



PLANNING STAFF REPORT

MEMO DATE: March 18, 2025

MTG. DATE: MARCH 26, 2025

TO: Village of Cottage Grove Plan Commission

CC: Village of Cottage Grove Board of Trustees
Matt Giese – Village Administrator
Lisa Kalata – Village Clerk
Kyela O’Loughlin – Public Works & Utilities Director
Larry Konopacki – Village Attorney
Rick Manthe – Village Attorney
Josh Straka – Village Engineer

FROM: [Erin Ruth, AICP – Village Planning Director](#)

RE: Mr. Queso Sports Bar & Restaurant – Conditional Use Permit

BACKGROUND

Property Owner: CG Silver Badger LLC

Location: 1609 Landmark Drive, Suite 120

Area: 2.66 acres

Agent: Alejandro Ramirez – Mr. Queso Sports Bar & Restaurant

Existing Zoning: PO, Planned Office

Proposed Zoning: PO, Planned Office

OVERVIEW

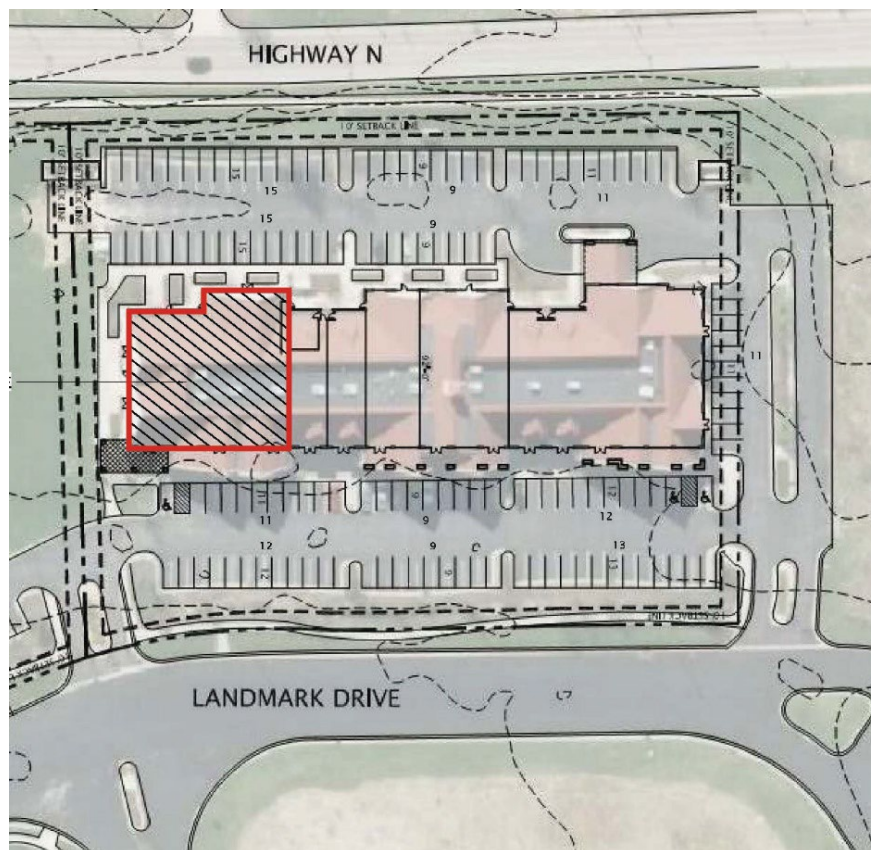
Following the recent closing of BB Jack’s restaurant at this location, Alejandro Ramirez (owner of Don Maguey Restaurant, which has operated in this building since 2020) is applying for a conditional use permit for a new sports bar, Mr. Queso Sports Bar and Restaurant, in the former BB Jack’s space.

The building is zoned PO, Planned Office. The proposed sports bar use is considered an 'indoor commercial entertainment with a liquor license' land use. Per 325-39(B)(2)(b)(9), this use requires a conditional use permit in the PO district.

BB Jack's held a conditional use permit for the same use in this location. However, per the approval conditions that CUP pertained only to BB Jack's and is not intended to transfer to a new business. Therefore, Mr. Queso requires a new CUP.

No exterior changes, other than signage, are planned in association with this conditional use permit.

LOCATION MAP



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY

The proposed use is consistent with the Planned Business designation in the Comprehensive Plan.

ZONING CONSISTENCY

The subject property is zoned PO, Planned Office, which is regulated by 325-39(B) of the Village Zoning Ordinance.

Per 325-39(B)(2)(b)(9), ‘indoor commercial entertainment’ is permitted as a conditional use in the Planned Office district, if the use is adjacent to residentially zoned property or if the subject business holds a liquor license. In this case, Mr. Queso has applied for a liquor license. Therefore, a conditional use permit is required.

The proposed use will use the same amount of parking as BB Jack’s.

