

**MEETING:** Site Review Committee  
**SUBJECT:** EKOS Production Facility  
**ADDRESS:** 3800 Bowman Drive  
**PRELIMINARY SITE REVIEW**

**LOCATION:** Zoom Meeting  
**DATE:** January 5, 2021

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Beth Shrader, Planning Director  
(219) 462-1161 / [bshrader@valpo.us](mailto:bshrader@valpo.us)  
Vicki Thrasher, Building Commissioner  
(219) 462-1161 / [vthrasher@valpo.us](mailto:vthrasher@valpo.us)  
Bill Laird, Engineering Dept.  
(219) 462-1161 / [blaird@valpo.us](mailto:blaird@valpo.us)  
Tim Stites, Fire Department  
(219) 462-8325 / [tstites@valpo.us](mailto:tstites@valpo.us)  
Matt Zurbriggen, Engineering Dept.  
(219) 462-1161 / [mzurbriggen@valpo.us](mailto:mzurbriggen@valpo.us)  
Mark Geskey, Water Dept.  
(219) 462-6174 / [mgeskey@valpo.us](mailto:mgeskey@valpo.us)  
Paul Scott, Water Reclamation Dept.  
(219) 464-4973 / [pscott@valpo.us](mailto:pscott@valpo.us)  
Tony Fahel, Water Reclamation Dept.  
(219) 464-4973 / [tfahel@valpo.us](mailto:tfahel@valpo.us)  
Brent Dickson, Public Works Dept.  
(219) 462-4612 / [bdickson@valpo.us](mailto:bdickson@valpo.us)  
Mike Jessen, City Administrator  
(219) 462-1161 / [mjessen@valpo.us](mailto:mjessen@valpo.us)

**PRESENTERS:**

Cosmin Vrajitoru, ARCHEO Design Studio, Inc.  
(773) 649-4423 / [cosmin@rkodesign.com](mailto:cosmin@rkodesign.com)  
Daniel Timm, CCSK Law  
(219) 230-3600 / [Daniel@ccsklaw.com](mailto:Daniel@ccsklaw.com)  
Virgil Ramirez  
[virgil@ramirezgroupllc.com](mailto:virgil@ramirezgroupllc.com)  
Joel Phelps  
[joel@reflectionwindow.com](mailto:joel@reflectionwindow.com)  
Eric Neagu  
[eneagu@anterogroup.com](mailto:eneagu@anterogroup.com)  
Ed Kruschka, EKOS  
[ed@reflectonwindow.com](mailto:ed@reflectonwindow.com)  
Other Members from ARCHEO Design Studio

The following is a summary of discussion at this meeting.

**OPENING:** The Site Review Committee met to discuss the proposed EKOS Production Facility to be located at 3800 Bowman Drive. Shrader stated that site review is not an approval. Rather, it is a preliminary discussion of the requirements and issues to be considered by the developer or owner. It is possible it will need to come back before site review or to seek other approvals.

**EXPLANATION OF PROJECT:** Phelps said they produce and supply curtain walls, window walls, metal panels, etc. for exterior facades. They either fabricate these items themselves through overseas partnership, or they fabricate the items at a small facility they have in Cicero, Illinois or through a dealer model. They want to create a domestic fabrication, assemble and glaze facility primarily for a sister/new product that they have developed and that the market is very interested in. Phase 1 will be having the fabrication, assemble and glaze facility in Valparaiso and Phase 2 will be repatriating some jobs from the overseas

