
ORDINANCE NO. O-1516-33

ITEM NO. 9

STAFF REPORT

GENERAL INFORMATION

APPLICANT	Maria Gardner
REQUESTED ACTION	Special Use for Bar, Lounge or Tavern, Special Use for Live Entertainment Venue
EXISTING ZONING	C-2, General Commercial District
SURROUNDING ZONING	North: C-2, General Commercial and R-1, Single Family Dwelling District East: PUD, Planned Unit Development, R-1, Single Family Dwelling District, and A-2, Rural Agricultural District South: PUD, Planned Unit Development, and I-1, Light Industrial District West: C-2, General Commercial District
LOCATION	1309 24 th Avenue S.W.
SIZE	0.45 acre
PURPOSE	Event Center
EXISTING LAND USE	Existing Building
SURROUNDING LAND USE	North: Dollar General and Single Family Homes East: Greenhouse and Single Family Homes South: Offices and Auto Salvage West: Restaurant
LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATION	Commercial
GROWTH AREA DESIGNATION	Current Urban Service Area

SYNOPSIS: The applicant is requesting Special Use for a Bar, Lounge or Tavern and Live Entertainment Venue. The applicant's initial proposal included a request for an Adult Entertainment Special Use, however, this request was eliminated due to the close proximity to residential uses; Adult Entertainment establishments are not allowed within 500 feet of residentially zoned property, and R-1, Single Family Dwelling District is east and northeast within 250 feet of the building.

The building, located near the intersection of West Lindsey Street and 24th Avenue S.W., is zoned C-2, General Commercial, and to bring the current business into conformance with the zoning code Special Use is required for the proposed uses.

ANALYSIS: This business establishment has been operated as various bars, lounges, and dance clubs over the past 45 years. The applicant is requesting the Special Use to continue operating the business in conformance with City of Norman Zoning Regulations.

This location has long been established, according to local historians or 'Normanites', (citizens that were born and raised in Norman and lived here all their lives) as an entertainment venue/bar/lounge and dance club as far back as the late 1960's. The Cleveland County Assessor shows the facility was built in 1965 for a warehouse show room. However, 'Normanites' reminisce about the various businesses that have operated out of this Norman landmark building. The establishment has been known as the 'Blue Onion', or 'Onion', JR Buckaroos and later known as Buckaroos, Okie Pokies, The Fox, The Red Fox, Sooner Knights, The Castle, The Hidden Castle and, until recently, The Labyrinth. All these previous businesses were bars and dance clubs, pool halls and a venue for live entertainment. This establishment has even been a restaurant, Buzz's Sub Shop.

Special Use for a Bar, Lounge or Tavern was not adopted by City Council until November 12, 1991, by Ordinance No. O-9192-18. Therefore, the business was a non-conforming use in C-2, General Commercial District; after that date the use was allowed to continue until it ceased for two years. The non-conformity expires at that point and any future uses must conform to the current zoning requirements.

The applicant operates the business, Lovesproductions, an entertainment venue for music, bands, DJ's, and artistry shows at this location. The facility is also rented for private parties and special events such as weddings, bridal showers and birthday parties. The applicant would like to continue these uses with the requested Special Uses to be in conformance with the zoning code.

ALTERNATIVES/ISSUES:

- **IMPACTS**

This business location has long been established as an entertainment venue/bar/dance hall; surrounding businesses and residences have developed around this establishment over the last 50 years. Surrounding this location there are offices, automotive recycling operations, mini-storage facilities, restaurants and bars, and an eclectic mix of retail business as well as single family homes and agriculturally zoned properties. Because of the established type of uses in this location, which are similar in nature to the applicant's requested uses, there are no negative zoning impacts associated with this request. Furthermore, the applicant will be required to adhere to all ABLE regulations regarding the liquor license for the facility in conjunction with City of Norman codes.

OTHER AGENCY COMMENTS:

- **PARK BOARD**

Parkland dedication is not required for commercial infill businesses.

- **PUBLIC WORKS**

This parcel is platted as part of W.S. Murphy Addition, Block 2, Lot 9, and filed of record with Cleveland County on March 13, 1951.

- **PREDEVELOPMENT MEETING**

December 18, 2015

- Maria & John Gardner were present and explained their proposed event center.
- The Del Rancho Restaurant property owners expressed concern about burlesque shows being held at the event center and wondered how often they would be held.
- The applicants stated yes that burlesque shows would be one of the activities held at the event center but not the only one. The Special Use permit would provide the applicants the ability to tap into a variety of venues to host at the event center.
- Applicants explained that a burlesque show was really an art form and encouraged the neighbors to come see a practice show at the building. Furthermore, the burlesque shows would only be offered on Friday and Saturday nights and yes liquor would be served.
- Neighboring property owners stated that given the burlesque shows and the alcohol involved, how the applicant's will handle the problems associated with such a venue.
- The applicants stated they have hired security to be at the facility, they have a private membership requirement and they screen their membership. They further explained that their shows would be similar to shows held at The Dollhouse, located in Bricktown in OKC.
- The neighbor stated they were fine with the other uses proposed for the event center but were opposed to the Adult Entertainment Use. The neighbors indicated there was not anything the applicants could do to mitigate the Adult Entertainment Use; they further stated that there were other event centers in town and that they did not need an adult entertainment next door to their family-oriented business.
- Reaching this impasse, Leah Messner, City Attorney, explained to the neighbors the process for submitting a protest letter if they desired to do so.

Because the Adult Entertainment Special Use is no longer part of this rezoning request the neighbor's concerns are mitigated.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: This building has over 45 years of history in Norman, operating as a bar, dance club or live entertainment venue; the applicant's requests are alike in nature to the businesses that have operated previously in this location. Staff supports and recommends approval of Ordinance No. O-1516-33.