

2024-0102 Public Hearing and Request for Conditional Use Recommendation - File No. PCU2024-0001- for alcoholic beverage sales for onsite consumption at The Jackson restaurant, located at 184 N. Adams Rd. within the Village of Rochester Hills shopping center, on the east side of N. Adams and north of Walton Blvd., zoned CB Community Business District (Consent Judgment), Parcel No. 15-08-351-005, Justin Vaiciunas, Canvas Hospitality Group, LLC, Applicant *(Staff report dated 2-14-24, Applicant's Letter and Revision received 2-14-24, Development Application, Environmental Impact Statement, Floor Plans, Renderings and Updated Renderings received 2-14-24, and Public Hearing Notice had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)*

Present for the applicant were Justin Vaiciunas and Michael Mauro, co-owners of Canvas Hospitality Group LLC and The Jackson.

Chairperson Brnabic introduced this item and noted that it was a public hearing and request for conditional use for alcoholic beverage sales for on-site consumption at The Jackson Restaurant, located within the Village of Rochester Hills shopping center on the east side of Adams Road and north of Walton Boulevard, zoned CB Community Business District and governed by Consent Judgment. She invited the applicants to the presenters' table and asked for the Staff Report.

Mr. McLeod explained that the conditional use request is relative to the former Noodles and Company site on the west side of the complex facing North Adams Road. He noted that all of the immediately surrounding uses are non-residential, and a residential subdivision is across the parking lot and across Adams, and he mentioned that it is over 300 feet to the nearest residential property line. He pointed out that the area is zoned Community Business (CB), but it is driven by the Consent Judgment for the property which allows for this type of use. He stated that the conditional use request will move on to City Council where it will get paired up with their actual liquor license request. He commented that he thought that the Liquor Committee will be meeting on Thursday and if all goes well here tonight they would most likely be to Council for the second meeting in March.

He stated that as the site is all non-residential in nature, the impacts should be relatively minimal. He reiterated that this is for an on-premise consumption of alcohol, with hours of operation Tuesday through Thursday weekday hours ending at 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday ending at 10 p.m., and Sunday ending at 4 p.m. He noted that there will be a lunch-dinner menu and a total of 24 employees. Per the EIS and the floor plan provided there would be approximately 87-90 people in terms of actual seating capacity. He added that the ancillary packet provided to the Commission provides the kind of finishes proposed within the unit itself. He reviewed the five standards that the Commission should consider. He noted that while it was a restaurant before, it was not a place where alcohol was served; and he noted that the Village has a number of other eating establishments with liquor licenses.

Chairperson Brnabic asked if the applicants had a presentation or any additional

comments.

Mr. Vaiciunas stated that they were excited to bring this to Rochester Hills. He mentioned that he grew up in Rochester Hills and attended Adams High School, and his brothers and family went to Van Hoosen and Delta Kelly schools. He explained that the first restaurant he worked at was the Kruse and Muer in the Village, and he commented that this was full-circle for him being the first restaurant he would open with his own finances. He noted that he and Mr. Mauro have lived all over the country and opened very high-end fine dining, and Mr. Mauro has recently come from working in Singapore and Dubai.

Mr. Mauro stated that he is originally from East Lansing, went to culinary school in Chicago, and also went to hospitality school in Switzerland. He explained that he has worked in Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Chicago, Miami, and Dallas where he met Mr. Vaiciunas. He noted that one of his dreams was to come back to Michigan to open a restaurant and settle down here. He stated that Mr. Vaiciunas is a very talented chef, while he is more of front of house operations. He noted that he has many certifications in wine, sake, spirits, alcohol and infusion, and can bring a lot of different things and give some new culture to the area.

Mr. Vaiciunas commented that the Village is very excited to have them in there. He explained that the Village is trying to go through its own self-transformation. He noted that currently everything is predominantly corporate-owned and operated, and the plan is for the Village to slowly start incorporating more of a local business ownership to change the direction they want to go. He stated that the Village is helping them tremendously with the space to make this a positive for the community.

Chairperson Brnabic noted that this request requires a Public Hearing and opened the Public Hearing. She stated that the Commission received one email from Jackie Cunningham that stated that she is strongly against another restaurant with a liquor license, and noted Ms. Cunningham wrote that the Village backs up to residential homes and it will add traffic and safety concerns on Adams Road.

Chairperson Brnabic noted that she had no speaker's cards, and saw that no one else wished to speak on the item; and closed the Public Hearing.

Ms. Neubauer thanked the applicants for wanting to bring this upscale dining business to Rochester Hills. She commented that there are several places in the Village that have a variation of liquor licenses. She addressed the email received against the request and noted that this request went through a traffic review and passed without issues. She stated that she does support this, and thinks it will be a beautiful restaurant. She commented that the story of growing up in Rochester Hills and coming back was great, and she would hope that her kids will stay and contribute to Rochester Hills.

Mr. Vaiciunas responded that before he left the Detroit area, he had opened the Ponchartrain Hotel and had done some great things down there. Every time he would come back to visit his family, they would be driving 40 minutes down to

dine in Detroit. He commented that suburban locations are just ten minutes away, and stated that it is a huge incentive for them to want to be here versus just being a part of those locations down in the city.

