

Village of Birchwood
101 N. Main Street
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Birchwood, WI 54817



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**The Village of Birchwood
Public Hearing
Wednesday February 2nd, 2022
5:30 P.M.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88974098169?pwd=YUpOblhkSWcyS2IyMHNkMzlwRERYZz09>

Meeting ID: 889 7409 8169

Passcode: 763224

Minutes

Call Public Hearing to Order by Robert Hayes

Present: R. Hayes, B. Darkow, S. Milligan-Absent: C. Gargulak, S. Lindow

Also present: L. Zillmer, S. Rurup, R. Duhela, Y. Ferris, R. VanGilder, T. Fee -Zoom: Jim for Dollar General, T. Platt-developer

1. L. Zillmer gave Committee members a handout and discussed how a Public Hearing is normally conducted. R. Hayes thanked her for the information and then asked Jim/Dollar General to give an overview of what they are requesting at this meeting tonight. Jim stated they were requesting a parking variance from the number of parking stalls required per the ordinance, which is 46. Per Village Ordinance -1 stall per 200 Sq. feet of floor area required. The definition of floor area can be interpreted in different ways, such as the actual sales floor vs. total footage. The 46 stalls would be for the entire footage of the building, not just the sales floor (7300 sq. ft.) The sales floor footage calculates to approximately 36 stalls. Dollar General would like to propose 30 parking stalls on the site plan. Jim also went over the site plan for the building and parking. Driveway will enter off of N Algoma. The building faces Hwy 48 and the handicap parking spots will be on this side of the building. Parking is also on the West side of the building. He also discussed delivery truck access.
2. Public comments on an application for land use request with variance request to the number of parking lot spaces and construction of Dollar General: L. Zillmer asked about the setback dimensions, Jim responded by clarifying that this is a building setback, not a parking setback.

LZ voiced concern as to why the building and parking weren't staked per the information she sent to the board. Jim responded that he didn't recall receiving a specific request to do this. He went over the dimensions as follows: North edge of the driveway is 78 feet South from the edge of the trail. The front drive aisle is 36 feet, parking stalls are 20 feet deep, sidewalk is 9 feet. For the South property line(rear), the setback is the required 25 feet. Delivery truck access was discussed. LZ went over

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her handouts and the Village ordinance- she concluded with the reasons for her opposition to the variance being proposed.

R. VanGilder stated that the Dollar General will actually help the TID#2 district which is currently in distress. He also gave an example of how the parking uptown is and said he feels the 30 stalls will be fine.

S. Rurup (owner of Ed's Pit Stop) states she has grown her business over the last 32 years and wants to see Birchwood grow. She does have concerns that the local grocery store will close- like the Stone Lake grocery store did when Dollar General came into that town. She said it is a trade-off, we don't want to lose our small businesses, but agrees that Dollar General offers stuff the other businesses don't carry. She is wondering if Dollar General supports the community and school the way the smaller businesses do. Jim responded to her concern by saying that the Dollar General will keep people in town. He has feedback showing that communities flourish when Dollar General build. T. Platt stated that this is a significant investment in the Village. It will have a positive effect on the tax base. It also benefits the residents by providing jobs (6-10) and more variety and convenience with shopping. It will bring people into the community that will ultimately shop at the other businesses as well.

LZ doesn't think Dollar General will be self-sustaining in this community. She doesn't feel the Committee can grant the variance under the legal guidelines she pointed out.

B. Darkow pointed out the uniqueness of our small businesses. Our tourist's will be able to go to DG instead of driving to Rice Lake, keeping them in town to utilize our other businesses. Darkow referenced the parking at the other businesses and stated that there really isn't proper parking anywhere. She doesn't want to see people move from Birchwood because they can't afford to live here.

R. Duhela opposes DG. She thinks this will have a negative impact on the small businesses. As the owner of the grocery store, she has to pay small business prices and doesn't have the option of paying corporate prices for her store. DG is able to sell things at a lower price because of that.

LZ voiced concern that she feels no-one understands how the TID's affect our taxes. She doesn't think DG will make up for the loss of small businesses on the tax roll. She is concerned that the grocery store will suffer the most because of the DG in town.

Y. Ferris is generally in favor of the DG. He owns the property next to where the DG is planning to build and is extremely concerned about what this will do to his property and the value of his property. He is against the variance because he feels the area is too small. He is worried that if the trees are removed, he will have issues with weather, wind, noise, and overall safety of his property.

S. Milligan agrees our small businesses are unique. Milligan discussed the need for help on the TID#2 district. Taxes have increased. Milligan stated if you're good at

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what you do, people will want to do business with you. We need to listen to everyone and make the right decision.

R. VanGilder recapped J. Depoister's vision for the Village to grow.

LZ again reminded the Committee of the reasons they should deny the variance. LZ also brought up that 10 years ago DG were looking at another site and wanted the Village to pay for the water and sewer installation-which was denied by the board.

R. VanGilder and T. Fee corrected LZ regarding the previous comment. It was denied because of the cost of running the water and sewer to the location and that it wasn't a suitable location for the utilities. It would have been a shared cost, not the Village paying the total expense. It was denied due to the utility location.

T. Platt thanked everyone for sharing their thoughts and concerns. Platt reiterated that this is not a Public Hearing to discuss whether Dollar General can build on this site. The site is already zoned for Commercial Use, and this is not a land use hearing. Per Village Code, they have the right to purchase the lot and develop it as a DG. They are here to discuss the amount of parking stalls. Based on their experience building throughout the state, Dollar General has a positive effect on communities. Platt stated that per Village Code requirements, this site is large enough to build the project based on 40+ stalls. They do not feel they need this many stalls and think it would be beneficial to the community to not have that many stalls due to storm water management and landscaping. It is their intent to do the project even if this doesn't get approved. Jim again went over the different definitions and interpretation of floor area.

3. Adjourn: Motion by Darkow, 2nd by Milligan to adjourn. Carried 3-0

It is possible that members of and possibly a quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may attend the above-stated meeting to gather information; no action will be taken by any governmental body at the above-stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice.

Village request persons requiring assistance to enable attendance and participation to provide at least 24-hour notice.

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