



City of Gretna

Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting

May 12, 2025 – 5:30 PM

The Planning & Zoning Commission of the City of Gretna, Louisiana held the meeting scheduled for Monday, May 12, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at 740 Second Street, Gretna City Hall, Gretna, LA 70053.

Notice for the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting was duly posted as law requires on the bulletin board, at Gretna City Hall main entrance, 740 Second Street, Gretna, Louisiana 70053.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Roll call taken; Commission members present James Rolf, Rory Cadres and Lisa Carr Absent: Elizabeth Strohmeyer and William Tomasak

Chairman, James Rolf was in the chair, and the City Clerk was present. A quorum of three members being present, Chairman Rolf, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

City Staff present: Norma Cruz, City Clerk; Amelia Pellegrin, Director, Planning and City Development and Qudsiyyah Noorulhaqq, City Planner. District Council Members Wayne Rau, Rudy Smith and Randy Carr were in attendance at the meeting.



2. Major Site Plan Review: (Recommendation to Council)

83 Westbank Expressway - Drive through only Chick-fil-A Restaurant

Chairman James Rolf informed that the Planning and Zoning Commission members were meeting tonight to review the request for a major site plan review for a planned development of vacant property at 83 Westbank Expressway.

The Commission members will then ask corresponding questions if any, then deliberate based upon reports provided, along with public comments to be heard in favor or against this proposed project, or to approve the project with staff recommendations and contingencies. The City Staff recommendation along with the Commission's recommendation will be presented to the City Council for their final consideration and approval at the May 14, 2025, Council Regular meeting.

Miss Amelia Pellegrin, Director, Zoning and City Development, informed packets were available on the table. She stated that this redevelopment was previously approved in August 2023, but the approval expired due to 12 months passing. She stated that nothing had much changed from the previous submittal. She reviewed the previously submitted information-- exterior lighting, signage, landscaping, parking requirements.

The following conditions were recommended by Staff for the Planning and Zoning Commission's consideration:

1. A signed development agreement between the applicant, City, DOTD and RTA as to the scope and responsibilities for site improvements in the surrounding public right of ways.
2. Applicants agree that a right turn lane on Hancock will be explored if needed after opening.
3. Building design to increase transparency on the Westbank Expressway façade; UDC requires 40% transparency (windows, doors, or building materials as discussed otherwise) at two to eight feet above first floor elevation for restaurants.
4. As defined in the UDC, the applicant shall have twelve months to begin construction from the date of site plan approval, or a new application will be required. An extension may be requested in writing to the Planning Director.

In addition to these items, the applicant was advised that State Fire Marshal and Department of Health reviews will be required for a building permit, as well as a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) as required by the Department of Environmental Quality due to the size of the site (greater than 1 acre).

Chairman Rolf requested a motion made regarding the type of recommendation to be for the major resubdivision.

Member Lisa Carr offered a motion for approval with the conditions put forward by City Staff. These conditions include a signed agreement between the applicant, City, DOTD, and RTA regarding the scope and responsibilities for site improvements in the surrounding right of ways. The applicant agrees to explore the need for a right turn lane on Hancock after opening.

Additionally, the building design should be revised to include more transparency on the Westbank Expressway façade, meeting the UDC requirement of 40% transparency. The motion was seconded by Member Rory Cadres.

Chairman Rolf proceeded to call on comments from the Commission members. Commission members raised a few questions. The questions raised by the Commission members were answered in depth by Miss Amelia Pellegrin, Director.

Chairman Rolf announced that the floor is closed to public comment and the hearing is closed. On a motion by **Member Lisa Carr** and seconded by **Member Rory Cadres**, **IT WAS RESOLVED** to approve with conditions recommended by Staff, the Major Site Plan Review request for the applicant of 83 Westbank Expressway; Mike Sherman (Sherman Strategies); and the same was approved by the following vote:

Yeas: **Members Lisa Carr, Rory Cadres and James Rolf**

Nays: None

Absent: Elizabeth Strohmeier and Wiliam Tomasak

3. Variance request:

2135 Weyer Street- Reduced exterior side setback dimensions.

Miss Qudsiyyah Noorulhaqq, City Planner, provided an overview of the staff report on 2135 Weyer Street request for a variance.

2135 Weyer Street is zoned R-1, which is designated for single-family residences. The property is a residential rebuild funded through the Restore Louisiana Homeowner Assistance Program. The Restore Louisiana program is administered by the Louisiana Office of Community Development and funded by HUD through CDBG-DR funds. It was established to assist homeowners impacted by various floods and hurricanes. The program's reconstruction guidelines require rebuilding on the same footprint with limited size changes. New home reconstruction is limited to pre-designed structures, with no deviation. The owner was given the most compact building layout available.

This is a 30-foot-wide lot, attempting to build with a 10-foot exterior side setback would require a redesign of the house to a different layout, something not offered through the grant program – essentially making them ineligible for the construction grant. Strict adherence to the exterior side setback regulation for the property would result in a demonstrable hardship upon the owner (not allowed to rebuild their home under the grant program), as distinguished from mere inconvenience or economic relief.

