Chairman Strach called the April 17, 2019 regularly scheduled meeting of the City of McHenry Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:31 p.m. In attendance were the following: Doherty, Gurda, Miller, Sobotta, Strach, and Walsh. Absent: Thacker. Also in attendance were: Director of Economic Development Martin, City Attorney Cahill, and Economic Development Coordinator Wolf.

Chairman Strach opened the public portion of the meeting at 7:31 p.m. There was nobody in attendance who wished to address the Commission with public comment. Chairman Strach closed the public comment portion of the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Commissioner Strach recognized Commissioner Miller for her service to the Commission noting her recent election as Alderwoman to Ward 7.

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Miller seconded by Walsh to approve the March 20, 2019 Regular Meeting minutes of the Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting as presented:

Voting Aye: Doherty, Gurda, Strach, Walsh, and Miller.
Voting Nay: None.
Not Voting: None.
Abstaining: Sobotta.
Absent: Thacker.

Motion carried 5-0.

Public Hearing: DN N DIRTY LLC
File No. Z-945
4564 Bull Valley Road
Conditional use permit to allow outside storage of vehicles in conjunction with a towing operation

Chairman Strach called the Public Hearing to order at 7:33 p.m. regarding File No. Z-945 an application for a conditional use permit to allow outside storage of vehicles in conjunction with a towing operation for the property located at 4564 Bull Valley Road.

Chairman Strach stated Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the Northwest Herald on March 26, 2019. Notices were mailed to all abutting property owners of record as required by ordinance. The subject property was posted. A Certificate of Publication and Affidavit of Compliance with notice requirements are on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

In attendance were Krzysztof Lenart, 1524 River Terrace Dr. Johnsburg IL 60051 and Brandon Lenart, of the same address, who were sworn in by Chairman Strach. Krzysztof Lenart stated they
are seeking to establish a tow yard in McHenry at 4564 Bull Valley Road with outside storage. They currently tow for McHenry County Sheriff’s Department and would like to establish a relationship for towing with the McHenry Police Department. They need to get approval for storing vehicles outside in conjunction with a small towing office that will be operated out of one of the buildings at 4564 Bull Valley Road. Mr. Lenart further stated they will not operate as a junk yard or repair shop but will strictly be doing towing.

Director of Economic Development stated in 2017 the owner of the subject property received a conditional use permit for the outside storage of recreational vehicles and boats in conjunction with a contractor’s office. The current applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow outside storage of vehicles in conjunction with a towing operation at 4564 Bull Valley Road.

A conditional use permit is required for outside storage associated with any permitted or conditional use allowed in the I-1 Industrial zoning district. In this case, the applicant is proposing an office and outdoor storage of vehicles, other than just recreational vehicles and boats. The proposed location of the outdoor storage is far from view of Bull Valley Road and is unlikely to detract from the surrounding area. All of the surrounding properties are zoned industrial with the exception of Northwestern-Centegra Hospital south of Bull Valley Road.

Director Martin stated Staff is aware there are long-range plans for this general area included in the comprehensive plan, which go beyond the scope of this proposal. With the hospital being across the road and vacant land to the north, west, and east, there are many development and redevelopment alternatives possible in the future. The time limitation placed on the previous conditional use permit was in anticipation of redevelopment of this property along with the surrounding properties, potentially, for commercial and/or residential uses. This has not come to fruition as of yet.

Staff is not proposing a time limitation associated with the approval of the applicant’s request. Economic conditions remain uncertain and staff believes a time constraint would be unfair and the property may remain vacant indefinitely. Staff believes the proposed use will provide benefits to the City including an additional viable business locating in the City of McHenry; Cleaning and removal of trash and debris on subject property, as well as ongoing maintenance; and potential increase in assessed valuation, along with surrounding properties, which may at some point encourage developers to assess development/redevelopment options.

Unless a new business locates on the subject property, staff believes the area will remain stagnant and an eyesore. The applicant owns a significant piece of property and in the future this could play a key role in redevelopment of this area. Due to the isolated location of the site the greater portion of the property is not visible to the public.

