



October 16, 2020

TO: Nick Norris, Planning Director, Salt Lake City Corporation

FROM: Judi Short, First Vice Chair and Land Use Chair
Sugar House Community Council

RE: Zoning Amendment Related to Restaurants in the PL Public Lands Zoning District

In my opinion, this is a difficult thing to do. But, before you get to that point, there are a number of issues to be considered, especially in our current economic climate. The Aviary already has a small restaurant/coffee shop, you should explore how that is financed and if it generates any money. We have seen in Sugar House, 9th and 9th, 15th and 15th, along 2100 South, the Granite Block, lots of restaurants have gone out of business. I'm sure it is happening all over the city. We assume it is related to the pandemic. Nationally, financial experts are predicting up to 80% of restaurants that were in business before Covid-19 will go out of business, and maybe some of those will return eventually. But we won't return to pre-pandemic levels any time soon. Restaurants and coffee shops have thin margins, and to try to find someone to put in a restaurant, and then share that small profit with the park, is asking a lot. Who would pay for and build the restaurant, and finance it?

Another issue is, would that new restaurant be in competition with the other neighborhood restaurants near the public land? It might create a great deal of animosity in the business community for the city to do this. There is one business really excited to put a restaurant in the Garden Center at Sugar House Park, but that building needs a lot of renovation for that to happen, and the park doesn't have money to do that. And, it could/will potentially displace all the small art groups and clubs that have been using that space for events and shows for decades at no charge, who will have no place to go. And, my thought is that these parcels should be put out to bid, through some sort of a process, rather than the first guy who shows up gets the prize.

I understand that we need to think of creative ways to add funding to our Public Lands for maintenance, etc. But I am not sure this is the way to go about it. Would the employees of the restaurant be SLC Corp employees, or work for the person who has the contract? Will the funds really go back to help the parks, or will it just go into the city's General Fund?

And, you need to be very clear about which parcels are Public Lands compared to Open Space, and come up with a list of parcels that might qualify. In talking to staff from various departments, no one had a clear answer. A quick look at a zoning map, looking for places I thought might qualify, I got Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Sugar House Park, Fairmont Park, Forest Dale Park, Nibley Park in Open Space. Schools are in Public Lands, such as Emerson, Bennion, Uintah, Liberty Elementary Schools, and Highland High School, to name a few. Do we want to have restaurants in schools? Do we want to give away Open Space to be parking lots for the customers of these businesses to park? This shouldn't be a vague list, you should identify every parcel in the city that is zoned Public Lands, and make a list, so you can determine that some parcels or certain groups of parcels, shouldn't qualify (like elementary and secondary schools).

I think you need to put a lot of thought into figuring out what all of this would take, and whether it would be worth it, before you write up an ordinance and try to get it passed. In our current economic climate, this may not be in the best interest of the city. I think you need to think about this for a long time, and maybe in five years or so you can begin exploring the idea again. In the meantime, I am told this was studied previously, and you might find that report and read it.

COMMENTS RESTAURANTS IN PUBLIC LAND ZONES

From: David Fernandez <dfernandezclimb@gmail.com><2685 S Hartford>
Subject: Restaurants in Public Lands Zoning District

Message Body:

This plan should not allow restaurants, food trucks or any other portable vendors in Sugar House Park. There should be at least one natural safe zone from the onslaught of consumerism.

From: Thea Peters Brannon <theabrannon@yahoo.com><1768 E. Wilson Ave>
Subject: Restaurants in Public Lands Zoning District

Message Body:

Once again, who started this? The Planning Commission letter says "We have been asked..." By who? This should be identified right off the bat. I can see some benefit in or near buildings--like the library--where people are already gathered for another purpose. Any such restaurant should be more like a cafe--small. The other issues I can see as problematic are parking, city staff needing to supervise the premises, and trash/garbage issues. Without specific suggestions as to where a business would be located, it is hard to comment meaningfully. With so many issues before the Commission and facing the city, perhaps this is not the best use of their and our time.

Scott Kisling

1:49 PM
(6 hours ago)

to Amanda.Roman, me

Dear Commissioner,
I am in favor of including restaurants as a Conditional use in PL Zones, subject to enforceable restrictions, especially if restaurants are allowed to serve alcohol – a necessary element for their financial success. I strongly believe sufficient constraints must be in place to prevent the appearance of commercializing our parks. It's always difficult to tie proposals such as this to any particular language in the applicable Master Plans, but I believe that conditionally approving this use certainly addresses the *spirit* of the documents.

Warm regards,
Scott Kisling
2409 Lynwood Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84109