ATTACHMENT D

North Mountain
VILLAGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary
Z-72-25-6

Date of VPC Meeting	August 20, 2025
Request From	R1-6, R-5
Request To	C-2
Proposal	Commercial Uses
Location	Northeast corner of 17th Street and Northern Avenue
VPC Recommendation	Approval, per the staff recommendation, with additional stipulations and direction
VPC Vote	11-2

VPC DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDED STIPULATIONS:

Item No. 6 (Z-72-25-6) and Item No. 7 (Z-SP-3-25-6) are companion cases and were heard together.

15 members of the public registered in opposition to this item, with 8 members speaking and 7 members yielding their time to other speakers.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Robert Kuhfuss, staff, presented the proposal, directing the audience to the city's website for the staff report and related addendum. Mr. Kuhfuss summarized the subject request and its companion case, clarifying that the Special Permit, if approved, would only allow a self-service storage warehouse without the other uses normally associated with C-2 zoning. Mr. Kuhfuss summarized the site conditions and surrounding uses, as well as the General Plan Land Use Map designation of the site and surrounding area. Mr. Kuhfuss highlighted the major features of the site plan adding that the proposed facility encompasses one story below ground and two stories above ground. Mr. Kuhfuss further stated that the proposed facility meets the development standards of the C-2 zoning district. Mr. Kuhfuss displayed an image of the elevations that were included in the packet stating that the applicant had provided revised elevations in response to discussions between members of the community and the applicant. Mr. Kuhfuss displayed the revised elevations noting the muted earth-tone colors. Mr. Kuhfuss summarized the community input received to-date and provided an overview of staff's findings and recommended stipulations, stating that Stipulation No. 1 had been revised to reference the revised elevation.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Jason Morris, representing the applicant with Withey, Morris, Baugh, PLC, stated that he had a challenge with this subject case in that he has represented many self-storage facilities and has found that very few local residents are overwhelmed with excitement with the idea that a new self-storage facility is being proposed in their neighborhood but noted that self-storage facilities, while not exciting, are necessary and are utilized by the people closest to the neighborhood, typically within a two-mile radius of the facility, because they are out of room. Mr. Morris noted the site's proximity to Northern Avenue and State Route 51 and further noted that Northern Avenue is unique in that there is no signalization at the intersection leading from southbound State Route 51 to westbound Northern Avenue, which allows for the free flow of traffic and resulting higher speeds on Northern Avenue. Mr. Morris acknowledged neighborhood concerns regarding higher speeds and the volume of traffic and stated they saw that as positive in that short of a two-acre cemetery, there are few uses that generate less traffic than that proposed. Mr. Morris noted that the office buildings located to the east and west of the subject site take access from 18th Street and 17th Street, respectively, and both take access from Northern Avenue. Mr. Morris noted the existing zoning of the site and the surrounding area and stated that without the proposed zoning, the site would likely develop as multifamily under its current zoning designation. Mr. Morris noted the prior use as a banquet hall that accommodated weddings and other large gatherings until the time that the facility was demolished. Mr. Morris outlined the surrounding land uses, which is what they used to draw from architecturally, while limiting the height of the building to two stories plus a basement level. Mr. Morris provided other imagery of the area and stated that the proposed self-storage facility would generate less traffic than any of the surrounding uses. Mr. Morris displayed an image of the site plan stating that the intent was to bring the building as close as possible to Northern Avenue while placing the parking lot on the north side of the site with a single shared access serving the property to the north. Mr. Morris displayed an image of the revised elevations noting the architectural features of the building and their desire to activate the various facades by providing visual interest on all four sides. Mr. Morris displayed an image of the building renderings and noted an outreach meeting which generated considerable feedback that included feedback regarding the elevations as well as the use and associated traffic, and reiterated the minimal traffic generated by the proposed use, stating there could not be a less intense use. Mr. Morris stated that they had agreed to use faux windows on the second floor of the north elevation, instead of using standard windows. Mr. Morris stated that the facility was internally accessed as opposed to the units being drive-up. Mr. Morris stated that they had agreed to implement changes to the building design and color palette, limitations on signage, and limitations on outdoor lighting. Mr. Morris reiterated that the proposed use was low intensity compared to the current R-5 zoning, which is the most intense residential zoning district. Mr. Morris reiterated that self-storage would be the only use allowed on the site, with no chance of any increase in traffic or difference in the character of the building. Mr. Morris stated that the requested zoning is necessary and would obviate the development of the site as an apartment community.

QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Committee Member Steve Pamperin asked staff if it would be possible for the applicant at some future date to remove the Special Permit thereby allowing all of the uses that would be allowed in C-2 zoning. **Mr. Kuhfuss** stated that it would require a legislative action that would come before the Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council. **Committee Member Elizabeth Pérez-Pawloski** asked for further clarification that this or a future owner could come back to remove the Special Permit thereby allowing the list of uses that are allowed under C-2 and asked what those uses are. Mr. Kuhfuss reiterated that it would require a legislative action and that the property owner would have the right to file that application. Mr. Kuhfuss stated that if that were to occur, all of the uses listed under C-2 would be available to the owner, noting that the list of allowed uses is lengthy. Committee Member Pérez-Pawloski stated that she had a follow up question as to why the other C-2 uses would not be allowed and realized that it was because the Special Permit was a zoning overlay. Committee Member Pérez-Pawloski asked if the zoning case involving the neighboring property that had been before the committee the month prior had been approved. Mr. Kuhfuss stated that he had been on vacation and was not sure of the disposition of that case. **Vice Chair Joshua Matthews** stated that the Planning Commission had recommended that case for approval. Mr. Kuhfuss stated that the reason that the Special Permit would only allow self-storage is because that is what the applicant asked for. Vice Chair Matthews provide clarification that this or another property owner could come back at any time in the future and request any of a litany of zoning districts on the site, including R-5 or the removal of the Special Permit, and that the process to do so would follow that of the current case, which involves the Village Planning Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council.

