



**MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.**

CHAIRMAN JEFFREY FERNHOFF
JOHN FALK
REED VOORHEES
BRAD WEITEKAMP
SCOTT SMITH
JON EMERT

CITY ATTORNEY, ALEXANDRA SIEVERS
CITY ADMINISTRATOR, BEN DECLUE
DEPUTY CITY CLERK, JOANNE CARR

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Fernhoff called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Fernhoff, Mr. Smith, Mr. Voorhees, Mr. Emert, Mr. Weitekamp, Mr. Falk

Absent: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 12, 2023

Chairman Fernhoff asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from April 12, 2023 and May 30, 2023. There being some he asked for a motion. Mr. Voorhees moved approval of the minutes as submitted, seconded by Mr. Emert. The motion was approved.

REVIEW SPECIAL USE REQUEST FOR SITE ALTERATIONS AND BUILDING
EXPANSIONS OF GLENDALE CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM
10070 MANCHESTER ROAD

Present:

Jenni Belding, General Manager
Josh Barcus, Senior Associate
George Stock, P. E., President
Gary Brown, McClure Engineering, Sound Engineer
Rusty Saunders, Loomis Associates, Landscape Architects
Bill Hoagland, D & S Car Wash Equipment Co.
Kristopher Mehrtens, ACI Boland Architects

Chairman Fernhoff opened the meeting by advising the audience that anyone wishing to speak to the Planning Commission would have a time limit of 3 minutes with which to speak.

Chairman Fernhoff stated that there would be items under discussion as follows and noted that the Board met with Glendale Chrysler team for a tour of the neighboring properties on April 12, 2023. Chairman Fernhoff reported that the Plan Commission would make a motion of which will be sent to the Board of Aldermen at the end of this meeting.

Josh Barcus, Stock & Associated.

Mr. Barcus reported that the only major revision to the permit request since the last meeting would be with the storage building and the grading behind it and noted that they could move the building or add a small wall to save the trees. Mr. Barcus stated that 8 trees would be removed instead of 20 trees, including invasive species and the three trees in the within the footprint, adding that there would be 42 evergreen trees added to the landscape in addition to 6 canopy trees.

Mr. Emert asked if they looked to the north parking area as a spot for the storage building. Mr. Barcus stated that they had not adding that the proposed location added more access. Mr. Emert stated that the three mature trees were being lost the way the building is oriented.

Mr. Weitekamp asked if there was anything preventing the move other than parking spaces. Ms. Belding stated that the ingress and egress for the Fire truck could be a problem but would have to check to be sure. Mr. Weitekamp stated that an alternative location could be straight to the east where there are no trees but closer to the Church parking lot. Ms. Belding stated that other utility easements are located in that area in addition to the MSD easement, adding that there were no agreements from MSD for that location. Maintenance for new vegetation.

Mr. Smith asked if the landscape area would be maintained during all the season. Ms. Belding stated that with the fence at the back property line, it would be easier to maintain and would be cared for more frequently. Mr. Weitekamp noted that the neighbors have commented about installation delays in the past, and asked if the trees would be installed immediately. Ms. Belding stated that the trees would be installed immediately upon approval.

Kevin Kissling, 835 Brookside

Glendale Plan Commission (Jeff Fernhoff, Reed Voorhees, John Falk, Brad Weitekamp, Jon Emert, Scott Smith)

From: Kevin and Tracy Kissling, Chris Nitzsche and Caroline Springer Tony and Katherine Wright Jay Galmiche and Shannon Duffin

Cc: Mayor Mike Wilcox
Aldersperson Aaron
Nauman Aldersperson
Sarah Vitale

Date: May 15, 2023

Subject: Merlo Automotive Group, Inc. Proposed Amendment to Special Use Permit (SUP) and Site Plan

Dear members of the Glendale Plan Commission,

Thank you for your service to Glendale and the time you have spent evaluating this proposed amendment and site plan. This letter is to summarize why the proposed amendment and plan are not in the best interest of the City of Glendale and should be rejected:

1. Without knowing what proposed conditions or limitations there might be in the SUP, it is impossible from a legal perspective for the Plan commission to evaluate whether the proposal meets the requirements of the Zoning Code of the City of Glendale, namely
 - a. that the proposed amendment would not:
 - b. Substantially increase traffic hazards or congestion,
 - c. Substantially increase fire hazards,
 - d. Adversely affect the character of the neighborhood,
 - e. Adversely affect the general welfare of the community, or
 - f. Overtax public utilities.
2. Regardless of what conditions might be imposed, Merlo Automotive's operation of a car wash *will* affect the character of the neighborhood and the general welfare of the community. Please see the list of approximately 200 individuals who oppose this expansion plan and their comments to the same effect.
3. Merlo Automotive has exhibited a marked unwillingness to be bound by any limitations in the operation of their proposed car wash. Their representative (Ms. Jenni Belding) was opposed to any requirements that the car wash be operated only with the doors closed because she did not want to have to monitor Merlo Automotive workers.
4. It is well-documented that Merlo Automotive has not abided by the terms of the current SUP and there is no reason to believe that it will abide by the terms and conditions in a SUP in the future.
5. Merla's proposal to remove approximately 20 mature trees to accommodate the construction of a storage building is misguided. There are other areas on their site that would accommodate a storage building without requiring Merlo to incur the expense of grading and tree removal while preserving an essential sound and visual barrier: win-win for
6. Merlo Automotive and the residents. Since Merlo is no longer suggesting additional parking at the rear of its lot, there is no need to replace the effective chain link/barbed wire fence with an 8-foot plastic fence that will be less effective and is inconsistent with the aesthetic of Glendale's neighborhoods. Maintaining the existing fence will save Merlo from incurring a needless expense and preserve the *safety* and character of the neighborhood. Another win-win for Merlo Automotive and the residents.
7. Merlo Automotive makes vague representations about the type of work that will be performed in the new service bays. We ask that you impose the proper restrictions and limitations that would prohibit them from performing work that emits noxious and/or hazardous fumes and/or creates noise pollution both of which have an adverse impact on the character of the neighborhood and the general welfare of the community.
8. Rock Hill Touchless Car Wash (0.8 miles) and Brite WorX Car Washery (1.2 miles) are both within 1.5 miles of Merlo Automotive. St. Louis County is considering a proposal that would require any new car wash built to be at least 1.5 miles from any other existing one.

In addition, both these car washes have existing excess capacity and present a partnership opportunity that would save Merlo Automotive from incurring hundreds of thousands of dollars of expense. Another win-win for Merlo Automotive and the residents.

9. Again, thank you for your service to Glendale and we look forward to seeing you at the upcoming Plan Commission meeting on May 31.

Mr. Kissling stated that he had additional objections and asked that the agreement in place now not be diluted and asked that the dense vegetation remain in place. Mr. Kissling stated that the dead trees needed to be removed and replaced and added that the new row of evergreens recently planted took 20 years to plant. Mr. Kissling stated that the buffer zone needed to be maintained without any cars parking on it per the SUP. Mr. Kissling stated that allowing Glendale Chrysler to grow their business was a win for everyone, adding that he did not want a car wash in his backyard. Mr. Kissling played back a recording of a car wash from one of two car washes reviewed in Pacific and High Ridge, MO.

Chris Nitzsche, 825 Brookside

Mr. Nitzsche stated that his focus was on regarding property values adding that undoubtedly noise, and light will negatively affect the neighborhood. Mr. Nitzsche stated that there were 4 to 5 adjacent homes and additional neighboring homes which will decline in value and would be affected by the changes requested by Glendale Chrysler. Mr. Nitzsche stated that there were many children who play in the area who would also be affected by the changes and noted that Glendale was a prime place where people come to live. Mr. Nitzsche stated that there were many other car washes down the street that could be used by Glendale Chrysler which would create a win for everyone. Mr. Nitzsche noted that Glendale Chrysler purchased the strip mall to the west with the intent to grow and bought condos to spread out its business, adding that it is not right that they plan to grow a megaplex in Glendale.

Karen Dozer 1306 Glendale Gardens.

Ms. Dozer stated that the area where trees were to be removed was part of the Glendale Garden buffer zone, adding that she did not want small trees to take their place. Ms. Dozer noted that following the resolution of the alarm system problem, there have no problems related to sound. Ms. Dozer asked that Glendale take care of its residents, tax assessments and excess noise.

Katherine Wright, 845 Brookside

Ms. Wright stated that they just installed a new playground adding that the auto dealership will be loud if all the trees are removed, and a car wash added. Ms. Wright noted that Glendale should remain beautiful for the residents and their children.

Jay Galmiche, 815 Brookside

Mr. Galmiche stated that the dealership had a record of not following rules and/or violating the rules regularly, always asking for more changes. Mr. Galmiche asked about safeguards and what would be put in place to protect the City of Glendale and residents. Mr. Galmiche noted that if the dealership did not follow the rules now, how could they be expected to follow the rules once a new SUP is issued.