Future roadway improvements are planned along Bull Valley Road west of Illinois Route 31 at some point in the future, including consolidation of access points and roadway widening, which will alter the dynamics of the area. At that time, it may be more plausible for new development/redevelopment to occur. Staff does not believe that this area will necessarily remain industrial in nature but at the same time does not want to prevent a viable business from locating there.
Director of Economic Development Martin stated Staff recommends approval of a conditional use permit to allow the outdoor storage of vehicles on the subject property, in conjunction with a towing operation subject to the conditions presented and Staff believes that the criteria in table 31 of the zoning ordinance have been met.

Chairman Strach invited questions and/or comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Gurda recused himself from the hearing.

Commissioner Walsh asked what type of security will be in place for the tow yard. Mr. Lenart stated there are gates and chain link fence as well as cameras.

Mr. Brian Blanchard, 6008 Tomlinson Dr., McHenry, IL was sworn in by Chairman Strach. Mr. Blanchard stated he is the property owner and he confirmed there are already cameras on the property. In response to a question posed by the commission, Mr. Blanchard stated there is gas in the boats at times but the majority of the time they are stored they are winterized and have no gas in them. In the summer there will be some RV’s and other recreational vehicles stored that may have gas in them but they are kept clean and monitored for leakage.

Commissioner Miller inquired what type of vehicles will be stored. Mr. Lenart responded it is mostly crash cars and cars to be impounded. In response to Commissioner Miller’s concern about the vehicles leaking on the property, Mr. Lenart added they use oil dry and fabrics to absorb all leaking liquids.

Commissioner Sobotta asked what the typical length of time is for vehicle storage. Mr. Brandon Lenart stated it depends upon the vehicle but should never be longer than 3-4 months. Mr. Krzysztof Lenart stated it is typically no longer than 30 days.

Chairman Strach opened the floor to questions and comments from the audience. There was nobody in attendance who wished to address the Commission regarding this matter.

Chairman Strach closed the public comment portion of the hearing 7:42 pm.

Motion by Doherty seconded by Miller to recommend to the City Council with regard to File No. Z-945 an application for a conditional use permit to allow outside storage of vehicles in conjunction with a towing operation for the property located at 4564 Bull Valley Road, subject to the following conditions, as presented:

1. The property shall be cleared of all debris, including any inoperable vehicles, trailers, etc. and anything unrelated to the request being considered;
2. The property keeps a neat and orderly appearance;
3. Boats and recreational vehicles must be stored in one area of property-not all over the property.
4. Vehicles must be stored in the area indicated on the site plan;
5. Applicant work with City Staff in locating signage for business off of Bull Valley Road, not impeding access or site lines to other businesses, customers or vehicles traversing the roadway;

6. Provide minimal security lighting/cameras on-site.

And Staff finds that the criteria in table 31 of the zoning ordinance have been met.

Voting Aye: Doherty, Miller, Sobotta, Strach, and Walsh.
Voting Nay: None.
Not Voting: None.
Abstaining: None.
Absent: Thacker.

Motion carried 5-0

Chairman Strach closed the Public Hearing regarding File No.Z-945 at 7:45 pm.

Public Hearing: Ryan McTague, MCHS District #156
File No. Z-946
4724 W Crystal Lake Road
Conditional Use Permit for an Assembly Use: Variance to the Maximum Building Height permitted; Variance to eliminate parking lot landscape islands; and Variance to allow an additional accessory structure (salt dome)

Chairman Strach called the Public Hearing to order at 7:45 p.m. regarding File No. Z-946 an application for a conditional use permit to allow outside storage of vehicles in conjunction with a towing operation for the property located at 4564 Bull Valley Road.

Chairman Strach stated Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the Northwest Herald on March 31, 2019. Notices were mailed to all abutting property owners of record as required by ordinance. The subject property was posted. A Certificate of Publication and Affidavit of Compliance with notice requirements are on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

In attendance were: Tom Rychlik, Engineer, Gewalt Hamilton Associates, 625 Forest Edge Dr. Vernon Hills, IL 60061; Don Dixon, Engineer, Gewalt Hamilton Associates, 625 Forest Edge Dr. Vernon Hills, IL 60061 and Todd Woolever, Architect, Wold Architects, 110 N. Brockway Suite 220, Palatine, Illinois 60067, who were sworn in by Chairman Strach.