**Our City...Our Values**

Honestly Accountable Surprisingly Responsive Boldly Proactive Creatively Frugal Respectfully Compassionate

partnership and bringing the existing product lines into this proposed facility. If you were to peel back the exterior enclosure what you would see is painted extrusions and aluminum extrusions being cut, tapped, drilled, notched and then screwed together. Precut glass is installed on the assembled frames with structural silicone. Vrajitoru said the building will be a 120,000 sq. ft. single-story manufacturing facility. The building will have a low hazard occupancy classification. It will be a non-combustible, metal structure. The overall building height is 28 ft. The bulk of the facility will be a pre-engineered metal building with an addition that will have a showroom on the ground floor and offices on the mezzanine. The addition will be enclosed and have unitized curtain walls with ceramic tiles. There will be a mesh screen outside of the curtain wall on the western façade. There will be approximately 100,000 sq. ft. of manufacturing. There will be a training component with a showroom primarily displaying table-top mockups of their product. There will be a library for clients and architects. The mezzanine floor will house offices for the plant manager and a number of engineers. The ground floor will have a lunchroom and restrooms. The plant side will include the metal fabrication component, the CNC machines, cutters and assembly line for glazing. There is a depressed loading dock on the south side of the property. There will be a glass storage area. On the west end of the facility there is storage for metal components, the end of glazing line and assembly line area. There will be 140 employees. They are providing 150 parking spaces. Neagu said some of his concerns include meeting the parking requirements and getting information about the regional detention pond and utilities.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

**SHRADER:** This parcel has split zoning. It is predominantly Heavy Industrial which opens up a little more in terms of options. Shrader said whether to categorize the EKOS facility as light or heavy industrial can be argued either way. Shrader mentioned that it may be to their benefit to categorize the facility as light industry. It fits as long as the building is kept under 45 ft. in height. At 28 ft., the building is well under this requirement. If they consider raising the height, Shrader cautioned that they keep this in mind as they progress through the design. Light industry has three things that need to be met: **1)** height under 45 ft.; **2)** outside storage that occupies less than 16,000 sq. ft. Shrader said she is curious about what to expect for the outdoor storage square footage. There appears to be a future covered storage area on the south face of the building. It will be helpful to know what this square footage will be.; **3)** a ground floor area of less than 80,000 sq. ft. The facility only needs to meet one of the three. Shrader said she categorized this as an assembly of product from pre-manufactured components. There is nothing hazardous or combustible and Shrader feels it

meets the standards for light industry. Vrajituro said the storage area is approximately 12,000 to 13,000 sq. ft. and it is a fully enclosed area. The plans have not been updated and currently only show the 12 acres. Shrader asked if they still plan to utilize the entire 14 acres. Phelps indicated that the entire 14 acres will be used for several reasons. One reason is the velocity of financing to ensure the project goes up in time. It would be challenging at this point to try to subdivide the property because lenders want a parcel number with a defined legal description before they will move forward. It is important that the civil engineer understands what they have to work with in terms of parking and having enough space to have a drainage swale if needed. Neagu mentioned that there are recorded easements for storm water within the property and the easements may constrain them a little more depending on what the easements allow. Shrader conveyed that the Landscape Ratio, the Gross Floor Area Ratio and Net Floor Area Ratio need to be met. Shrader feels they will be fine on all of these issues based on the amount of open space. Calculations for LSR, Gross FAR and Net FAR need to be shown on the plans. Shrader will provide notes with excerpts from the Unified Development Ordinance. The lot area is appropriate. The allowance for signage is 3 sq. ft. for each lineal foot of building frontage. It will be necessary to be creative with frontage due to the cul-de-sac that hits the corner of the property. However, this should not create an issue. Shrader said it appears they may be “under” parked. Vrajituro asked if parking is based on the square footage and occupancy or the actual number of employees. Shrader conveyed that the standard for light industry is 1 space per 500 sq. ft., plus 1 space per company vehicle. Parking spaces for loading is the greater of 1 space per 20,000 sq. ft. or 1 space per loading bay. Shrader indicated that restrooms, utility areas housing equipment for HVAC, plumbing or similar purposes and spaces that are designed and used exclusively for storage should not be included in the calculations. Vrajituro said they currently have 150 spaces and they might be pretty close to meeting the requirement. Shrader does not want them “over” parked so it will be necessary to take a close look and calculate the exact amount of spaces needed. Shrader mentioned the City’s landscape requirements are substantial and suggested they have their landscaper contact the Planning Department to walk through requirements. The on-lot landscaping is based on the amount of the parcel left over after the areas dedicated for bufferyards and the parking lot landscaping are subtracted. Shrader said it does not matter if they are only developing 12 acres, all 14 acres will be part of the calculation. Submittal of a Photometric Plan and Landscape Plan will be necessary. A Zoning Clearance is required. Vrajituro asked about storm water retention. Shrader said this issue will be part of the Engineering Department comments. Phelps asked if there will be any requirement to go before the Plan

