



Post Office Box 299
Peru, Illinois 61354

January 25, 2024

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

RE: Petition of Keeley James Olivo
1830 4th Street, Peru, IL (PIN# 17-17-436-011)

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, January 24, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the City Municipal Building, 1901 Fourth Street, Peru, IL, to consider the Petition of Keeley James Olivo (“Petitioner”) concerning the 1st floor of property commonly known as 1830 4th Street in the City of Peru, Illinois, legally described as follows:

The North One Hundred Ten (110) feet of the West Twenty (20) feet of Lot Five (5) in Block Thirty-four (34) in Ninewa Addition to the Town, now City, of Peru, except coal and minerals and the right to mine and remove the same as heretofore severed from the fee thereof, situated in the City of Peru, LaSalle County, Illinois.

PIN #: 17-17-436-011 (hereinafter, “Property”)

Petitioner, with permission of the Property owner, Hammers Real Estate Properties LLC, requests the following relief under the City’s Zoning Ordinance, to wit:

- (1) Approval of a Special Use pursuant to Section 11.04(d)(15) of the Zoning Ordinance to operate a Body Art Establishment upon the Property; and
- (2) For such other and further relief as may be reasonable and appropriate.

The Property is located in a B-3 Central Business District.

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

Petitioner, Keeley James Olivo, and Gloria Galindo appeared and were duly sworn. Ms. Galindo provided the Planning/Zoning Commission with copies of Petitioner's business plan, a copy of which is attached hereto as "Exhibit A."

Ms. Galindo testified that Petitioner seeks to open a new enterprise, Déjà vu Tattoo. Petitioner would be relocating from Mendota, where he has operated a licensed tattoo business for 7 years. The Property is more centrally located within the Illinois Valley and would be closer for Petitioner's clientele. Petitioner has had 20 years' experience as a tattoo artist. He was born and raised locally, but has worked as an artist all over the country including Chicago, Las Vegas, Miami and several locations in Georgia, among others. Petitioner's business would also offer body piercing, something Petitioner has done for 15-16 years. Petitioner also paints and, in 2021, was invited to the Rawlings Art Show in Miami. He intends to display his artwork at the business.

Ms. Galindo says their daughter is 12, but is following in Petitioner's footsteps and they hope she can one day take over the business. Exhibit A shows a few photographs of the concept they envision for the Property. They want to keep it bright, open, and modern. They plan to do some cosmetic and minor plumbing improvements to comply with state law, but nothing structural.

Galindo said there aren't many places around here that offer piercing other than Claire's. Claire's uses a gun, which is not as safe as a needle. Petitioner also plans to sell jewelry, apparel, and general merchandise. If approved, Petitioner plans to hire a front desk receptionist and 2 other tattoo artists. He would also like to offer apprenticeships.

In response to questioning from Chairman Miller, Ms. Galindo said the business would be about 80% tattoos, 20% piercings/other. Chairman Miller noted there are currently 3 tattoo shops in Peru and 1 in LaSalle and concerned the market might be oversaturated. Ms. Galindo responded that Petitioner has been an artist for 20 years and many of the shops that have opened locally are run by his former apprentices. What differentiates Petitioner is his experience and specialty in Chicano art. To her knowledge, Petitioner would be the only Hispanic tattoo artist in the area.

In response to questioning from Member Brady, Ms. Galindo said Petitioner's business is seasonal. Business is steady, but slower, in the Winter during the holidays. It becomes very busy during tax season when he averages 5-6 people per day. The number of customers and length of each session is highly dependent on the size and complexity of the tattoo.

In response to questioning from Member Kalsto, Ms. Galindo said Petitioner usually maintains by appointment only business hours during the winter, but walk-ins would be welcome during the busier spring and summer months. In response to further questioning from Chairman Miller, Ms. Galindo said Petitioner prefers appointments.

In response to questioning from Member Lucas, Ms. Galindo said the Property has two bathrooms. The plumbing work would be to add a sink for the artist. The State of Illinois recommends a separate sink for each artist station. They have their application ready to file with the State of Illinois. It is a 4-6 week process, including inspection. They have to file a renewal application annually.

