



PLANNING STAFF REPORT

MEMO DATE: December 4, 2019

MTG. DATE: **DECEMBER 11, 2019**

TO: Village of Cottage Grove Plan Commission

CC: Village of Cottage Grove Board of Trustees
Matt Giese – Village Administrator
Lisa Kalata – Village Clerk
Lee Boushea – Village Attorney
Michael Maloney – Village Engineer

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

RE: **Farris Auto – Conditional Use Permit Amendment**

BACKGROUND

Property Owner: Farris Auto

Location: 212 W. Cottage Grove Road

Area: 1.4 acres

Agent: Jon and Gerard Farris

Existing Zoning: PB, Planned Business

Proposed Zoning: PB, Planned Business

OVERVIEW

In April 2015, Farris Auto received a conditional use permit to operate a vehicle repair and sales business at 212 W. Cottage Grove Road subject to several conditions (see attached Village Action Report).

Since then, the owners Jon and Gerard Farris purchased the 0.75 acre parcel occupied by the garage (they had been leasing it from UW Credit Union), as well as the adjacent 0.65 acre parcel that had been leased by a lawn mower repair business.

Over the past few months the Village has received complaints regarding the number and condition of cars on the lot.



The conditional use permit limits the number of cars on sale on the property to five. The permit also states that “inoperable or salvage vehicles shall not be stored on site, except inoperable vehicles awaiting repair in the short term.”

At the time the permit was granted the business was expected to be primarily a customer-based repair shop where cars would pass through in a few days at most, with sales expected to be a minor aspect of the business. Since then, the business has begun purchasing cars to repair and resell. While those cars are also “awaiting repair” they do not move through the site as quickly and the site can get cluttered with cars.

Now that Farris Auto owns the site, this may be an opportune time to address the complaints with a plan for a more permanent solution that could allow the business to operate successfully while also fitting in with the neighborhood.

Jon and Gerard Farris have met with the Plan Commission to discuss potential options for the site, including a site plan prepared by Village Staff. They have since been working with paving and fencing contractors regarding the project. They are prepared to begin working to improve the site as soon as the weather allows in 2020.

CURRENT CONCEPT PLANS

The current concept is attached. The applicants are planning to improve the site in three phases in a manner that will allow them to continue operations through each phase.

Phase one includes a roughly 60' x 200' parking lot south of the existing buildings. The lot will be enclosed by a wood (or vinyl simulated wood) privacy fence between 6' and 8' tall. The entry to the parking area should be from between the buildings on the north side of the lot as businesses are prohibited from access from a local residential street. Visible sides would include a mulched and landscaped band around the exterior of the fence. The applicants plan to implement this work as soon as paving can resume in the spring.

In phase two the applicants plan to remove two existing sheds on the west side of the site (formerly used by Cottage Grove Mower Repair). The structures would be replaced by a small, new sales office building. Also, in phase two the final segment of the privacy fence will be built between the new sales office and the existing repair shop. The applicants hope to perform this phase over the summer of 2020.

Phase three includes the repair/replacement of the existing paved area on the north side of the site along with landscaping improvements and new signage.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the amended Conditional Use Permit be **APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS**, with the conditions as follows:



1. Signage related to auto sales shall be restricted to signage within the windows of the vehicles for sale on the property.
2. Inoperable or salvage/junk vehicles shall not be stored on-site, except temporarily inoperable vehicles awaiting repair and stored within the fenced area.
3. No unpaved areas shall be used for vehicle parking, storage, or circulation.
4. Signage will require a permit via a separate application process.
5. The Conditional Use Permit shall apply only to Farris Auto at this location.
6. Phase 1 shall include the elements shown in the attached Phase 1 plan including paving, fencing, and landscaping. Coordinate erosion control, stormwater management, and grading with the Village Engineer prior to issuance of a land disturbance permit.
7. Prior to initiating Phase 2, detailed building design drawings shall be provided for Plan Commission and Village Board approval.
8. Contact Village prior to initiation of Phase 3 to discuss scope of work and to determine necessary submittal and approval process, or Phase 3 review may be combined with Phase 2.
9. All cars for sale shall be limited to spaces along the north edge of the property, west of the driveway or shall be within the fenced area.
10. Generally, cars awaiting repair shall be stored within the fenced area. Up to five cars awaiting repair in the short term may be located outside the fence for the convenience of repair operations.