on site?**

Response provided: There would be an event manager on site the entire time during the hours of operation for an event.

- **Are the shuttle times fixed?**

Response provided: The Solarium does not anticipate ceremony times being late enough to change the shuttle schedule at the end of events, but the shuttle start times could vary if the ceremony time were moved to earlier.

- **Is there an instrument used to codify limitations/restrictions?**

Jason Holland, City of Fort Collins Planner:

- This is documented on site plan as notes outlining the operating restrictions/conditions.
- The plans are signed by the city and property owner.
- The plans can be amended but would need to go through the development review process if amendments are proposed.

- **How do violations work?**

Jason Holland, City of Fort Collins Planner:

We can take enforcement action.

- **What happens if the property is sold?**

Jason Holland, City of Fort Collins Planner:

Lodging and event center would be specific to property and are not limited to the current owner.

- **Music—is there a DJ inside or bands?**

No bands. A DJ or stringed instruments (1-3 instruments).

- **If sold, would the maximum number of events still apply?**

Yes.

- **Is moving the event inside at 7:00 PM realistic? In summer, people want to be outside.**

- The building is beautiful.
- This will be regulated.
- When the event moves inside, people could still go outside (make a phone call, etc.).

- **What impact will this have on future development in the area? Can other properties petition for rezoning? Petition for a commercial use? Would approval influence future proposals?**

Jason Holland, City of Fort Collins Planner:

- The other properties could be redeveloped but have to follow the land use code. These would be reviewed separately and are not part of this proposal.
- Staff doesn't support rezoning individual parcels in the area. If use is allowed, other proposals can submit a development proposal for that use. (If the use isn't permitted, then the Addition of Permitted Use process would apply).

- **Is the neighbor to the east in favor of this?**

- The buffer zone “kidney” to the east is meant to address concerns.
- We have been in regular contact with this neighbor.

- **If sold, would the number of events still apply?**

Yes.

- **Noise complaints, how are these handled?**

Justin Moore – Code Compliance Lead Inspector:

- In this zone district, 8:00 PM to 7:00 AM are quiet hours, limited to 50 decibels. 55 decibels are allowed from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM.
- We measure with a decimeter at nearest property line in public Right of Way.

- **Will sound be mitigated during events?**

We will have our own meter and will measure sound levels at events.

- **Will there be fire pits?**

No.

- **How would criteria get changed, is this with a Modification? Frequency or size changes – would there be a public hearing/notice?**

Jason Holland, City of Fort Collins Planner:

- If a change is proposed to what is approved, this would be an amendment.
- Minor Amendments are reviewed by staff, Major Amendments would go back to the original decision maker and would require a new public hearing.
- Major vs. Minor would depend on what is changing. A change in character would be a Major Amendment.

- **Can major vs minor changes be written in as conditions?**

Jason Holland, City of Fort Collins Planner:

- If applicant and decision maker agreed to do that, could consider options like that.
- This would require legal guidance from the City Attorney’s Office.

- **Who is the Decision maker?**

Jason Holland, City of Fort Collins Planner:

- Two hearings for the Additions of Permitted Use:
- P&Z – provides a recommendation to City Council for the APUs.
- City Council is the decision maker for the APUs.
- City Council can approve, deny, or approve the APUs with conditions.

- **Parking agreement with St. Luke's—What is the contingency?**
  - We currently have a letter of intent with St. Luke's, and then will negotiate a lease of the parking lot.
  - Events are planned in advance.
    - Can rent lot at Bauer Elementary as a back-up.
- **A neighbor attending the meeting discussed train noise and how such noise wakes this particular neighbor up notwithstanding being farther away. The neighbor asked if events at the Solarium would wake him up in the same way.**

No.

Senior City Planner JC Ward adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:40 PM.