Mr. Rychlik stated they are representing McHenry High School District #156 in their request to revise their conditional use and due to the passing of a recent referendum, obtain permission for variances in order to begin construction on improved parking and grounds facilities and an addition to the building at West Campus. Renderings were displayed and the public was invited to view them. They explained their detailed drawings and the need for more parking due to the increase in the student and teacher population at this building after the construction is complete. They will move some of the tennis courts in order to add additional parking areas while allowing the tennis
courts to help act as a partial buffer to the homes to the south from the parking traffic. They also intend to make improvements to the detention system on the property.

Director of Economic Development stated the applicant is proposing to construct a 64,000 square-foot addition to the existing West Campus High School. The West Campus School will become a sophomore thru senior campus and the East Campus High School will become a freshmen campus. Additionally, the parking lot will be expanded on the south side of the school and at buildout the total number of spaces will be 874 spaces, an increase of 224 spaces to accommodate students and teachers from East Campus. Director Martin stated the applicant is seeking the following:

- Conditional Use Permit for an Assembly Use
- Variance to the Maximum Building Height permitted
- Variance to eliminate parking lot landscape islands
- Variance to allow an additional accessory structure (salt dome)

In regard to the Conditional Use Permit for an Assembly Use, the property is currently zoned residential and is surrounded on three sides primarily by residential land uses. To the east is a mixture of residential and commercial land uses. Staff believes the use is appropriate for this location. The proposed development includes an addition on the north side of the school including a Science, Technology and Manufacturing Center. The proposed addition will eventually serve 2,000 students from East and West Campuses. The freshmen students will be attending East Campus. The parking will be expanded to accommodate 874 vehicles, include renovations to the tennis courts and eliminate the need for trailers as classrooms.

A traffic analysis was completed. Similar to the traffic study review completed by HR Green, staff believes there should be alternative parking lot access points and circulation patterns considered for the site to efficiently move car and bus traffic to and from the site and to prevent queuing onto adjacent roadways. Director Martin stated this would be done as part of a collaborative effort between McHenry District 156 and the City, particularly the police department. Director Martin further stated while a traffic signal is not warranted at this time one should potentially be planned for the long term-2030 for the safe movement of vehicles in the future as traffic volumes increase.

Director Martin stated the applicant is seeking a variance to exceed the maximum height limitation, from 35 feet to 45 feet. Staff is not concerned with this variance. The proposed addition is approximately 125 feet from Crystal Lake Road and over 350 feet from the closest residence to the northwest.

The applicant is also seeking a variance to eliminate the parking lot landscape islands. To the north of the building landscape islands are proposed on the ends of the parking rows, on the south no parking lot islands are proposed. However the applicant is proposing a center landscape strip between the existing parking lot and the expansion with a sidewalk from the tennis courts to the building. Again, staff does not have a problem with this variance request, as the applicant is limited
in space and trying to maximize parking. Additionally, there is effort being made to do some improvements within the parking areas.

In addition, the applicant is seeking a variance to construct a salt storage shed to the west of the existing maintenance building. The building is approximately 1,750 square feet and will allow the school district to store a sufficient volume of salt onsite for use throughout the winter. All residential zoning districts are restricted to a maximum of two accessory buildings, and several currently exist on the subject property; therefore a variance is required to address this as well.

Staff supports this variance. This is a very unique situation and property. The property was acquired many decades ago and has existed and been used for sporting events for numerous years. A complex of this size requires many types and sizes of accessory buildings and structures in order to optimize the functionality of the site, in terms of accommodating multiple events throughout the year.

None of the circumstances creating the need for the requested variances were caused by or a direct result of any action taken by the applicant and denial of the requested variances would certainly create an undue hardship/burden on the property owner and essentially render the property useless as a public sporting complex/venue. Finally, the variances are consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Director of Economic Development Martin stated Staff recommends approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow an Assembly Use and all Variances with all conditions as presented.

Chairman Strach invited questions and/or comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Doherty asked for clarification on the location of the tennis courts and new parking area. Mr. Rychlik explained the rebuilding of the courts and stated the new parking lot will be located at the same grade as the existing parking lot, as an extension of it.

Commissioner Miller asked for clarification that the sports practice fields will remain as is. Mr. Rychlik stated there will be no further improvements on the sports fields but they will add a walking path and trees.