Chairman Miller called for public comment. TJ Templeton was present and said that he is the realtor for the Property owner, Gary Hammers. Mr. Templeton said he knows Petitioner wanted to have a tattoo shop in Peru previously, but they were not allowed at that time. As for the plumbing improvements, he said the sink just needs to be touchless and outside of the bathroom. He said the Property is in great shape and has photographs and a video available to view upon request. The proposed lease to Petitioner is for four years at \$1,500/month rent, which would be the highest rent of any commercial space leased in downtown Peru in the last 18 months. He said they have marketed the Property for the last 5 months and Petitioner is the only one that has expressed legitimate interest. Mr. Templeton said it is a great rent for downtown Peru. He has an interest in seeing the Property leased to a business rather than sitting vacant. He knows there is another tattoo shop two doors down and understands the predicament facing the City with creating that culture downtown, but Petitioner is willing to pay a premium for that location and believes he would be able to maintain longevity there.

In response to questioning from Member Lucas, Mr. Templeton said that the photographs in Exhibit A are just renderings of what the concept for the space would look like.

Chairman Miller said his main concern is the oversaturation of tattoo and gambling businesses downtown. Ms. Galindo said she understood the concern, and that she felt the same way about gambling. She said they are unrelated businesses. Ms. Galindo said every major city has an art district, and that maybe this is becoming Peru's art district. She added that tattoo artists are not all the same; they specialize in different kinds of art. The other local artists don't specialize or represent Chicano culture. She likes the Property because it is located right next to the Mexican grocery store.

Art Giese was present and said, if approved, there would be a tattoo parlor, a grocery, then another tattoo parlor. He did not believe the business would increase the number of people visiting downtown. He said there are already two tattoo businesses downtown and asked what the criteria is for allowing more. He said the building was bought by the City for \$70,000 and sold by the City for \$100. He thought the City was going to get more out of it.

Mike Sapienza was present and said he is the Alderman for the 3rd Ward, which includes the Property. Alderman Sapienza said he was excited when Mr. Hammers agreed to buy and redevelop the Property. He has approximately 100 photographs of what the Property looked like before it was sold. He thought Mr. Hammers did a fantastic job with the remodel and was a big supporter of the project. As Mr. Giese said, the City did spend money to acquire the property as an incentive to bring something successful downtown. He gets phone calls all the time about the condition of downtown Peru. You can't compare it to downtown LaSalle and the standards they have put into place. He feels like Peru's downtown is on a downward slide right now. He respects Mr. Hammers and the amount of money and effort he put into the Property, but the redevelopment has not spurred the revitalization of downtown like he had hoped. Alderman Sapienza also noted the City spent considerable money constructing a beautiful parking lot across the street. He noted that at the last City Council meeting, he passed out photographs showing the condition of the downtown Peru to the other council members.

In response to questioning from Chairman Miller, TJ Templeton said the Property is marketed as office/technical. They did have one person inquire about the possibility of putting a sub shop there, but that was the only restaurant related inquiry. Passini's Pizza previously occupied the space. It is listed as office/technical but it is marketed to everybody on MLS, Coldwell Banker, social media, etc.

In response to questioning from Alderman Sapienza, Mr. Templeton said Gary Hammers owns much of the property in downtown LaSalle and a similar space there would rent for \$1,000-\$1,100/month. The Property is 20' wide by 80' deep, which is the industry standard for commercial buildings and the most common size of spaces in downtown LaSalle. Alderman Sapienza commented that downtown LaSalle has an entirely different climate. It does not have the proliferation of gaming, tattoo parlors and smoke shops like downtown Peru. Sapienza said he would like to see that change and for downtown Peru to become an attraction. Mr. Templeton said there were two gaming places in downtown LaSalle, both of which have closed in the last 6 months. One has become a Farmers Insurance Agency and the other remains vacant. Templeton agreed that downtown LaSalle has a lot more variety with small businesses, hairdressers, shopping, travel agencies, and restaurants, but no smoke shops. Templeton said he represents 6 of the vacant spaces in downtown LaSalle, but this is the only commercial space he represents in downtown Peru. He has a good sense of the commercial market. There is not a lot of interest in the vacancies in downtown Peru and is hopeful this Petition is approved but, if not, he would like guidance from the City as to what they want to see go into the Property and its vision for downtown. Mr. Templeton noted he was born and raised in Peru and shares an interest in doing what is best for these downtown areas.

