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February 19, 2025

Mayor Ken Kolowski,
Peru City Clerk, and
Aldermen of the City of Peru

RE: Petition of Heidi Quick
1820 4th Street, Peru, IL (PIN# 17-17-436-012)

Gentlemen:

Pursuant to legal notice published in the News Tribune in the manner provided by law, the Planning/Zoning Commission of the City of Peru convened for a public hearing on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the City Municipal Building, 1901 Fourth Street, Peru, IL, to consider the Petition of Heidi Quick ("Petitioner") concerning property commonly known as 1820 4th Street in the City of Peru, Illinois, legally described as follows:

The East Twenty-seven (27) feet of Lot Four (4) in Block Thirty-four (34) in Ninewa Addition to the Town, now City, of Peru, in the City of Peru, excepting and reserving the underlying coal and mining rights as the same have been heretofore severed from the fee thereof, but with all party-wall and other rights, privileges, benefits and advantages belonging thereto and pertaining to said real estate,

PIN: 17-17-436-012 ("Property")

Petitioner, as an owner of the Property, along with her husband, Kevin Quick, and daughter, Maya Ahlstrom, desire to operate an event space business upon the Property for meetings, banquets, parties, and other small events. Petitioner requests the following relief under the City's Zoning Ordinance, to wit:

- (1) A finding that the proposed event space business is an allowed or compatible use in the B-3 Central Business District pursuant to Sections 11.01 and 11.04 or, alternatively, for a text amendment to Section 11.04(d) of the Zoning Ordinance to add such use as a special use available in B-3 Central Business Districts and for such further approval of said special use as applicable to the Property;

- (2) A waiver from the minimum parking spaces requirement as provided in Section 7.03(b)(9); and
- (3) For such other and further relief deemed necessary or appropriate.

The Property is zoned B-3 Central Business District.

Planning/Zoning Commission Members Miller, Lucas, Jones, Grabowski, Brady, and Becker were present at the hearing. Member Kalsto was absent.

Kevin Quick and Maya Ahlstrom appeared on behalf of the Petitioner and were duly sworn. Mr. Quick testified that he was involved in running the bar that previously operated at the Property with his father-in-law, Art, and his brother-in-law, Chris. After the bar closed, they rented the Property, but the tenant moved out about a year ago. The building has been in his wife's family since 1936 and they'd like to keep it that way, but none of them have any interest in running a bar. Heidi is currently a teacher but will be retiring next year. They love the beauty and ambiance of the building and saw a need in the area for a small event space for things like bridal showers, graduation parties, and baby showers – smaller events with under 50-60 people.

Maya Ahlstrom testified that she has a degree in event planning and community development. She is currently a director at the YMCA, which she loves, but has weekends off. For smaller gatherings, the options available in the area are too expensive. She believes the Property is ideal for these events. They are not looking to host weddings.

Mr. Quick added that they had Maya's rehearsal dinner at Dayton Ridge Golf Course, which was great because they could bring their own food. They want to do the same thing here and provide an affordable option. It will allow them to continue to upkeep the building. Mr. Quick said they have always been a good neighbor downtown and have the best interests of Peru at heart.

Mr. Quick testified further that one of the concerns he received was regarding parking. He noted there are 3 or 4 parking lots with over 100 parking spaces within the radius set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

City of Peru Corporation Counsel, Scott Schweickert, said the City's concern with parking was because the parking lot in the back of the building is not owned by the Petitioner, and they wanted to have this public hearing to see if anyone had any objections. Attorney Schweickert agreed with Mr. Quick noting there were, by his count, 119 parking spaces within the 400' radius established by the Zoning Ordinance including street parking but excluding the privately owned lot behind the Property.

Mr. Quick testified further that he did speak with the owners of the adjacent parking lot. They gave him the same answer as they did back when the bar was open - that they don't care if they use the lot, but they aren't willing to give them written permission. He said this was understandable due to liability. He added that the back door provides an additional entry point and, currently, all of the people living in the upstairs apartments on the block park there.

In response to questioning from Chairman Miller, Mr. Quick stated he has no immediate plans to change the exterior of the building but would love to redo the front façade of the building in the future. Since the tenant left, they have painted the interior and have some other minor improvements planned, including replacing the storm doors in the Spring. Attorney Schweickert acknowledged the historical significance of the building and asked Mr. Quick to reach out to the City once he planned to improve the façade as TIF funds may be available.

In response to questioning from Attorney Schweickert, Mr. Quick said it was his understanding that the building started out as a bank, the movie theater was next door to the East. He added that when they took the Property back from one of the former tenants, there was a large hole in the wall that provided access to the building to the East. That was back when the building was Doc's and bands played next door.

In response to questioning from Member Grabowski, Mr. Quick testified the Property would not operate as a bar when not being used for events. He reiterated they do not want to run it as a tavern, but said they do intend to keep, restore, and preserve the original bar and back bar along with the tin ceilings. Member Grabowski noted the tin ceilings are some of the finest in the area. In response to Member Grabowski, Mr. Quick said the infamous shuffleboard table will stay.

In response to further questioning from Member Grabowski, Mr. Quick stated that he did not know the building's capacity. Attorney Schweickert stated it depends on the layout inside, noting that occupancy limits are calculated based on available square footage. In response to questioning from Member Lucas, City Director of Engineering and Zoning, Eric Carls, said his office would review the layout with Petitioner then, during final occupancy, he and the City's Fire Chief would run a calculation to determine the occupancy limit before issuing an occupancy permit.

In response to questioning from Attorney Schweickert, Mr. Quick said he does not currently have a tenant living in the upstairs apartment at the Property. He noted there are some water issues that need to be repaired up there before he can rent it. That is his next project.

With regard to the use, Attorney Schweickert said he believed, with the facts presented, the proposed small event space use should be considered a compatible use within B-3. He reviewed other zoning codes and found this use common in other central business districts. He noted further that several of the allowed uses in B-3 would have similar traffic flow and draw of people. Perhaps the most similar of these allowed uses is "(21) Clubs, lodges, temples, fraternal and not for profit organizations". Engineer Carls agreed with Attorney Schweickert finding the proposed use similar to that of a club.

There were no public comments or objections.

The Planning/Zoning Commission found the requested relief will not alter the essential character of the locality; will not be detrimental or injurious to other properties in the area; will not impair an adequate supply of light or air to adjacent properties, or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or diminish or impair property values and will not increase street congestion and, therefore, favorably recommends that the City Council grant the relief as prayed for in the Petition.

Member Grabowski moved, and Member Jones seconded, to favorably recommend that the City Council approve the Petition as prayed for. The motion passed unanimously: 6 aye, 0 nay, and 1 Member absent.

Respectfully submitted,

CARY MILLER, Chairman of the
Planning/Zoning Commission