Commissioner Walsh stated a concern with the lighting of the new tennis courts to the south closer to the residences. Mr. Rychlik stated only 4 or 5 of the tennis courts to the south will be lit and they are using led lights and will only be the courts located furthest away from the homes. Commissioner Walsh asked stated he would like to see time limits imposed on the hours the courts are lit. The applicants agreed to lighting time limits being imposed.

Commissioner Walsh and Commissioner Gurda both stated concerns with the increase in traffic on Crystal Lake Road due to the increase in student population going up by 224. Commissioner Walsh was particularly concerned about the exit and entrances during peak hours. Both Commissioners Walsh and Gurda opined a traffic light will be needed eventually. Commissioner Strach stated there is a condition on the request which requires further discussion on the traffic concerns due to the increased student population. Mr. Rychlik stated the traffic study reflects a
traffic light is not warranted at this time but there are several suggestions they are looking into to ease the traffic flow such as modifying signal times on traffic signals located to the north and the south of the campus.

Commissioner Walsh asked for clarification on what is being disturbed on the rear side of the building. Mr. Rychlik stated the bus lane will still be used and the exit road will be renovated but will remain usable only for bus traffic. He stated there will be no other improvements in the far rear of the property past the addition.

Chairman Strach opened the floor to questions and comments from the audience and invited audience to view the elevations and drawings being displayed.

Gail Riddle, 4819 Oakwood Dr. inquired when the construction will start and hours and how many days of the week construction will be allowed, stating a concern in regard to noise and construction dirt. Mr. Rychlik stated they hope to start this June but it is hard to determine and end date. He expects the fields and parking additions to the south will be done during the summer followed by excavation for the addition. He stated construction should be 5 days a week unless there are problems and the north parking lot will be renovated last.

Alderman Andy Glab, 5001 Oakwood Dr. stated concerns with ingress and egress. He opined the school needs a traffic light and uses the time and takes a police officer away for at least 2 hours a day. He further stated there need to be more restrictions on student parking on area streets and that the chillers are very loud on the building which will continue to be a noise problem if not addressed. Mr. Rychlik stated the chillers are being replaced. Mr. Glab stated concerns with drainage on the property dating back 18 years clarifying he is not in favor of the expansion but acknowledges a referendum passed so he wants to be sure all drainage issues are fully addressed. Mr. Rychlik provided clarification stating the sewer will be enlarged as needed based on capacity, the detention basin will be expanded to care for the increased capacity, and the replacement basin will continue to be a natural planting basin. They are cleaning and fixing the old basin and putting in a new basin that will address all the drainage issues. Detailed clarification and explanation on the overflow and drainage was given by Mr. Dixon and Mr. Rychlik both giving assurance the drainage system design will be done in a way that will not lead to excessive overflow. Mr. Glab further stated his concern with the tennis court noise and lighting and agreed with the Commissioners on limiting the time of lighting usage. Mr. Rychlik stated there will be a buffer also for the residences.

Chairman Strach closed the public comment portion of the hearing at 8:23 p.m.

Commissioner Sobotta stated he wished to make a comment as a resident that he really suggests a traffic light be added, stating he has seen major concerns as a resident who has a student attending the school. He further stated his concerns stated as a commissioner were addressed.

Commissioner Miller stated her major concern is traffic on Crystal Lake Road and she opined a traffic light if not necessary now but will be needed in the future and that the impact will be greater than is presently thought. Commissioner Doherty agreed.
Commissioner Strach stated he has the same traffic concerns but believes there will be reduced drop-offs because freshmen will no longer be at this campus. He opined the police department, city staff, and school district staff will be able to address the traffic issues and offer alternatives for ingress and egress. Commissioner Sobotta stated there will be more students driving and they’re less experienced drivers than parents dropping off students and that should be taken into consideration.

Commissioners Strach and Miller inquired if a study was done on the number of accidents in the general location of the high school. Ms. Lynn Meads, Senior Transportation Engineer with GeWalt Hamilton Associates was sworn in and stated the traffic study was thorough and includes information including that a traffic signal is not warranted until the school reaches capacity explaining the growth of the student population is stagnant and almost declining. She further stated they are considering other options to help with the flow such as separating the lot users and looking for ways to separate parent drop offs which will reduce congestion. Crystal Lake Road has congestion due to traffic signal lengths on existing traffic signals along the road and making traffic signal modifications will help. In regard to crashes at the school, page 12 of the traffic study states that within a 5 year period the south access had 1, the center access had 4, and the staff access had 11.