### Our City...Our Values

Commission to unify the zoning. Shrader said this project would fit under either light industrial or heavy industrial so they can submit for permits under the normal procedures. Since the property is not being subdivided, no other processes through Plan Commission will be required. Shrader feels that the need for variances can be avoided since they have enough space to meet requirements.

**LAIRD:**

Site Plan:

1. Show all building setbacks.
2. Show driveway width dimensions.
3. Show and dimension driveway curb radii.
4. Show parking stall dimensions and drive aisle widths.
5. Show and dimension all sidewalks
6. Is curb and gutter being proposed for the parking lot perimeter?
7. Please clarify what "receiving dock glass" is at southwest corner of proposed building is.
8. Show proposed ADA accessible ramps.
9. Show water and sewer tap locations.

Grading Plan (not submitted):

1. Show elevations at proposed driveways, proposed top of foundation, first floor, and lot corners.
2. Show existing and proposed one-foot contours.
3. Show grading and drainage design for all impervious areas.
4. Show location of any drainage swales.
5. Show pond calculations, design and grading.
6. Show pond outfall.

Erosion Control Plan (not submitted):

1. Since more than 14 acres of land will be disturbed, a detailed Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will need to be submitted, and a Rule 5 permit is required. This website (<https://www.in.gov/idem/stormwater/2371.htm>) shows step by step process for compliance with Rule 5.
2. Proposed Post-Construction Stormwater Management BMPs need to be able to remove at least 80% TSS after construction is done. Please prove

this goal can be achieved. A Post-Construction BMP Operation and Maintenance Manual (O&M Manual), which is signed by the property owner, is required.

Permits:

1. The following permits are required and can be obtained via the Engineering Office
  - Site Permit
  - Right-of-Way Permit
  - Sanitary Sewer Permit

**ZURBRIGGEN:** The drainage calculations are based on Porter County's Storm Water Technical Manual since we are releasing to a regulated drain. The calculated CN is based on an industrial zoning with 72% impervious coverage according to the attached table. A CN of 88 was established in areas that fell within the hydrologic group B and a CN of 90 for areas within the hydrologic soil group C.

- As long as the developer stays at or under the maximum impervious surface of 70% established under the UDO for both Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial.
- Please be sure to include any known future improvements in plans and calculations.

Neagu asked if they could do a hybrid if they wanted to develop more than 70% of the site. In other words, they would use the regional retention pond for the portion that is 70% or under and if they needed more space develop something on site. Zurbrigggen confirmed this will be possible. Engineering will work with them. Neagu asked if it could be possible to enlarge the existing pond if they expand later and develop more of the site. Zurbrigggen said they can always meet at a later date to discuss this issue. Vrajituro said they will probably separate the permits and asked if they could start the grading. Zurbrigggen said that typically the City does not give out a mass-grading permit ahead of time. The way it usually works is the complete set of engineering plans are submitted and reviewed. Then the Site Permit would be issued to move forward. Neagu asked if the Site Permit could be issued prior to the architectural documents being approved. Thrasher (Building Commissioner) interjected that typically if a project is at the point of grading, the foundation plans have been produced. A Foundation Permit, which includes all the civil work and the building foundation

can be issued. Zurbriggen said if they want to submit preliminary engineering plans, the Engineering Department can do an intermediate review before full submittal. Neagu conveyed they will probably want to meet once or twice just to make sure they are on the right path.