Committee Member Arick O'Hara referenced slide number 77 and stated that this appeared to be a list of concessions agreed to during a past outreach meeting and asked if those concessions were reflected in any of the 19 stipulations of approval as currently written. **Mr. Kuhfuss** stated that the changes to the design and colors were reflected in the revised elevations referenced in revised Stipulation No. 1 and that he was not sure if the revised elevations called out the faux windows on the north facing elevations. Mr. Kuhfuss stated that signs and lighting were not addressed in the stipulations. **Committee Member O'Hara** stated that under the current R-5 zoning, the owner could construct a 48-foot-high apartment complex with no input from the neighbors. **Mr. Kuhfuss** stated that he would have to refer to the Zoning Ordinance regarding the building height but confirmed that no rezoning process would be required.

Committee Member Massimo Sommacampagna asked if the final plat process as it pertains to the easement referenced in Stipulation No. 3 would require City Council approval or if it was administrative. **Mr. Kuhfuss** stated that it was his recollection that it was an administrative process.

Committee Member Pérez-Pawloski asked for clarification regarding the nature of the Special Permit. **Mr. Kuhfuss** asked for clarification on the question. Committee

Member Pérez-Pawloski clarified that it was her understanding that given the pending nature of the C-2 request, the property owner could come back to rezone the property. Mr. Kuhfuss stated that was correct. Committee Member Pérez-Pawloski stated that according to Google Maps, there are five other self-storage facilities in the area and asked the applicant why they chose to seek approval for another facility on the subject site. **Mr. Morris** stated that similar conversations are not had with respect to restaurants or convenience stores and that the applicant had done their research and would not be willing to invest millions of dollars if they were not certain there was a market for the service being provided. Mr. Morris stated that storage facilities have undergone a significant change over the last decade in that self-storage facilities used to consist of drive-up units with no air conditioning compared to contemporary facilities that include air conditioning where people are storing family heirlooms and other items that would not have been typically stored in an older facility. Mr. Morris stated that could not be ascertained through a simple Google search further stating that the proposed facility would be considered “high-end”, offering a variety of amenities.

Committee Member O’Hara asked for clarification regarding the deceleration lane along Northern Avenue leading to 17th Street, stating that the decision to not include a deceleration lane at that location was based on the city’s Street Transportation Department, not the applicant. **Mr. Kuhfuss** stated that his conversation with the Street Transportation Department was that deceleration lanes were intended to get traffic out of the way, thereby not impeding the flow of traffic on the main travel lanes and that adding a deceleration lane at that location would have that effect, which is counter to the idea of slowing traffic down. Mr. Kuhfuss further explained that a deceleration lane would not solve the problem of westbound traffic that is coming off the freeway at high rate of speed. Committee Member O’Hara asked for confirmation that the city said no to a traffic signal in that area. Mr. Kuhfuss stated that a traffic signal must meet certain warrants and that based on his conversation with the city’s Street Transportation Department, the proposed use does not trigger those warrants. Committee Member O’Hara asked the applicant if he would be willing to include additional stipulations that address the neighborhood concerns expressed at the neighborhood meeting as previously discussed. **Mr. Morris** stated that he would be willing to do so as there is nothing on the list that they have not already agreed to do. Mr. Morris also pointed out that there was a large meeting followed by a lesser-attended meeting that had been coordinated by one of the residents and did not want to imply that the neighborhood would be supportive of the request as a result of those concessions. Mr. Morris also stated that the proposed restrictions on outdoor lighting were consistent with the case to the north that was heard the month prior.

Committee Member Patrick Edwards asked for confirmation that the city did not feel that a deceleration lane at that location was advantageous or warranted. **Mr. Kuhfuss** stated that his conversation with the Street Transportation Department was that a deceleration lane would exacerbate the problem as opposed to helping it. Committee Member Edwards stated that seemed counter-intuitive. Mr. Kuhfuss stated that he is not a traffic engineer or transportation planner and that he was simply relaying to the committee the information that was relayed to him by the Street Transportation