Variance Approval Requirements - Unified Development Code, Chapter 58; Section 58-65:

1. The variance granted is the minimum amount of relief required to enable reasonable use of the affected property.
2. The approval, if granted, will not cause any diminution or depreciation of property values of any surrounding property or will not alter the essential character of the locality.
3. The approval, if granted, will tend to preserve and advance the prosperity and general welfare of the neighborhood and community.
4. The approval, if granted, will not be detrimental to the public welfare or seriously affect or be injurious to other property in which the property is located, in that it will not: impair an adequate supply of light and air; or increase substantially the congestions in the public streets, create a traffic hazard, or permit inadequate parking; or increase the danger of fire; or substantially affect or overburden existing stormwater management or sewerage systems; or otherwise endanger the public safety; or cause serious annoyance or injury to occupants or adjoining premises by reason of emission of odors, fumes, gases, dust, smoke, noise, vibration, light or glare, or other nuisances.
5. A physical hardship with special conditions and circumstances exists that is peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district; and the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the intentional actions of the applicant or any person who may have or had interest in the property.
6. The purpose of the variance is not based exclusively upon a desire to serve the convenience or profit of the property owner or other interested party, and strict adherence to the regulation for the property would result in a demonstrable hardship upon the owner as distinguished from mere inconvenience or economic relief.

7. Literal interpretation of the provisions of this chapter would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same district under the terms of this chapter.
8. Granting the variance requested will generally not confer on the applicant any special privilege which is denied by this chapter to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district similarly situated

Chairman Rolf opened the floor to public comment, hearing none, the Chairman Rolf announced that the floor is closed to public comment and the hearing is closed.

On a motion by **Member Rory Cadres** and seconded by **Member Lisa Carr**, **IT WAS RESOLVED** to approve with conditions recommended by Staff, the variance request for the applicant 2135 Weyer Street, Terry Videau and the same was approved by the following vote:

Yeas: **Members Rory Cadres, Lisa Carr and James Rolf**

Nays: None

Absent: Elizabeth Strohmeyer and Wiliam Tomasak

4. Unified Development Code, Text Amendments: (Recommendation to Council)

The Planning and Zoning Commission to review amendments to the Unified Development Code, Chapter 58; Article IV. -Site Development and Design Standards; Division 3. -Signs; by amending Sec. 58-191 through Sec. 58-202, by editing, addition, clarification and modification with recommendations by City Administration Staff . (Exhibit "A")

Miss Pellegrin presented the proposed text amendments. One of the substantive changes to the existing Sign ordinance in the UDC concerns temporary signs. Previously, temporary signs were limited to 32 square feet. The amendment changes this to 32 square feet or the maximum area allowed for attached signs per the property's zoning district, whichever is greater.

A major clarification and change were made to pole signs. Pole signs are now limited to 40 feet in height, with a minimum distance of 100 feet between signs, or adjustments based on existing pole signs. Pole signs must be placed in a way that does not block vehicles or use the required parking spaces. Landscaping requirements are increased to 100 square feet. Decorative covering for the pole was proposed. Additionally, if there is no change in business, all non-conforming pole signs must be removed by January 1, 2030.

Member Lisa Carr expressed concern that the proposed decorative paneling might obstruct visibility for smaller businesses. She noted that the architectural detailing from ground level upwards is vague, stating, "The more you add, the bigger it gets."

Chairman James Rolf raised concerns about maintenance, emphasizing that using cheap building materials for the base decoration could lead to deterioration over time. He questioned how business owners would be held accountable for maintaining the appearance of their signs. Miss Pellegrin responded that Code Enforcement would cite any unsightly signs.

Chairman Rolf also inquired about the enforcement of the 2030 pole removal requirement. Miss Pellegrin explained that this requirement would be tied to business license renewal and mentioned an upcoming grant from the City that could help alleviate the burden of removal.

Member Lisa Carr offered a motion approve the Unified Development Code Text Amendments with the condition that the proposed change to decorative covering and architectural details from ground level to 20 feet be revised as presented and was seconded by Member Rory Cadres.

On a motion by **Chairman James Rolf**, seconded by **Member Rory Cadres**, **IT WAS RESOLVED** to approve the Unified Development Code Text Amendments with the condition that the proposed change to decorative covering and architectural details from ground level to 20 feet be revised as presented.

Yeas: **Members James Rolf, Rory Cadres, and Lisa Carr**

Nays: None

Absent: Elizabeth Strohmeyer and Wiliam Tomasak



5. Meeting Adjournment

There was no further business to conduct, and on a motion by **Member Lisa Carr** and seconded by **Chairman James Rolf**, the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting for Monday, May 12, 2025, adjourned at 6:19 PM, and the same was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Amelia Pellegrin,
Director, Planning and City Development