**GESKEY:** Water and sewer are both on Bowman Drive. The water is approximately three quarters of the way around the cul-de-sac in their favor. The sewer is in the middle of the road. Geskey mentioned that backflow protection will be required in the facility because it is commercial. This project is located in a well head protection area. Geskey conveyed that Shaun Shifflett will send information regarding the well head protection area. There is a pumping station very close to this project. The plans showing utilities need to be sent to Geskey and the Engineering Department.

**PAUL SCOTT/TONY FAHEL (Water Reclamation):** Submittal of an internal plumbing plan will be required. Scott asked if there is any metal manufacturing done on site. Vrajituro indicated that there is no metal manufacturing at this facility. Scott said if there are floor drains in the manufacturing area, Water Reclamation does not want any metal cuttings going down the drain. Fahel asked about the triple separator that was mentioned. Neagu said sometimes in areas where there is a lot of traffic there may be a concern about water quality. Will a separator be required? Fahel asked about the types of chemicals and oils that will be used. Neagu stated there is nothing specific that will be of concern and it will be contained within the building.

**STITES:** The Fire Department follows all adopted codes, standards and rules of the Indiana Fire Prevention and Building Commission and all local ordinances that apply. All initial inspections required through the construction phase must be scheduled and coordinated through the Building Department. After occupancy has been issued, the facility will be subject to annual fire inspections. All contractors installing fire alarms, sprinkler systems, hood systems, etc. must contact Stites prior to beginning work. Stites can be contacted at the phone number or email shown above with questions. Vrajituro said that based on the occupancy and structure type, sprinklers will not be required for the building. The site plan shows two (2) existing hydrants on the edge of the property. Will a hydrant be required on the property? Stites asked what the furthest distance is from the southeast corner of the building to Bowman Drive. Vrajituro said the distance is approximately 900 ft. Stites this distance may cause the requirement for a hydrant on the property. Stites said this can be discussed further once he receives a better set of plans. Stites asked for the square footage of the building. Vrajituro said the building is approximately 100,000 sq. ft., non-combustible structure, Type 1B. Stites asked if this will be an F occupancy. Vrajituro said the occupancy will be F2. Stites advised that anything above 12,000 sq. ft. requires

---

### Our City...Our Values

a sprinkler system. This information can be found in Section 903 of the 2012 International Building Code which is the 2014 Indiana Building Code.

**THRASHER:** Plans must be submitted to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security for review and to obtain the required Construction Design Releases. A Building Permit is required. All work must be performed by contractors who are registered with the City of Valparaiso. Signage will require a permit. Phelps asked how the IDHS review dovetails into the City review and what they review for. Shrader interjected that IDHS looks at many of the same issues the City reviews. Generally, submittal to the State and City can run parallel to each other. Once the State completes their review and issues the Construction Design Release, the City can release the Building Permit. Phelps asked if a kickoff meeting with IDHS is necessary. Stites interjected that the State does not have this type of process. Stites indicated that if they send him an e-mail, he can provide a correct link for IDHS. The submittal to the State is done electronically.

**ON BEHALF OF BRENT DICKSON (PUBLIC WORKS):** Will there be a curb cut with a concrete apron through the cul-de-sac? Vrajituro confirmed that a curb cut with a concrete apron is planned.

**ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED:**

- Landscaping Plan
- Erosion Control Plan
- Rule 5 Permit
- Right-of-Way Permit
- Grading Plan
- Provide Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)
- Provide Post-Construction BMP Operation & Maintenance Manual
- Detailed Site Plan
- Backflow Prevention
- Site Improvement Permit
- State Design Release
- Building Permit
- Contractors Registered with the City
- Signage/Fencing Permit
- Submit Internal Plumbing Plan
- Show Calculations for LSR, Gross FAR and Net FAR on Plans
- Provide Photometric Plan
- Zoning Clearance