

Staff Report

Referral from 429 and 431 South Duff Avenue

July 26, 2011

Background

On June 21, the City Council referred a letter to staff from three businesses—Car-X Auto Service, Story Medical Natural Health, and Serenity Pet Spa. The letter sought City help in acquiring a second access from their property at 429 and 431 South Duff Avenue to South 5th Street. The letter is included as Attachment 1.

Staff spoke with representatives of the three businesses that wrote the letter and understands that they are concerned about northbound traffic on Duff Avenue being unable to access their property. This is because there is often southbound traffic backed up at the intersection with South 5th, especially in the center/left turn lane. This turning movement is shown on the map on Attachment 2 and is identified as “A”. **Another concern expressed by the three businesses is that it is difficult for cars to exit Car-X onto northbound Duff Avenue.** This movement is shown on the attached map and identified as “B”. **The business owners hoped that by providing an access across the corner lot at 435 South Duff Avenue, northbound traffic could turn left on South 5th and turn right into a driveway that would lead to their businesses.**

A vacant lot, formerly the Fox II and Sprint store, lies between the Car-X and South 5th Street and is owned by 435 South Duff, LLC (a corporation headquartered at the Hunziker Realty address). A site plan for a two-tenant building (of which one tenant is proposed as a Chipotle restaurant) has been submitted for that property, addressed as 435 South Duff. An excerpt from the proposed site plan is included as Attachment 3.

During conversations with the businesses that wrote the letter, staff showed them a copy of the proposed site plan for the two-tenant building but, since the driveway around the south side of the restaurant is a one-way drive, it would not provide an alternate entrance drive to the Car-X property. However, it could provide an exit lane for drivers wishing to exit Car-X onto South 5th. The cars could then make a left turn to become northbound on Duff Avenue. This movement is shown as “C” on the map on Attachment 2.

Staff asked all three business owners if they had approached the owner of the vacant lot at 435 South Duff to see if, through their design of the site, they could be provided the access they want. Staff learned from the three businesses that they had not. **Staff explained that the City cannot require such an access. However, while the City has no authority to compel the owner to provide an alternative access for the Car-X property, staff would certainly work with the owner to accommodate such an access if the owner so desired it.**

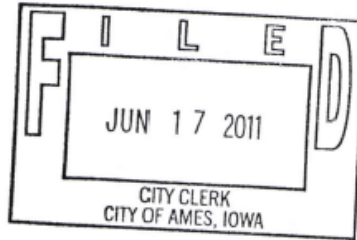
Since the City doesn't have any authority to require access easements across 435 South Duff Avenue to accommodate the wishes of the businesses at 429 and 431 South Duff Avenue, it doesn't appear any further City action is possible.

ATTACHMENT 1: LETTER FROM 429 AND 431 SOUTH DUFF AVENUE BUSINESSES

*Photo. 6-17-11
Copy: John Joiner
Steve O.*

June 11, 2011

The Mayor
City Council
Public Works –Engineering
515 Clark Ave.
Ames, IA 50010



We would like to bring to your attention the need for another access route to enter the businesses at 421 and 431 S. Duff Ave. Particularly since the lot at the NW corner of 5th and S. Duff will be re-built eventually, there is a need to plan for an entrance and exit that could serve our locations as well.

At this time, the only entrance or exit to our businesses is the driveway through the Car-X lot. A significant amount of traffic goes through this driveway and it has become more difficult to enter or exit due to the increasing amount of traffic on south Duff Ave. It also brings up some safety concerns for the customers walking across the Car-X lot.

Since the southbound traffic going to Wal-Mart is using the turn lane at the 5th St. and S. Duff intersection, quite a few cars can be lined up and therefore blocking the lanes for traffic from the south to enter the driveway. That also makes it difficult for customers to leave the Car-X driveway wanting to go north.

We would like you to assess the situation and determine if some alternative entrance can be included in the future building plans for the corner lot that is presently vacant but may soon be sold.

The businesses presently using the Car-X driveway are:

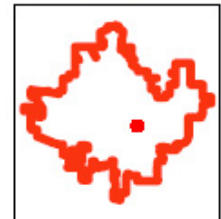
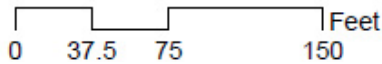
- Car-X
- Story Medical Natural Health
- Christine Shimkus Massage Therapy
- Sunstone Massage
- Serenity Pet Spa

MGR CARX John Blanke
Mrs Albert Smith
Owner Serenity Pet Spa
Valerie Schallbaum
Story Medical Natural Health

ATTACHMENT 2: MAP OF TURNING MOVEMENTS AT 429 AND 431 SOUTH DUFF AVENUE



**Turning Movements at
429-431 South Duff Avenue**



ATTACHMENT 3: PROPOSED SITE PLAN FOR 435 SOUTH DUFF AVENUE