Chairman Miller said he can't speak for the City Council, but he would imagine the City would like to see greater variety downtown rather than a saturation of a few types of businesses. He would like to see a business that attracts other businesses to locate there, like a restaurant. Chairman Miller asked Petitioner why Property's location is desirable versus other locations if Petitioner's business is largely by appointment only.

Ms. Galindo testified that Petitioner has been operating successfully for 7 years, while other tattoo shops have closed. She believes replacing the closed tattoo shops is partially the reason why you see so many new ones opening. Galindo added that when customers walk-in, they often have to wait which will lead them to visit other businesses nearby to kill time or grab a bite to eat at Maria's Pizza across the street. Petitioner tried to open a tattoo business in Peru in 2017 but were told they weren't allowed so they went to Mendota. Now they would like the opportunity to bring an established business to Peru.

Member Lucas said he agreed with Ms. Galindo and recalled the debate back when Casey's proposed opening its location at Shooting Park Road and Route 251. At that time, people asked why we need another Casey's when we already had one and there were two other gas stations down the street. He questioned whether it should be within the purview of the Planning/Zoning Commission or, instead, the City Council to decide whether to allow an owner to lease the Property. If prevented Casey's was prevented from coming in, maybe that lot would still be empty and not generating sales taxes for the City. If this Petition is denied, who else will occupy the Property and when? Member Lucas said he does not have a problem with the Petition.

Chairman Miller noted the City Council makes its decision based on the recommendation of the Planning/Zoning Commission. Lucas replied he understood but noted that the City Council does not always accept their recommendation. Alderman Sapienza commented that the City Council very rarely disagrees with the Planning/Zoning Commission and does not take its recommendations lightly.

Member Lucas noted if the Petition is denied, the Property owner is missing out on \$1,500/month and maybe nothing else comes in. Alderman Sapienza asked why something else wouldn't fill the Property. He thought one reason might be that \$1,500 rent is too high compared to LaSalle. Another reason is the Property's location. Maybe it isn't a great location for a restaurant due to the saturation of smoke shops and gambling. Member Lucas added lack of parking and Route 6 being a state highway as other challenges for the location compared to downtown LaSalle. Member Lucas said everybody knows the City made its bet years ago when they went north and abandoned the downtown. Now some people and the City are trying to redo it and that's great, but he thought it would be terrible to turn down a business opportunity like this, tell the landlord "No" and allow the Property to continue to sit vacant. Alderman Sapienza argued that would be just giving up on the concept of having a downtown Peru, noting there are still plenty of beautiful buildings here. Member Lucas responded that maybe the City started to give up on the downtown when it started giving out all of gaming licenses, which he is not in favor of.

Art Giese commented that back when Forrest Buck was Mayor of Ottawa, half the buildings downtown were empty. The mayor that followed turned Ottawa's downtown into a very nice retail area. Giese added that part of the problem with Peru's downtown is the condition of Route 6.

Alderman Sapienza said it isn't that they don't want Petitioner's business in Peru but suggested maybe they help find a different location. He noted that back when the Mirror Building was built, there was more comprehensive planning and the City even adopted a color scheme for new downtown development.

Member Kalsto asked if there were any other vacant properties in Peru they could look at to spread tattoo shops out, like the north end of the strip mall on Peoria Street. Mr. Templeton said he was aware of that property, but it was not sized right for Petitioner's purposes. Member Kalsto said she agreed with Member Lucas. She said Petitioner did a good job with its business plan and does not want to say no to anybody that wants to bring a business to Peru. Ms. Galindo said they did sign a four-year lease, not a year-to-year lease like many of the other local tattoo shops. Ms. Galindo said they fell in love with the Property and plan to be established there. It's a beautiful building with wonderful window space. She said she has visited the other local tattoo shops, and they are all old-school. Petitioner wants to be different. They want to have a modern and luxurious space like what you would see in Miami or California.

In response to questioning from Member Jones, Ms. Galindo said they looked at other spaces but the Property offers more than just meeting their parameters. It's a beautiful building on a corner with lots of windows and natural light. She reiterated that Petitioner just wants the opportunity, like others have been given, to have a business here that has been operational for 7 years.