Commissioner Gurda asked if traffic on Green Street will increase due to more student drop-offs being made at East Campus. Commissioner Strach stated the student population will decrease and student parking will only be for staff which basically eliminates students parking at East Campus. Commissioner Gurda opined this is a concern that should also be studied and be addressed and discussed at Council level.

Commissioner Sobotta asked that the city be proactive and address the traffic concerns aggressively because it has been made clear that it is a concern by all in attendance at this hearing.

Motion by Miller seconded by Sobotta to recommend to the City Council with regard to File No. Z-946 an application for a Conditional Use Permit to allow an Assembly Use with the following conditions, as presented:

• The project is developed in accordance with the Site Plan prepared by Gewalt Hamilton Associates dated 3/21/19 and consisting of one page, Landscape Rendering prepared by Gewalt Hamilton Associates dated 3/21/19 and consisting of one page, Traffic Impact and Parking Study prepared by Gewalt Hamilton Associates dated 3/22/19.

• Alternative points of access and circulation patterns should be discussed between the school district and the City, particularly the police department, to ensure the safe and efficient movement of traffic to and from the site especially during peak hours.

• The current parent drop-off/pick-up lane should be reevaluated to ensure adequate stacking is provided.
• Modified signal timings on area signals should be considered to reduce congestion and increase
  progression along Crystal Lake Road.

• A pedestrian connection from the sidewalk along the west side of Crystal Lake Road in to the
  high school is required.

• Vehicular and bus access onto West Oakwood Drive should be considered, northbound only
  for vehicles to access the traffic light at Royal Drive.

• The administrative parking lot on the north side of the school should be separated more from
  the adjacent driveway so as not to confuse drivers exiting the school.

And Staff finds the requirements set forth in Table 31 have been met.

Voting Aye:    Doherty, Gurda, Miller, Sobotta, Strach, and Walsh.
Voting Nay:    None.
Not Voting:    None.
Abstaining:    None.
Absent:        Thacker.

Motion carried 6-0

Motion by Miller seconded by Sobotta to recommend to the City Council with regard to File No.
Z-946 an application for:

A  Variance from the Maximum Building Height, from 35’ to 45’ with the following condition, as
presented:

The project is developed in accordance with the Site Plan prepared by Gewalt Hamilton Associates
dated 3/21/19 and consisting of one page.

And Staff finds the requirements set forth in Table 32 have been met; and

Approval of a Variance from the Landscaping and Screening Ordinance to eliminate parking lot
islands with the following condition, as presented:

The project is developed in accordance with the Site Plan prepared by Gewalt Hamilton Associates
dated 3/21/19 and consisting of one page and Landscape Rendering prepared by Gewalt Hamilton
Associates dated 3/21/19 and consisting of one page;

And Staff finds the requirements set forth in Table 32 have been met; and

Approval of a Variance from the Accessory Uses, Yards & Fences to allow an additional accessory
structure (salt dome) with the following condition, as presented:
The project is developed in accordance with the Site Plan prepared by Gewalt Hamilton Associates dated 3/21/19 and consisting of one page;

And Staff finds the requirements set forth in Table 32 have been met.

Voting Aye: Doherty, Gurda, Miller, Sobotta, Strach, and Walsh.
Voting Nay: None.
Not Voting: None.
Abstaining: None.
Absent: Thacker.

Motion carried 6-0

Chairman Strach closed the Public Hearing regarding File No. Z-946 at 8:40 p.m.

Staff Report
Director Martin thanked Commissioner Miller for her service on the Commission. He also stated that the May 15, 2019 regularly scheduled meeting would be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Director Martin added that a new zoning map and rough draft of historical neighborhoods from the comprehensive plan were distributed to be discussed at a future meeting. Commissioner Miller would like to see a very large map displayed in the council chambers in the future. She suggested the north wall in City Council Chambers would be a perfect location.

Adjournment
Motion by Miller seconded by Sobotta to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Voting Aye: Doherty, Gurda, Miller, Sobotta, Strach, and Walsh.
Voting Nay: None.
Not Voting: None.
Abstaining: None.
Absent: Thacker.

Motion carried 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

___________________________________
Shawn Strach, Chairman
City of McHenry
Planning & Zoning Commission