Bill Edmonds, 740 N. Sappington Road

Mr. Edmonds suggested placing the car wash farther way, closer to the recently purchased mall off Manchester Road following demolition or offering coins or some sort of certificate to use existing car washes on Manchester Road.

Pastor Scott Jonas, Glendale Lutheran Church

Glendale Lutheran takes no position on the car wash. But we do declare that Glendale Chrysler has been wonderful neighbors to us for decades. I've been pastor at this church for five years and we have had zero complaints about the car dealership.

We try to be a good neighbor to them, allowing their staff to sue the back of our parking lot.

They are courteous. I am outside often, and I never hear a commotion from Glendale Chrysler.

We host a preschool and there has not been one teacher or parent who has complained about noise. There is a lot of noise from Manchester traffic but little from Chrysler.

I have a great relationship with Jenni Belding, the General Manager at Chrysler. She is always responsive to our needs, trying to be a good neighbor herself. A few years ago, a dealership employee suddenly died, and we were asked to host a funeral for the employees. We were glad to be of service. We've also made lunch for Chrysler employees.

God calls all of us to be good neighbors. That call was made famous in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Glendale Chrysler is a good neighbor to us and we're a good neighbor to them.

By Grace through Faith

Pastor Scott Jonas

Judy Metzger, Glendale Chrysler Customer

My name is Judy Metzger and I have been a customer of Carlo Merlo, Glendale Chrysler – 3 jeeps for over 25 years. I am 77 and a recent widow. My last purchase was in 2013 – a 70th birthday gift to me from me. Carlo and his team treat me like family. I tell everyone. I am shocked that people are upset with his progress and investment in their neighborhood. It brings jobs and job security. People should be super upset re Manchester Road construction. I was terrified turning into Laurie's and exiting. Residents should get their priorities straight.

Miranda Lee,

Reaching out as we're customers of Glendale Jeep Dodge Ram and live on Nancy Carol Lane.

We are excited about the new carwash coming and the business's opportunity to continue to grow. It's sad to see all the negativity in the neighborhood over a business expanding on their property and really wish the neighbors would realize what they're getting into when living near Manchester Rd. I also am sad to see a website with false information on it made to seem like the carwash is going in-between houses. I have had nothing but amazing experiences with the dealership and its employees, live right on Nancy Carol Lane and never hear anything or had any complaints. To hurt a business that does so much for our city with this negativity makes me so sad and has gotten out of hand. Please know that we support the carwash and business and would love all the drama behind this that has blown out of hand to stop. They're extremely kind, have fantastic service and do a ton for our community for many, many years.

It was noted by a resident that Glendale Chrysler owned a section of property off Manchester Rd. to the west of its current property. It was noted that if the building was demolished, it would be a good area for a car wash and would not be noticed. It was also noted that consideration could

be given to offer car wash coins to be used at neighboring car washes instead of building an on-site car wash.

Chairman Fernhoff asked the Plan Commission to give their thoughts.

Mr. Voorhees stated that there have been changes through the years and asked if there had been a carwash in the past. Ms. Belding stated that there was one added in 2008 but was removed in 2013 adding that the entrance was on the west side of the building and vehicles backed out upon completion noting that there was no east exit.

Mr. Weitekamp asked about hours of use. Ms. Belding stated that there was no modification for time, noting that it would start at 7am and close at 10pm. Ms. Belding noted that the body shop was open from 7am until 6pm. Mr. Weitekamp asked about the maximum number of cars on the lot. Ms. Belding stated that there were 300 to 1,000 cars, adding that they had multiple lots. Mr. Weitekamp stated that he would like to minimize time for the car wash, adding that there could be a compromise with early closure and hand washing later in the day.

Mr. Falk stated that he was against losing trees and asked if this could be accomplished by moving the storage building to another location, possibly to the east side of the lot, which could be a good compromise. Mr. Falk stated that he could not approve the storage unit in its current location. Mr. Falk stated that the car wash hours should be restricted, and the car wash door closed during the washing of a car, adding that this would be a requirement.

Mr. Smith stated that the sound study showed that noise was adequately addressed, adding that Manchester Rd. exceeded the car wash noise. Mr. Smith stated that the changes take care of the fence concerns and safety issues, and the landscape plan addresses the coverage issue but added that there were outstanding permit concerns and would approve the car wash with changes to the hours of use.