In response to questioning from Attorney Schweickert, Ms. Galindo said they know the people at Stigma Tattoo two doors down and the artist was Petitioner's apprentice. Of course, they will compete, but they respect them and expect they will do the same. She added that they will have different business hours.

There were no other comments.

Member Lucas moved to favorably recommend that the City Council approve the Special Use as prayed for. There was no second.

Member Brady said the Property is the front yard to Peru's downtown and he did not want to see the continued proliferation of certain businesses downtown like gaming parlors, smoke shops and tattoo shops. Accordingly, Member Brady moved to recommend that the City Council deny the Petition for Special Use. The motion passed: 4 Members voting aye, Member Lucas and Member Kalsto voting nay, and Member Grabowski absent.

Respectfully submitted,

CARY MILLER, Chairman of the
Planning/Zoning Commission

Deja Vu Tattoo, LLC

1830 4th St., Peru, IL 61354

Introduction

Deja Vu Tattoo, LLC will be a licensed tattoo artists' and piercing studio that will be located at 1830 4th St., Peru, IL 61354. The roster of artists will be inspired by both modern and traditional design layouts and will work with Deja Vu Tattoo's clientele to create concept and originality into a tattoo. Currently, I have a licensed operational facility in Mendota, IL. That location has been operational for 7 years.

Deja Vu Tattoo, LLC will be offering services such as designing customized tattoos, providing body piercings, predesigning tattoos, maintaining aftercare tattoo and piercing services, administering permanent makeup tattoos. All services will be regulated by the Illinois Department of Public Health: Body Art Establishment Act.

Vision & Mission Statement

My mission is to provide professional tattoo and piercing services to individuals. I want to build a tattoo artists' studio that can favorably compete with other leading brands in the tattoo and piercing industry in the area.

My vision is to have my children gain knowledge in this trade and for me to be able to leave them with a little legacy for them to follow.

Owner's Background

I started professionally tattooing in 2004. I was always into painting and drawing, tattooing just followed into my passion. I have had a great opportunity to travel and learn from other well-known and established artists throughout the US. A few of the cities I have worked are:

Chicago, Illinois

Las Vegas, Nevada

Helena, Georgia

Gainesville, Georgia

Atlanta, Georgia

Anderson, South Carolina

Wilmington, North Carolina

Miami, Florida

I have been licensed and certified in each state.

Not only have I been tattooing for 20 years but I have also been painting. I was invited to the Rawlings Art Show in 2021 in Miami, Florida.



I find inspiration in my rooted Latino culture. I specialize in Chicano art. Chicano art style uses bold colors and is a fusion of Mexican and American cultural elements.

Critical Success Factors To Run A Successful Tattoo Business

Location, Location, Location

The most important element in any business is location. 1830 4th St., Peru is a great location for my clients. It is closer and more accessible. There is plenty of on-street and off-street parking. The building has been remodeled and updated. The only construction that will be needed is additional plumbing. I plan to have 2-3 stations,

and the plumbing might need to be modified to meet the State of Illinois Body Art Establishment Rules and Regulations.

The interior design for Deja Vu Tattoo will be a luxury-modern style. Some examples of my vision are below.



The design I have in my mind is open, inviting and bright.



Adding wall dividers to each station for privacy.

License and Permits

City of Peru requires a Special Use permit for Deja Vu Tattoo, LLC to operate. I currently have a signed 4 year lease with Hammers Real Estate Properties, LLC. The lease is not finalized until the City of Peru approves the necessary permit. The application with the State of Illinois for the Body Art Establishment will be submitted as soon as Deja Vu Tattoo, LLC is approved by the City of Peru. The State of Illinois approves licenses in 4-6 weeks, once inspection has been completed. Based on city approval Deja Vu Tattoo, LLC will be operational in 4-6 weeks.

Bloodborne Pathologies certificate is required for each individual working in a tattoo studio. My certificate is currently valid until May 15, 2024.

Tattoo Services

I will offer a variety of tattoo designs; I have designed tattoos in many different categories. Some of the styles of tattoos I have done are:

Blackwork, Traditional, Japanese, Realistic, Watercolor, Geometric, Tribal, New School, Abstract, Micro, Neo, 3D, Dotwork, Illustrative and many different forms of Lettering.

I specialize in Black and Gray, Chicano style and Portraits.

