

October 30, 2024

City of Alamo Heights Planning and Zoning Commissioners

Re: **Planning and Zoning Case No 444** - Request by Beth Smith (president of The Argyle) representing the Texas Biomedical Research Institute and The Argyle club requesting an omnibus Specific Use Permit (SUP) for 934 Patterson Ave, 815 Patterson Ave, 820 Patterson Ave, 423 Argyle Ave, a 2,417sq ft tract of land, and the northernmost one hundred fifty feet (150ft) of 401 Torcido Dr., all zoned Single Family District (SF-A).

Dear Commissioners,

The NPLAH and many others have been opposed to the proposed Argyle Major Event Center and the threat it represents to our neighborhood since February of 2022. While we look forward to presenting the case AGAINST the Specific Use Permit and the Project in person, we would like to share the following background information for your consideration:

- The Argyle, its current and proposed operations **are totally incompatible with a SF-A zoned neighborhood**. What began as a quiet private dining club for 200 members is now an event-dependent commercial enterprise with 1572 members. **Only 257 of those members are Alamo Heights citizens.**
- **The neighborhood is against the proposed expansion and the SUP.** While The Argyle states that they have a “majority” of support from their neighbors they neglect to tell everyone that 5 of the majority are members of the club. The others in the “200 ft radius” are **opposed to the project. Over 100 combined signs, petitions and letters of neighbors and AH citizens represent the opposition to the proposed Major Event Center.**
- **TBRI and the Argyle have lost their “non-conforming rights” to operate in the SF-A zoned neighborhood.** They have repeatedly violated the resolutions contained in the Board of Adjustment Appeal Case No. 134 (copy attached) granting them a variance and special exception. **The variance is dependent on TBRI and their tenant (The Argyle) complying with every resolution. The SUP is a blatant attempt to “spot zone” multiple properties and institutionalize non-allowable uses...an end run around the zoning code allowable SF-A uses, proper base zoning, and TBRI and The Argyle’s long history of non-compliance and violations of multiple ordinances.**
- The **City of Alamo Heights has failed (repeatedly) to enforce the resolutions** contained in the BOA case and the provisions of Ordinance 1757 (copy attached) that specified the only allowable use of 820 Patterson Ave property is **parking. Why should the neighborhood believe that the City will enforce any provisions contained in the proposed SUP?**
- The City of Alamo Heights has granted building permits to TBRI and The Argyle on numerous occasions for expansions and additions **in violation of the City’s own zoning code that prohibits the expansion of “non-conforming uses”.**

Zoning Code Section 3-89 (4)....A nonconforming use or structure shall not be expanded in any manner or form so as to increase the degree of nonconformity except when such change may be required by law or ordinance for the preservation of the health, safety and welfare of the community.”

- The proposed SUP includes residential property – 401 Torcido – that is not separately platted or owned by the applicant (TBRI) but rather by a member of the club who has been **leasing it to The Argyle as a commercial parking lot in violation of CoAH zoning. Commercial parking is not an allowable use in a SF-A.**
- **The Argyle will need at a minimum 600 off street parking spaces to service the existing and proposed buildings with an allowable occupancy of 1,100 + 100 in tents on the lawn.** Currently there are barely 70 off-street parking spaces available to members and guests for regular operations and this is reduced to 47 when tents are erected for events on the 820 Patterson parking lot. Does TBRI and The Argyle propose to provide 550+ off street parking spaces?...**No they do not.**
- **TBRI and The Argyle offer only an inadequate and poorly defined parking “plan” not a permanent “solution”.** There are several significant problems with their plan:
 - The plan does not provide by the Argyle’s own definition (1 parking space per 2 people) the number of required spaces – 1,200 attendees = 600 parking spaces minimum...and there parking provided for club, event and service personnel.
 - The plan is little more than a list of potential parking areas, one of which is public land (leased to CoAH by the City of San Antonio) that can only be used for recreational purposes.
 - There is no evidence that any of the referenced remote parking area leases or agreements (no exhibits are provided in the SUP) are “permanent” and irrevocable. While threatening their staff with discipline and dismissal...The Argyle offers only “they will encourage” their members and guests to use the remote parking.
 - **The proposed “plan” will inundate the neighborhood with queuing vehicles, idling buses, rideshares and valets. Congestion, traffic and chaos will continue and extend into the neighborhood on a constant basis. Crescent, Torcido, Patterson, Olmos Dam Drive and Argyle will be turned into “bus routes” and irreparably harmed.**
- The SUP offers no mechanism for enforcement or accountability. Attached are photos and maps that document what Argyle “Events” – day and night - look like. **Members and guests, vendors, ride-shares, buses, shuttles, and even off duty law enforcement ignoring No Parking Signs and Fire Lanes, idling and clogging streets and intersections, blocking emergency vehicles access....it’s arrogant, entitled and unconscionable!**

The proposed Specific Use Permit will authorize these activities, events, and behaviors on an unlimited basis...FOREVER!

Additional info available at www.nplah.org Please call us with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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