Department. **Vice Chair Matthews** stated that his interpretation in the matter was that if a vehicle were to make a right turn onto 17th Street, the vehicle would need to slow down which would create a cascading effect thereby slowing traffic down on Northern Avenue, and that a deceleration lane would act in a manner similar to a bus pullout. **Mr. Morris** stated that adding a deceleration lane increases the width of the roadway which intern causes motorists to feel more comfortable with driving faster. Mr. Morris stated that they consulted with the Street Transportation Department regarding that issue and were told that a deceleration lane would not be supported.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joann Itow and Jim Feldhan, on behalf of three other members of the public who wished to yield their time, provided a joint presentation outlining their concerns over the proposed project. **Ms. Itow** presented a slide depicting the area and stated there are only three C-O properties in the area adding that everything else in the neighborhood is residential. Ms. Itow stated it was their belief that the proposed C-2 zoning would set a president for additional commercial zoning in the area, which is not conducive to the area. Ms. Itow stated that there are statistics available regarding self-storage and stated that in 2024 the self-storage inventory was 11 million square feet which was 1.7 percent more than in 2024. Ms. Itow stated that in 2025 the supply was expected to increase by 161 percent, which will create a spillover in 2026. Ms. Itow stated they were vehemently opposed to the proposed C-2 zoning and did not support the Special Permit for self-storage. Ms. Itow stated there was no C-2 in the area while Cave Creek Road has a lot of C-2 properties and that Northern Avenue was not the same as Cave Creek Road. Ms. Itow stated no change would be preferable to the proposed zoning and that if the site was to be rezoned, C-O zoning would be preferable to C-2 since C-O zoning is located on either side of the site. Ms. Itow stated that the Southwest Gas facility was used for training purposes as opposed to corporate offices and that the traffic generated by that facility was very low. Ms. Itow stated that whoever builds on the site should be responsible for installing a traffic signal at 17th Street and Northern Avenue in order for people to access Northern Avenue to go either east or west. **Mr. Feldhan** stated that traffic on 17th Street was not the problem and that the issue was getting people in and out of the neighborhood. Mr. Feldhan stated there was not a traffic signal at either 17th Street or 18th Street and that the only option was the traffic signal at 16th Street. Mr. Feldhan stated that people cut through the Southwest Gas facility to gain access to 16th Street. Mr. Feldhan stated that he spoke with general council for Southwest Gas who stated that cut-through traffic was not acceptable due to the disruption of their operation and the associated liabilities, and that if it were to continue, they would consider gating off the facility. Mr. Feldhan stated that the only way for people to safely navigate the area was to take 18th Street north to Las Palmaritas Drive then west to 16th Street to gain access to the traffic signal at Northern Avenue. Mr. Feldhan stated that there was already a problem with cut-through traffic in the area and provided imagery depicting some of the restrictions caused by the narrow streets. Mr. Feldhan stated that he observed one individual having to drive on the sidewalk to avoid oncoming traffic. Mr. Feldhan stated that if the request is approved, there would be an increase in cut-through traffic and similar illegal traffic maneuvers. Mr. Feldhan stated the proposal

includes 722 storage units and 38 parking spaces, and that he observed that in other storage facilities, there was traffic in and out of the facility all day long. Mr. Feldhan stated that another large storage facility is planned near Shea Boulevard and Tatum Road. Mr. Feldhan related another traffic conflict he experienced on 18th Street and stated that these types of conflicts would continue given the unimproved nature of the roads and that the self-storage use is inappropriate for the area. Mr. Feldhan reiterated that the C-2 zoning should not be approved and that in a few years, the property owners could sell the property and come back in an effort to obtain approval for some other obnoxious use including manufacturing that industrial zoning is not appropriate.

Committee Member Pamperin asked if Ms. Itow, Mr. Feldhan, and the people they represent were supportive of the multifamily development that could occur under the existing zoning. **Mr. Feldhan** stated that if the current zoning allows that type of development then it would be ok, and stated that if the request were to be rezoned to C-O he would not object. Mr. Feldhan stated that he was concerned that the proposed self-storage building included one story that is below grade and would require 14 feet of excavation in hard rocky soil. Mr. Feldhan stated that once they determine that it is not cost effective to dig that deep they will seek relief from the height limitation through the Hearing Officer. Committee Member Pamperin stated that he lives in the area and is aware of the traffic issues and stated that if the site were to be developed as multifamily there would be even more traffic in the area. Committee Member Pamperin asked for clarification as to why the speakers would be comfortable with R-5 zoning. Ms. Itow stated that R-2 and R-3 zoning would be compatible with that area and that a five-story apartment building is too intense. Mr. Feldhan stated that it would be difficult to build an apartment building at that location due to the traffic issues.

Committee Member O'Hara asked for clarity in that concerns had been expressed regarding all of the possible uses allowed in C-2 zoning and whether the fact that the Special Permit only allows self-storage gave them any comfort. Committee Member O'Hara further asked if the fact that in order to remove the Special Permit or go back to R-5 zoning would require the same process gave them any comfort. **Mr. Feldhan** stated that the C-2 zoning is already in place, the list of allowed uses under C-2 is long, and that it would be a rubber stamp. Mr. Feldhan stated that if the storage facility did not work out they would try to repurpose the building and that it would be unlikely that a zoning request to facilitate that repurposing would be denied. Committee Member O'Hara stated that he thought that statement was presumptuous. Committee Member O'Hara stated that the presentation did a good job in explaining the traffic issues in the area and restated Committee Member Pamperin's question by asking if they would be ok with a scenario where the requested zoning is denied and the developer opts to move forward with a 48-foot high apartment building consisting of 50 to 70 dwelling units with 200 to 220 new residents generating 150 to 175 trips per day on a 24-hour basis with no public input compared to a facility that generates minimal traffic during business hours only. Mr. Feldhan stated that it was his understanding that the applicant did not yet own the property and that if the zoning was not approved, the purchase transaction would not likely be completed. Mr. Feldhan stated that the applicant builds storage facilities and is not going to build

apartments. Committee Member O'Hara asked the speaker, who was granted additional time to speak on behalf of a number of people, to clarify why they would be ok with a use that generates a high volume of traffic but not ok with a use that generates minimal traffic. Mr. Feldhan stated that if there was to be an apartment building, that would trigger the need for a traffic signal at 17th Street and Northern Avenue. Mr. Feldhan stated that on Camelback Road near 40th Street there are several traffic signals in close proximity to one another, which demonstrates that the city will install traffic signals when warranted.