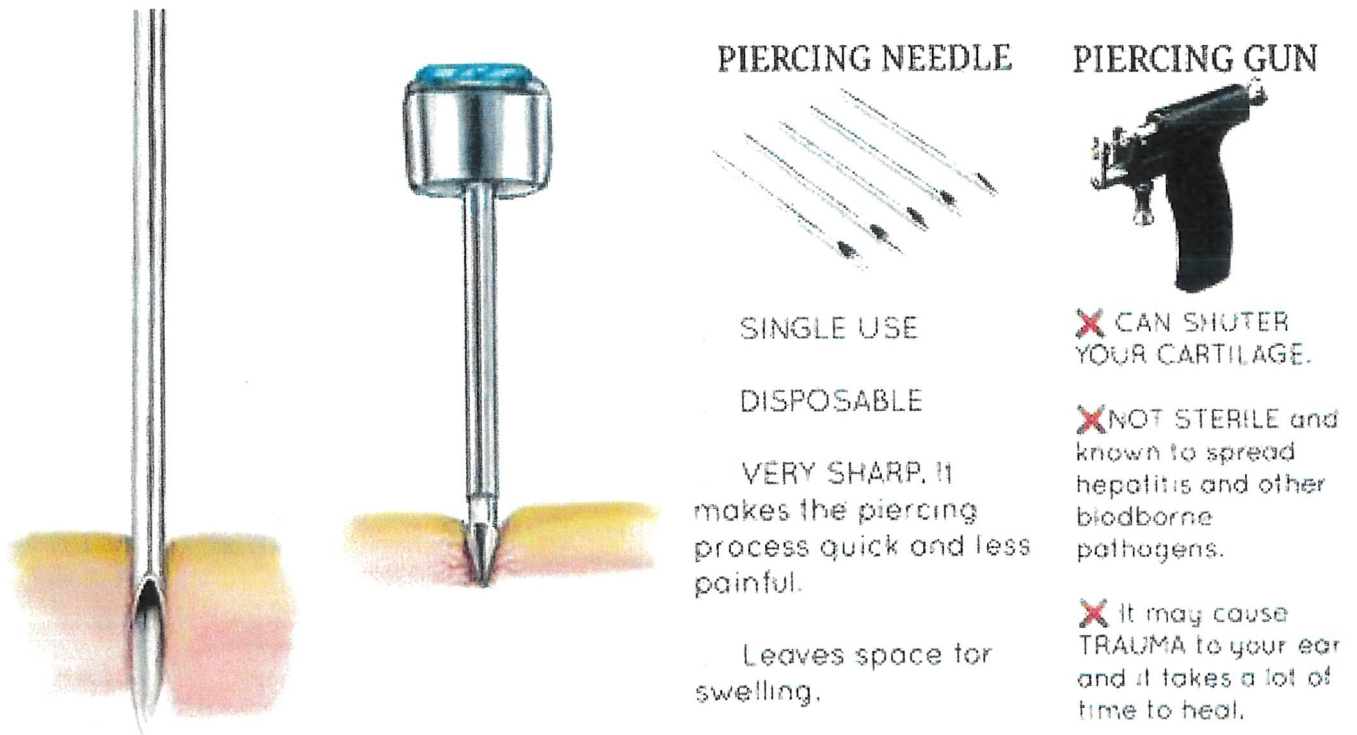
In 20 years of tattooing, I have learned that you must always be open to all different forms of art.

Piercing Services

I will offer body piercings as a service. I have been doing piercings for 15-16 years now and it is a service I provide at the Mendota location.

If approved, I will be the only local studio to offer piercings. I will be using 100% disposable equipment and will offer a full body piercings.

Below is a picture showing the difference in piercing with a gun vs needle.



Jewelry & Merchandise Sales

I will have 3-4 displays with body jewelry available for purchase. All jewelry is 316L stainless steel or titanium grade. This is the best grade of jewelry to have especially if an individual has sensitivity to metals.

T-Shirts & hoodies will also be sold with our company logo and just graphic-ts that I design myself.

Inconclusion

If approved I plan to hire a front desk receptionist and 2 other tattoo artists. I will also be offering apprenticeship for piercing and tattoos. I plan to be here for many years to come and hopefully my children can one day take over.