Mr. Emert stated that 50dB was considered a quiet conversation, adding that 31-60 dB was considered quiet. Mr. Emert stated that the noise study indicated that excessive noise issues would be satisfied and would not adversely affect the neighborhood. Mr. Emert stated that he agreed with Mr. Falk regarding the re-placement of the storage unit on the property before approving SUP to save the vegetation on and near the buffer zone.

Mr. Brown stated that they had revised the sound study numbers indicated on page 14.

Mr. Voorhees agreed with all the earlier statements, adding that the building should be moved unless it is definitely not doable adding the trees needed to be saved. It was noted that orienting the car wash towards the street would work towards sound reduction. Mr. Voorhees stated that the chain link fence looked terrible, adding that he was not a fan of vinyl fencing but noted that the fence at McKnight and Litzinger looked nice. Mr. Voorhees noted that the fence would cut the acoustic variable but added that he did not necessarily like the color.

Mr. Weitekamp stated that he was agreeable to the fence, recommended restrictions on the hours of use, added that when the carwash doors were open, the blower needed to be turned off, and

noted that the storage unit should be moved to safe trees. Mr. Barcus stated that 14 trees have been saved and 13 evergreens added was a good step forward adding that invasive trees was not good long term. Mr. Weitekamp stated that the consensus with the neighbors was for a 6' fence. It was noted that an 8' fence was always in the plans in a residential style.

Chairman Fernhoff stated that Glendale Chrysler was a good corporate citizen, and the neighbors were good Glendale citizens adding that the dealership cannot be completely quiet but added that landscape changes and electronic controls would be a compromise for all neighbors and the dealership. Chairman Fernhoff stated that the storage building could be moved to the east end to save trees and alleviate the site situation.

Chairman Fernhoff asked if there were additional questions or discussions. There were none.

Chairman Fernhoff made a motion to recommend approval of the Special Use Permit Request.

The Plan Commission members have recommended that Glendale Chrysler's request for an amended SUP be approved, including the addition of the service bays and the remodeling of the body/paint shop into showroom space, the new storage building, the new car wash, and the new fence/landscaping, subject to the following conditions/restrictions:

1. The 8' fence on the property line is recommended to be approved, however in recognition that the neighbors seem unhappy with the proposed material, they suggested the neighbors meet and let Glendale Chrysler know what unified fence type they would like and that it be reported to the Board of Aldermen for modification in the final permit.
2. The storage building is recommended to be approved subject to modifications to either its design or placement so as to preserve the 3 large cedar/pine trees adjacent to its proposed location.
3. The carwash is recommended to be approved subject to the following restrictions:
 - a. The doors and automated carwash system must be interlinked so that the car wash and blowers will not function so long as the automatic car wash doors are open. The car wash sound study shows that if operated with closed doors, and with the 8' solid fence in place, the sound levels would not reach a point where the car wash would be heard over the already existing noise levels from regular Manchester Road and dealership.
 - b. There be no automated voice system associated with the car wash (i.e., giving directions such as "pull forward" or "stop")
 - c. The Board of Aldermen should consider reasonable hours restrictions on the automated car wash but left the exact hours up to the BOA to determine.
 - d. The use of the non-automated car wash (i.e., the hand washing that occurs now) should be unrestricted as the noise associated with it is minimal and already exists.
 - e. The use of the car wash should be by the dealership only and not any customer pulling up requesting a free car wash.

4. The landscape improvements were reviewed and largely recommended for approval, except that the Plan Commission wishes Glendale Chrysler to save the three large evergreen trees identified to be removed as part of the storage building. Otherwise, two of the trees to be removed (ailanthus) are considered invasive species and three others (an ash, elm, and a tree already dead) are dead or in significant decline.

Based on the proposal and subject to the recommended conditions above, the Plan Commission determined that the project would not:

- A. Substantially increase traffic hazards or conditions
- B. Substantially increase fire hazards
- C. Adversely affect the character of the neighborhood
- D. Adversely affect the general welfare of the community
- E. Overtax public utilities.

Mr. Emert seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

Chairman Fernhoff called for a vote.

Ayes: Mr. Voorhees, Mr. Emert, Mr. Falk, Mr. Weitekamp, Mr. Smith,
Chairman Fernhoff

Nays: None

MISCELLANEOUS

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Emert moved to adjourn the meeting following with an onsite meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Falk. The motion was unanimously approved.

These minutes approved as submitted this 11th day of October, 2023

Joanne Carr, Deputy City Clerk