Committee Member Sommacampagna asked if the increase in the number of projected storage units that were cited were permitted or under construction. **Mr. Feldhan** stated that the 160 percent figure was for units that are under construction and coming online this year. Mr. Feldhan stated there were a number of units that had been rezoned but not permitted.

Committee Member O'Hara referenced slide number 83 and stated that the applicant had already indicated their back-up plan is to construct a 14,000 square foot, 48-foot high, four-story, 88-unit apartment complex. Committee Member O'Hara stated that it sounded like the applicant was a developer, not a storage unit developer. **Mr. Feldhan** asked if the statement that the applicant was a family-owned business that has been building storage facilities for three generations is not true. Committee Member O'Hara stated that he was only going off the slide that the applicant provided. Mr. Feldhan stated that he was going off representations made by the applicant. Committee Member O'Hara asked if that was as concerning to them as the proposed project. Mr. Feldhan stated that he had a problem with the city allowing them to blast 14 feet into bedrock to get the subterranean level they propose and that it will end up being a 40-foot tall building even if it is less traffic. Mr. Feldhan stated they were on a hill and that it is solid rock.

Mike Taborn, on behalf of four other members of the public who wished to yield their time, provided a presentation outlining their concerns over the proposed project. Mr. Taborn stated that he intended to discuss the intersection of concern, how residents compensate using Northern Avenue, the new use case associated with the zoning request, and his recommendations. Mr. Taborn stated that he and his neighbors tend to use the traffic signal at 16th Street and Northern Avenue during those times when traffic on Northern Avenue is heavy. Mr. Taborn stated that if the requested zoning goes through, this will increase the problem. Mr. Taborn stated that during a meeting held the week prior, the city's representative present at that meeting did not corroborate what Mr. Kuhfuss had stated earlier and had not studied the issue. Mr. Taborn stated that he did not understand how the city planner could now claim differently. Mr. Taborn presented a scenario of a 26-foot truck attempting to make a right-hand turn from Northern Avenue onto 17th Street, stating that the truck would have to slow to about two miles per hour in a lane that otherwise has fast moving traffic. Mr. Taborn stated that during times of heavy traffic, he would opt to pass 17th Street to access 16th Street in order to avoid having to slow down to make the turn onto 17th Street. Mr. Taborn stated that experienced drivers will know that but inexperienced drivers will not. Mr. Taborn discussed line of sight issues at 17th Street

looking east on Northern Avenue. Mr. Taborn stated that several obstructions, including an electrical transformer and a block wall, block visibility, and that motorist reaction times factor into the equation. Mr. Taborn stated that a deceleration lane would help and that more study is needed. Mr. Taborn stated that reaction times increase as additional drivers are factored in, which has a cumulative effect, and supports the idea of a deceleration lane. Mr. Taborn expressed concerns over left turn movements at Northern Avenue and stated there needs to be a “no left turn” sign at that intersection.

Committee Member Matthew Knapp asked if Mr. Tabor knew what the speed limit was for Northern Avenue. **Mr. Taborn** stated that he believed it was 40 miles per hour.

Doug Banfelder identified himself as representing the Stoney Mountain Neighborhood Association and stated that he was hopeful that if approved, the request would include the additional stipulations as previously discussed. Mr. Banfelder stated that the applicant has approximately 4,000 facilities across the country and apparently runs a credible operation. Mr. Banfelder stated that a deceleration lane is warranted and did not know that the city had already decided for them that a deceleration lane was not supportable, and that the Street Transportation Department was expecting motorists making the turn onto 17th Street to control the speed of the traffic behind them. Mr. Banfelder stated that Northern Avenue is signed at 40 miles per hour and that it is not uncommon for motorists to travel at 45 or 50 miles per hour and sometimes 55 miles per hour, which is highway speed. Mr. Banfelder stated that 17th Street was a narrow residential street and that it was asking a lot for the vehicles turning right into 17th Street to be the mechanism that slows down the traffic. Mr. Banfelder stated that while a wider thoroughfare might encourage higher speeds, traffic is already traveling at high speeds. Mr. Banfelder stated that it would be difficult for a truck, perhaps pulling a trailer, to slow down enough to make a right turn onto 17th Street and not get rear ended. Mr. Banfelder expressed concerns over the possibility that traffic will not slow down enough to negotiate that turn and will overshoot the turn and hit the obstructions located on the west side of 17th Street. Mr. Banfelder stated that they would like to support the request but are concerned about safety and would like a deceleration lane and signage to restrict left turns at 17th Street as well as a “no right turn” sign coming out of the facility to keep people from using the local street to gain access to 18th Street.
Charles Chapman stated that his home is located directly behind the proposed facility. Mr. Chapman stated that he had looked at a couple of Cube Smart facilities and they are not much to look at and except for the lack of barbed wire, they look like correctional facilities. Mr. Chapman expressed concerns over having a 30-foot-tall box directly behind his house. Mr. Chapman expressed concerns regarding two lanes of freeway traffic exiting onto Northern Avenue while maintaining freeway speeds with no traffic signals until 16th Street. Mr. Chapman stated that making either a right or left turn onto Northern Avenue is a risky proposition. Mr. Chapman expressed his appreciation of the rural character of the neighborhood, and that the addition of the proposed non-descript structure will aggravate traffic concerns and diminish the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Glenn Osborne stated that he is not opposed to the site being developed and had offered support for the request involving the neighboring property to the north because a 15-foot-tall building fit into the neighborhood. Mr. Osborne stated that the subject request involves a 30-foot-tall, 230-foot-long storage facility that will be close to his property line and home. Mr. Osborne expressed concerns regarding outdoor lighting shining onto his property. Mr. Osborne stated that traffic was a concern due to the speed of the traffic on Northern Avenue and the lack of a deceleration lane. Mr. Osborne stated that it was a blind curve east of the intersection at 17th Street. Mr. Osborne stated that the proposed facility did not fit into the neighborhood and that the area between State Route 51 and 16th Street consisted of homes, offices, and apartments with no self-storage facilities. Mr. Osborne stated there were already four or five existing storage facilities within a five-minute drive and there is no stated need for an additional facility. Mr. Osborne expressed concerns with the bedrock and the length of time needed to construct the facility.