Ms. Neubauer commented that there is a lot of chatter on community websites asking where they can go for a date night or to find an upscale place to go, and most of the suggestions are out of the city. She wished them the best of luck and commented that this is a great addition.

Mr. Hetrick stated that the renderings demonstrate something that would be very upscale and harmonious with the surroundings. He noted that the setup is more like a bar; and he questioned how the upscale dining experience would be reflected.

Mr. Vaiciunas responded that there was an area on the right hand side that is almost like a waiting area and would also be for those who don't want to engage in full dining service. He noted that this side will have limited service on the food side and full-service drinks; and will be an area where a guest could sit down, relax and enjoy their wait before getting seated versus standing outside or right next to a vestibule door. He added that the restaurant is not trying to turn over three or four turns a night and is looking to be more elevated and heavily food-focused. He mentioned that there will actually be a chef's table in the kitchen for four for someone to be embraced into what is happening in the kitchen. He pointed out that their price point will be \$65 to \$70 per person including drinks, and lunchtime will be probably \$30 to \$35.

He stated that the level of service and attention to detail is a huge component, and the menus will be seasonally rotating with locally-sourced ingredients and will be plated very beautifully. He mentioned that the name of the restaurant is The Jackson, named after Jackson Pollock, who is one of his favorite artists; and he noted that there is a sense of sophistication and elevation that comes with that.

Mr. Hetrick stated that he appreciated the commentary about setting up a waiting area away from the freezing door.

Mr. Struzik stated that he would echo Ms. Neubauer's comments that this is a great option for the site. He commented that he did not feel that this development will have an impact on traffic significantly greater than other businesses that have occupied the space. He stated that he feels that the two applicants are well-suited to operate The Jackson with complementary skills and will do well in business together.

Ms. Denstaedt stated that she would echo what everyone else has said and commented that it is exciting to see this come to the area. She noted that she is a huge proponent of local and loves the fact that the Village will have more local establishments coming. She asked when they are anticipating opening.

Mr. Vaiciunas responded that if things go through, they are hoping for the end of May or June, when the warm weather is coming out. He commented that they are determining whether they can get patio seating due to the fact that the

sidewalk is not as wide as they hoped it would be.

Mr. Dettloff commented that he would echo everyone's comments and stated that the more diversity the community has in its establishments, the better they are. He asked if the menu would be more of a small place type or a full menu, and whether the liquor license is an existing one from escrow.

Mr. Vaiciunas responded that they will be heavy on the shared plates and also have full-size entrees for guests to choose between. He explained that the license issued to B-Spot went back to the Village and will be transferred to them.

Mr. Dettloff stated that it would be another plus if the outdoor dining would work, and it would be up to the designers to work with the limited area. He commented that this is a great story from a PR standpoint especially based on their experience and what they can incorporate from different places around the world.

Mr. Mauro stated that he has a number of friends from around the world that are sending him recipes of cocktails from their own areas to showcase here. He commented that the level of the cocktail program and wine program will rival those seen in Chicago and New York.

Mr. Weaver stated that he thinks this is spot on and he likes the local fare. He commented that he is happy that the Village is trying to get away from the corporate influence. He stated that his wife just mentioned that Bravo has had the same menu for 20 years, and it is nice to hear that things will change seasonally especially with the drinks. He pointed out that he lives across the street, and he does not agree that traffic will be an issue. He stated that if they are successful he would imagine that they would look for a larger space.

Mr. Gallina welcomed the applicants home. He noted that looking at the website, it appears that this will be a great experience for diners to have.

Ms. Neubauer moved the motion in the packet to recommend approval of the conditional use. The motion was seconded by Mr. Struzik.

After calling for a roll call vote, Chairperson Brnabic announced that the motion passed unanimously. She asked Mr. McLeod when he expected this to appear on Council's agenda.

Mr. McLeod responded that the original projected date was March 18; however, there is a very outside chance that it may be able to go to March 4.

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

Aye 8 - Brnabic, Denstaedt, Dettloff, Gallina, Neubauer, Struzik, Weaver and Hetrick

Excused 1 - Hooper

Resolved, in the matter of File No. PCU2024-0001 (The Jackson), the Planning

Commission recommends to City Council Approval of the Conditional Use to allow sales for on premises alcoholic beverage consumption associated with a restaurant use, based on documents received by the Planning Department on January 19, 2024 with the following findings:

Findings

1. The proposed use will promote the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The existing building and proposed conditional use have 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 proposed restaurant use should have a positive impact on the community as a whole and the surrounding area by providing additional eating and gathering opportunities within the Community Business District and the Village of Rochester Hills.
4. The existing development and proposed use are 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 existing development and proposed use should not be detrimental, hazardous, or disturbing to existing or future neighboring land uses, persons, property, or the public welfare as there are a number of existing restaurants within the Village, the tenant space was previously a restaurant and the nearest residential land use is over 300 feet away, across N. Adams Road.
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.