COMMERCE PARK COVENANTS

No exterior changes, other than signage, will occur. Therefore, the building remains in compliance with the Commerce Park covenants.

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT CRITERIA

325-111(D)(2) of the zoning ordinance requires a proposed conditional use to be compliant with standards (a) to (f) of that section. In the opinion of staff, the proposed use is compliant with those standards as outlined below.

- a) The proposed conditional use (the use in general, independent of its location) is in harmony with the purposes, goals, objectives, policies, and standards of the Village of Cottage Grove’s Comprehensive Master Plan, this chapter and any other plan, program, or ordinance adopted or under consideration pursuant to official notice by the Village.*

The site location is designated as ‘Planned Business’ on the Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use map. The proposed use is consistent with those allowable within that designation.

- b) The proposed conditional use (in its specific location) is in harmony with the purposes, goals, objectives, policies, and standards of the Village of Cottage Grove’s Comprehensive Master Plan, this chapter and any other plan, program, or ordinance adopted or under consideration pursuant to official notice by the Village.*

The proposed use in this specific location, in the opinion of staff, is in harmony with all of the documents listed above. Specific examples of compliance with the Comprehensive Plan include:

- Land Use chapter, p. 64 – “northern and western edges of the (Commerce) Park, with their visual exposure to I-94 and CTH N, are improved for Planned Business development which may consist of retail, high-quality office, and supporting uses...” A restaurant is a desirable supporting use for other Commerce Park businesses.
 - Land Use chapter, p. 65 – “encourage Planned Business development that occurs along major transportation routes to contribute toward establishing and enhancing a positive image for the Village.” The proposed restaurant will occupy space in the Greywolf (formerly Ghidorzi) Building that has been vacant since the building was constructed. The on-going vacancy in that building is viewed as detrimental to the perception of the Village due to its prominent and highly visible location.
- c) *The proposed conditional use, in its proposed location and as depicted on the required site plan, does not result in substantial or undue adverse impacts on nearby property, the character of the neighborhood, environmental factors, traffic factors, parking, public improvements, public property or rights of way, or other matters affecting the public health, safety, or general welfare either as they now exist or as they may in the future be developed as a result of implementation of the provisions of this chapter, the Comprehensive Master Plan, or any other plan, program, map or ordinance adopted or under consideration pursuant to official notice by the Village or other government agency having jurisdiction to guide development.*

The building’s site and the public ways leading to it were planned, designed, and implemented on the assumption the building would be fully rented. The site, prior to construction, was reviewed and approved based on all applicable Village plans and regulations. The proposed use is not inconsistent with the type of use expected for the building during planning, design, and prior approval processes.

Any business serving alcohol has some potential to be disruptive. The property is not adjacent to any residentially zoned properties. When asked if he had any concerns about the project CGPD Chief Garry responded that he had no concerns.

d) The proposed conditional use maintains the desired consistency of land uses, land use intensities and land use impacts as related to the environs of the subject property.

The proposed use will fit within an existing building. The existing building was reviewed and approved relative to all applicable Village plans and ordinances, and it maintains the desired consistency and intensity of use.

e) The proposed conditional use is located in an area that will be adequately served by, and will not impose and undue burden on, any of the improvements, facilities, utilities or services provided by public agencies serving the subject property.

The full range of urban services are available at the subject property, and the proposed use will not add an undue burden to any public utility or service.

f) The potential public benefits of the proposed conditional use outweigh all potential adverse impacts of the proposed conditional use, after taking into consideration the applicant's proposal and any requirements recommended by the applicant to ameliorate such impacts.

The proposed use is not anticipated to create any adverse impacts on the Village or neighboring properties, while the potential public benefits are several, including:

1. The proposed use will quickly fill the vacancy at the BB Jack's space. Given the highly visible gateway location a lingering vacancy at this location could provide a negative perception of the Village.
2. The proposed restaurant has the potential to attract passersby from I-94. It will also serve the growing number of employees at other Commerce Park businesses, who appreciate restaurant options nearby.
3. The proposed bar/restaurant/game room is an example of a 'third place', an informal place outside of home and work that provides the opportunity for social interaction. In a book on the topic, urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg describes third places as "anchors of community life" which "facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction." Typical characteristics of a third place include 1) they are free or inexpensive, 2) food and drink are important, but not essential, 3) they are highly accessible, 4) they attract customers who become regulars, 5) they are welcoming and comfortable, and 6) they are a place to meet both old and new acquaintances. In most areas, the number of

third places has greatly decreased over the years. Clearly, the proposed project meets most of the criteria for a modern third place. The proposed use would provide an additional 'third place' in the Village.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- A. Staff recommends that the requested Conditional Use Permit be **APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS**, with the conditions as follows:
1. The Conditional Use Permit applies to the applicant business only.
 2. The business's liquor license will be considered separately by the Village Board.
 3. New signage shall require a sign permit.