Art Anderson stated that it is not possible to appreciate the traffic issues at 17th Street and Northern Avenue unless you drive it due to the blind curve and high speeds. Mr. Anderson stated that large trucks will have no chance of making a left turn onto Northern Avenue at 17th Street, and that a deceleration lane that is occupied by a large truck will block the view of oncoming traffic from the left. Mr. Anderson stated that comparing a contemporary facility to an older one is putting lipstick on a pig. Mr. Anderson stated that it was unfair to ask if someone would rather have this facility or an apartment complex since they were here to talk about the self-storage and apartments are another issue.

Ruth Truman stated that she is a real estate land development attorney and is opposed to the project. Ms. Truman stated that she felt there were a number of red herrings and strawmen being presented. Ms. Truman argued against Mr. Morris' assertion that the property needs to be developed because it is vacant. Ms. Truman further argued against Mr. Morris' assertion that the neighborhood needs the proposed facility stating there are five storage facilities in the immediate area that are not at capacity. Ms. Truman stated that the threat of a 48-foot-tall multifamily building happening if the developer does not get his way is a strawman argument and used the analogy of a prosecutor stating that a defendant better take a plea or face a larger sentence. Ms. Truman stated that assuming the broker was not a bad broker, the reason the property had not attracted a multifamily developer is because the site is not suited for multifamily development and that it was not appropriate to state that they are just going to make the neighborhood worse by building a multifamily development if their request for a storage facility is not approved. Ms. Truman stated that she was in favor of a deceleration lane and that on August 18th Jorge Rivera from the Street Transportation Department met with a number of residents in the area and stated they were open to the idea of a deceleration lane. Ms. Truman stated that it was ludicrous for anyone to state that a deceleration lane is off the table and that it was not off the table since it had not even been studied.

APPLICANT RESPONSE

Mr. Morris thanked the members of the public for coming out and stated that he understood this is an adversarial process. Mr. Moris stated that he appreciated Ms. Truman's comment that not every site needs to be developed. Mr. Morris stated that the Village Planning Committee sees zoning applications every month and that the site could remain vacant forever but that is unlikely since it is a desirable location adjacent to an arterial street with 50,000 cars per day. Mr. Morris stated that much of the conversation was over traffic yet there is not a less intensive use than that proposed. Mr. Morris stated that every alternative use that was presented by the opposition would generate three to five times the amount of traffic than would be the case under the current proposal. Mr. Morris compared the vision of what might happen to a movie trailer for Mission Impossible 6 in that motorists, when trying to turn, would crash into gas lines, trees, etc. Mr. Morris stated that he recognized there would be fast traffic and experienced the situation firsthand but stated that it is possible to make a right-hand turn safely. Mr. Morris pointed out that there is an office building located on either side of the subject site with access to Northern Avenue and that one of the buildings was served by 88 parking spaces while the other was served by 200 parking spaces and that all of these people manage to get into those parking spaces every day. Mr. Morris stated that the proposed facility has 22 parking spaces. Mr. Morris stated the only use that generates less traffic is a vacant site and that he did not believe the site would remain vacant. Mr. Morris stated that what had been demolished on the site was a banquet hall that generated considerably more traffic than what is being proposed and the idea of placing a use on the property that generates the least amount of traffic makes sense. Mr. Morris stated that the applicant is a developer and understands the value of R-5 zoning and will be closing escrow on the property knowing they have the ability to move forward with an R-5 development. Mr. Morris stated there is multifamily in the area and that the site would support about 56 dwelling units with parking but that type of development is not what the applicant wishes to do even though it is a backup plan. Mr. Morris stated that going with multifamily is not a threat because if that was their intent they would not be seeking to rezone. Mr. Morris reiterated that self-storage is the lowest intensity use that can be placed on the site and that it is the only use allowed under the Special Permit. Mr. Morris stated that SP zoning is not an overlay but is a zoning district and that while there must be an underlying district, the only use allowed is self-storage. Mr. Morris stated that there was a lot of conversation regarding the idea that C-2 zoning would exist thereby paving the way for more intense development later should the self-storage fail and added that would be required to go through the same process. Mr. Morris stated that conceivably he could request A-1 zoning or a small nuclear power plant but it has to go through a process that is the same as that required for the current proposal. Mr. Morris stated that he found it ironic that the opposition did not show images of the intersection of 17th Street and Northern Avenue and that one of the reasons this is an appropriate site is because it has arterial access. Mr. Morris stated they had already agreed to no left turns. Mr. Morris stated they had asked the city numerous times about a deceleration lane and were told that was not an option but were happy to have a solution that works for the neighbors. Mr. Morris stated that he found it ironic that more than a couple of residents stated that they have a storage

