

2021-0475 Public Hearing and request for Conditional Use Recommendation - City File No. 21-033 - to allow for alcoholic beverage sales for onsite consumption at Meshico Restaurant, 2949 Crooks Rd., north of Auburn Rd., east of Crooks, zoned B-2 General Business District with FB-2 Flexible Business District overlay, Parcel No. 15-28-353-002, Michael Livanos, Meshico Restaurant, Applicant

Attachments: Staff report 111621.pdf
Floor plan & elevations 101321.pdf
EIS 110521.pdf
PHN 111621.pdf

Present for the applicant was Michael Livanos, owner of the Honey Tree Grill.

Ms. Brnabic introduced the application for a conditional use application to allow for alcoholic beverage sales for onsite consumption at Meshico Restaurant at 2949 Crooks Rd., north of Auburn Rd., zoned B-2 General Business District with an FB-2 Flexible Business District overlay.

Mr. Livanos introduced himself as the current owner of the Honey Tree Grill.

Ms. Kapelanski reviewed the plans to alter the concept of the Honey Tree restaurant near the corner of Auburn and Crooks Roads for a new Mexican restaurant, Meshico, with onsite alcohol sales. The current zoning does permit onsite alcohol sales as a conditional use. There are some minor site modifications to the outdoor seating and facade shown as well which can be reviewed and approved administratively by staff. The applicant is in compliance with ordinance requirements and is requesting a positive recommendation of the conditional use this evening.

Mr. Livanos said that the location is currently the Honey Tree Grill restaurant and they are doing some cosmetic changes and designs to bring a Tex Mex southwest type restaurant to the area. There is a high volume of restaurants in the area of Crooks Road between Auburn and Hamlin. He noted that they have lost business in the last few years especially with the pandemic, and they are having a hard time maintaining employees and the hours of operation. They hope that this new concept will bring more customers and employees back. They've been there since 2006, and with the changes and new patio they look forward to doing business for the next 20 yrs. or more. He explained that it will be a Tex Mex style restaurant with a bar, featuring tacos, tequilas, and southwest entrees. They are bringing in a chef from another restaurant and look forward to opening with these changes.

Chairperson Brnabic said that she does not have a problem with the sale of alcoholic beverages in this location, and noted it would have been nice to have a small color rendering showing the exterior changes to the facade and the outdoor seating area, although it's not required.

Mr. Livanos said that they spoke with the landlord and suggested that they change the lime green steel awnings that are very dated. The proposal is to make them look more up to date and modern and to match his patio. He doesn't have the renderings of the patio yet, he just has a drawing of where the patio will be built, and it will be facing west. He is looking at a black steel style

railing, with zip-ups, so that it could be used for four seasons with heaters inside. It will be a nice element incorporated into the style of the building.

Mr. Dettloff said that this is a smart move for this concept. He noted that he can imagine how the applicant's business has been impacted for the last 18 months. He asked the applicant whether he currently has the liquor license. Mr. Livanos replied that he did. He said that the Liquor Control Commission has given him a conditional use and is awaiting for the use to be permitted by the City. Mr. Dettloff said that he thinks it's a great idea and noted that there are guidelines for serving alcohol on the patio. He said that supports this use and wished the applicant good luck in moving forward. He asked the applicant how long has the Honey Tree been there and if he's been the operator during that whole time. Mr. Livanos replied it has been there since 2007, and noted he used to have two partners however they backed out after the business went down, now he is the sole owner. Mr. Dettloff asked Mr. Livanos whether he owns any other restaurants in the area. Mr. Livanos replied that he does not.

Mr. Kaltsounis asked staff whether the applicant have to come back for the seating outside if the conditional land use has already been approved. Ms. Roediger replied that the conditional use is only for the alcoholic sales and the outdoor seating is handled administratively.

Dr. Bowyer asked the applicant whether they would have a full liquor license, or if they would just be selling beer and wine. Mr. Livanos replied that it is a Class C liquor license so it would be a full liquor license. Dr. Bowyer commented that it is a great idea to have the outdoor seating. She noted that this will increase the business since Tex Mex is very popular and wished them well.

Chairperson opened the public hearing at 7:26 p.m. Seeing no one wishing to speak and no email communications received, she closed Public Comment.

Mr. Kaltsounis commented that this property is surrounded by a lot of shopping plazas and office buildings, and is pretty far away from houses in this location. He said that he lives in the area and has seen some of the issues that Mr. Livanos has mentioned. He said that it fits a lot of the checks in the boxes that he likes to fill with regard to an application like this.

MOTION & VOTE

Mr. Dettloff asked the applicant if he acquired an existing or an escrow license. Mr. Livanos said that it is an escrow license; it came from outside. Mr. Dettloff wished Mr. Livanos good luck.

A motion was made by Kaltsounis, seconded by Dettloff, that this matter be Recommended for Approval to the City Council Regular Meeting,. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 9 - Brnabic, Dettloff, Gaber, Hooper, Kaltsounis, Bowyer, Weaver, Neubauer and Struzik

Resolved, in the matter of City File No. 21-033 (Meshico Restaurant), the Planning Commission recommends to City Council Approval of the Conditional Use to allow sales for on premises alcoholic beverage consumption, based on documents dated received by the Planning Department on October 13 and 15, 2021 with the following findings:

Findings:

1. The proposed use will promote the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The building has been designed and is proposed to be operated, maintained, and managed so as to be compatible, harmonious, and appropriate in appearance with the existing and planned character of the general vicinity, adjacent uses of land, and the capacity of public services and facilities affected by the use.
3. The proposal should have a positive impact on the community as a whole and the surrounding area by further offering jobs.
4. The proposed development is served adequately by essential public facilities and services, such as highways, streets, police and fire protection, water and sewer, drainage ways, and refuse disposal.
5. The proposed development should not be detrimental, hazardous, or disturbing to existing or future neighboring land uses, persons, property, or the public welfare.
6. The proposal will not create additional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services that will be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.

Conditions:

1. City Council approval of the Conditional Use.
2. Public hours of operation for the restaurant will be between 11:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. daily.