unit. Mr. Morris stated that self-storage is part of the neighborhood fabric and are a low intensity use but are under constant pressure and they would not be seeking approval if they did not feel they would get staff support, address traffic restrictions in the area, and deliver an appropriate project that benefits the area. Mr. Morris stated that not every site needs to be developed and that his impression was there was an expectation that if the request is not approved the site would remain vacant. Mr. Morris stated this was akin to whack-a-mole theory and that he did not believe there was great appreciation for the fact that the site will be developed and that keeping the site vacant is a temporary situation. Mr. Morris stated that if the request were to not be approved, his guess is that the next development proposal will avoid the process by using the existing zoning and involve a use that will exacerbate every one of the concerns expressed by the neighborhood.

QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Vice Chair Matthews asked Mr. Morris if in his experience, would a multifamily development occurring under the existing zoning necessitate additional improvements such as a traffic signal. **Mr. Morris** stated that it would not warrant a traffic signal and that the background traffic on Northern Avenue is 50,000 trips per day but that the cross-traffic is limited and there is no way that warrants would be met. Mr. Morris stated that he was at the city the day prior to discuss the possibility of a traffic signal at 18th Street and Northern Avenue and that the Council Member has some ability to bring in a signal at that location. Mr. Morris stated there was discussion about the city adding illuminated speed signs with flashing lights along the stretch of Northern Avenue between the freeway and 18th Street and that if the city was to decide that a traffic signal was viable for 18th Street, the applicant would be willing to fund a portion of that signal, it if could be moved up in the Capital Improvement Program.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Vice Chair Matthews, in an effort to focus the discussion, summarized the main points of the discussion so far stating that the site was zoned R-5 and that the request was for C-2 with a Special Permit to allow a self-storage warehouse only. Vice Chair Matthews stated that if the subject request is approved, and this or any future owner wished to change that zoning, they would need to come back though the same process. Vice Chair Matthews stated that it appeared that the residents of the neighborhood understand that the site is zoned R-5 and that by-right there could be multifamily housing. Vice Chair Matthews stated that he believed that everyone would agree that multifamily development will produce more traffic than a self-storage facility. Vice Chair Matthews stated that the committee could recommend additional stipulations and provide direction. Vice Chair Matthews further stated that any new stipulations must be the burden of the applicant and be supported by both the applicant and staff. Vice Chair Matthews stated that the deceleration lane will require additional study.

Committee Member Joshua Carmona stated that Vice Chair Matthews did a good job summarizing the discussion and that he understood that the neighborhood is

against the Special Permit but less hesitant regarding the R-5 zoning. Committee Member Carmona stated that a “no” vote could result in the site being developed as R-5.

Committee Member Pamperin stated that it was not within the committee’s purview to discuss whether or not the site should develop as multifamily. Committee Member Pamperin stated that he counted ten self-storage facilities within a 4.5-mile radius of the site and that in a wealthier neighborhood, there would not be a self-storage facility every two miles. Committee Member Pamperin stated that because this is a lower income neighborhood, there is an overabundance of storage facilities. Committee Member Pamperin stated that he did not believe that a storage facility would add value to the neighborhood or increase property values. Committee Member Pamperin stated that the area has a high volume of traffic and that if the request were to be approved, he would be in favor of a stipulation that requires a deeper look into the traffic situation.

Committee Member Pérez-Pawloski asked if there were comment cards where the individual indicated they were in support of the request. **Vice Chair Matthews** stated that he did not have any comment cards that indicated support and deferred to staff regarding any letters of support that may have been received. **Mr. Kuhfuss** stated that all letters regarding this request were in the packet or handed out. Committee Member Pérez-Pawloski stated that she wanted to know where the members of the audience lived relative to the site. Vice Chair Matthews stated there were individuals who live on 17th Street, Griswold Road, and the neighborhood. Committee Member Pérez-Pawloski stated that she understood the neighbor’s concerns and felt that it was inappropriate for the residents to be asked if they would rather have the existing zoning. Committee Member Pérez-Pawloski stated that she was prepared to make a motion.

MOTION 1:
Committee Member Elizabeth Pérez-Pawloski motioned to recommend denial of Z-72-25-6. **Committee Member Steve Pamperin** seconded the motion.

DISSCUSSION:

Committee Member Barraza asked if a motion to deny failed would it automatically default to an approval of the request. **Vice Chair Matthews** stated that it would not and that the committee would need to vote in the affirmative on something.

Committee Member Edwards stated that he would not support a motion to deny. Committee Member Edwards stated that the committee should remain objective regarding the request and be clear on the issues, and that it was not a zoning issue or storage issue but a traffic issue that cannot be solved with the subject case. Committee Member Edwards stated that the question having to do with whether or not the proposed facility is warranted is not within the purview of the committee and that the committee would not be asking that question if the request involved a restaurant or other type of business. Committee Member Edwards stated that he was pro-

development and that a property owner has the right to develop their property within certain guidelines. Committee Member Edwards stated that he did not believe the business was inappropriate for the area and that the traffic issue needs to be addressed independently.

Vice Chair Matthews clarified that a “yes” vote would have the effect of denying the request and that a “no” vote would bring the committee back into discussion.

VOTE 1:
3-10, motion to recommend denial of Z-72-25-6 fails with Committee Members Carmona, Pamperin, and Pérez-Pawloski in favor and Committee Members Barraza, Edwards, Harris, Hepperle, Jaramillo, Knapp, Larson, O’Hara, Sommacampagna, and Matthews opposed.

DISSCUSSION:

Committee Member Arick O’Hara stated that he was ready to make a motion but requested a point of privilege. Committee Member O’Hara stated that he had been on the committee for nearly ten years and that in his experience, Mr. Kuhfuss was one of the best planners to serve the committee. Committee Member O’Hara stated that if Mr. Kuhfuss does not have the answer to a question he will state so and find the answer. Committee Member O’Hara stated that he did not believe that anyone meant to be rude or offensive and stated that he takes exception to numerous speakers who questioned Mr. Kuhfuss’ integrity regarding whether he spoke to someone in a very large department of a very large city. Committee Member O’Hara stated that if Mr. Kuhfuss said that he spoke to someone, he spoke to someone. Committee Member O’Hara stated that he heard the residents loud and clear and was going to include in his motion additional stipulations including a thorough traffic evaluation to assess the need for a traffic signal and a deceleration lane, since Mr. Tabor raised valid points during his presentation. Committee Member O’Hara referenced Ms. Truman’s statement that she had spoken with the Street Transportation Department on August 18th and received a different answer and that the matter needs to be clarified before any dirt is turned.

Vice Chair Matthews asked staff if it was true that stipulations are typically the burden of the applicant to fulfill. **Mr. Kuhfuss** stated that was the case. **Vice Chair Matthews** suggested that the motion include direction for the applicant to seek clarity from the Street Transportation Department regarding the traffic signal and deceleration lane and that clarity be obtained prior to Planning Commission. Vice Chair Matthews stated that he assumed that the applicant would be willing to obtain that clarity. **Mr. Morris** stated that was acceptable. Vice Chair Matthews asked staff if the additional stipulations needed to be read into the record for both cases. Mr. Kuhfuss stated that each case needed to be taken independently and that staff would work with the applicant regarding specific language, and that for consistency, the stipulation language should ultimately apply to both cases.

MOTION 2:
Committee Member Arick O'Hara motioned to recommend approval of Z-72-25-6 per the staff recommendation, with additional stipulations and direction. Additional stipulations are to 1) reduce the number and locations of building wall signs, 2) reduce the size of the monument sign on Northern Avenue, 3) limit outdoor lighting to low-profile shielded fixtures not exceeding a height of 15 feet including lamp, pole and base, and not exceeding 2,700 Kelvin, and no more than one foot-candle at the property line, and 4) to not allow any north-facing windows above the 1st floor. The direction is for the applicant to seek final determination from the Street Transportation Department regarding the traffic signal and deceleration lane prior to Planning Commission. **Committee Member Jim Larson** seconded the motion.

VOTE 2:
11-2, motion to recommend approval of Z-72-25-6 per the staff recommendation, with additional stipulations and direction passes with Committee Members Barraza, Carmona, Edwards, Harris, Hepperle, Jaramillo, Knapp, Larson, O'Hara, Sommacampagna, and Matthews in favor and Committee Members Pamperin and Pérez-Pawloski opposed.

VPC RECOMMENDED STIPULATIONS

1. The development shall be in general conformance with the site plan ~~**and elevations**~~ date stamped May 27, 2025, **AND THE ELEVATIONS DATE STAMPED AUGUST 18, 2025, WITH SPECIFIC REGARD TO THE COLOR PALETTE,** as modified by the following stipulations and approved by the Planning and Development Department.

2. Where pedestrian walkways cross a vehicular path, the pathway shall be constructed of decorative pavers, stamped or colored concrete, or other pavement treatments that visually contrast parking and drive aisle surfaces, as approved by the Planning and Development Department.

3. At the time of final plat, a minimum 14-foot-wide vehicular access easement, providing for future shared access with the adjacent northern property to 17th Street, shall be recorded.

4. The existing sidewalk Northern Avenue shall be removed and reconstructed with a minimum 6-foot-wide detached sidewalk separated by a minimum 10-foot-wide landscape strip located between the back of curb and sidewalk on the north side of, adjacent to the development, and shall comply with the following standards, as approved by the Planning and Development Department.

    a. Minimum 2-inch caliper, single-trunk, large canopy, drought-tolerant, shade trees, planted 20 feet on center or in equivalent groupings on both sides of the sidewalk to achieve a minimum of 75% shade.

b. A minimum of five 5-gallon drought-tolerant shrubs per tree and a mixture of drought-tolerant shrubs, accents, and vegetative groundcovers, maintained to a maximum height of two feet, evenly distributed throughout the landscape areas to achieve a minimum of 75% live coverage.

Where utility conflicts exist, the developer shall work with the Planning and Development Department on an alternative design solution consistent with a pedestrian environment.

5. All mitigation improvements shall be constructed and/or funded as identified in the accepted Traffic Impact Analysis dated May 8, 2025.

6. Replace unused driveways with sidewalk, curb and gutter. Also, replace any broken or out-of-grade curb, gutter, sidewalk, and curb ramps on all streets and upgrade all off-site improvements to be in compliance with current ADA guidelines.

7. All streets within and adjacent to the development shall be constructed with paving, curb, gutter, sidewalk, curb ramps, streetlights, median islands, landscaping and other incidentals as per plans approved by the Planning and Development Department. All improvements shall comply with all ADA accessibility standards.

8. A minimum of 5% of the required parking spaces shall include EV Installed infrastructure.

9. A minimum of two bicycle parking spaces shall be provided through Inverted U and/or artistic racks located near building entrances and installed per the requirements of Section 1307.H. of the Phoenix Zoning Ordinance, as approved by the Planning and Development Department. Artistic racks shall adhere to the City of Phoenix Preferred Designs in Appendix K of the Comprehensive Bicycle Master Plan.

10. A minimum of one of the bicycle parking spaces shall include an electrical receptacle for electric bicycle charging capabilities, as approved by the Planning and Development Department.

11. All bicycle parking spaces and pedestrian pathways, including sidewalks, shall be shaded by a structure, landscaping, or a combination of the two to provide a minimum of 75% shade, as approved by the Planning and Development Department.

12. Natural turf shall only be utilized for required retention areas (bottom of basin, and only allowed on slopes if required for slope stabilization), as approved by the Planning and Development Department.

13. A minimum of 25% of the surface parking areas shall be shaded, as approved by the Planning and Development Department. Shade may be achieved by structures or by minimum 2-inch caliper, drought tolerant, shade trees, or a combination thereof.

14. Prior to final site plan approval, documentation shall be provided that demonstrates a commitment to participate in the Phoenix Water Efficiency Checkup program for a minimum of 10 years, or as approved by the Planning and Development Department

15. A minimum of two green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) elements for stormwater management shall be implemented, as approved or modified by the Planning and Development and/or Street Transportation departments. This includes but is not limited to stormwater harvesting basins, bioswales, permeable pavement, etc., per the Greater Phoenix Metro Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development Details for Alternative Stormwater Management.

16. If determined necessary by the Phoenix Archaeology Office, the applicant shall conduct Phase I data testing and submit an archaeological survey report of the development area for review and approval by the City Archaeologist prior to clearing and grubbing, landscape salvage, and/or grading approval.

17. If Phase I data testing is required, and if, upon review of the results from the Phase I data testing, the City Archaeologist, in consultation with a qualified archaeologist, determines such data recovery excavations are necessary, the applicant shall conduct Phase II archaeological data recovery excavations.

18. In the event archaeological materials are encountered during construction, the developer shall immediately cease all ground-disturbing activities within a 33-foot radius of the discovery, notify the City Archaeologist, and allow time for the Archaeology Office to properly assess the materials.

19. Prior to final site plan approval, the landowner shall execute a Proposition 207 waiver of claims form. The waiver shall be recorded with the Maricopa County Recorder's Office and delivered to the City to be included in the rezoning application file for record.

20. THERE SHALL BE NO WALL SIGNS LOCATED ON THE NORTH-FACING OR EAST-FACING ELEVATIONS.

21. WALL SIGNS LOCATED ON THE WEST-FACING AND SOUTH-FACING ELEVATIONS SHALL BE LIMITED TO NOT MORE THAN 170 SQUARE FEET IN THE AGGREGATE.

22. GROUND SIGNS LOCATED ALONG NORTHERN AVENUE SHALL BE LIMITED TO NOT MORE THAN FIVE FEET IN HEIGHT.

23. WINDOWS LOCATED ABOVE THE FIRST FLOOR ON THE NORTH FACING ELEVATIONS SHALL BE LIMITED TO FAUX WINDOW ONLY.

24. THE FOLLOWING LIGHTING STANDARDS SHALL APPLY ON-SITE, AS APPROVED BY THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT:

A. ALL LIGHTING SHALL BE SHIELDED TO PREVENT DIRECT VISIBILITY OF THE LIGHT SOURCE FROM ADJACENT PROPERTY.

B. LIGHTING SHALL BE SHIELDED WITH CUT-OFF FIXTURES AND DEFLECTORS TO DIRECT LIGHT DOWNWARD AND LIMIT ON-SITE LIGHTING LEVELS TO A MAXIMUM OF 1 FOOT CANDLE AT THE PROPERTY LINE.

C. ANY LIGHTING SHALL NOT EXCEED A MAXIMUM OF 15 FEET IN HEIGHT INCLUDING LAMP, POLE, AND BASE.

D. THE COLOR TEMPERATURE OF ANY OUTDOOR LIGHTING SHALL BE LIMITED TO 2,700 KELVIN.

STAFF COMMENTS REGARDING VPC RECOMMENDATION & STIPULATIONS:

None.