



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

Office of the Clerk of Council
200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Kristin E. Rosan, Chair, Jennifer Tisone Price, Vice Chair, David K. Andrews, Bobbie Burba, Joe Keehner, Donald R. Shepherd, Thomas J. Wester

Jayme Maxwell, CMC, Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

7:00 PM

City Hall

Commission will caucus at 6:30 in the Committee Rooms

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL

Gahanna Planning Commission met in Regular Session in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 200 South Hamilton Road, Gahanna, Ohio on Wednesday, March 11, 2015. The agenda for this meeting was published on March 6, 2015. Chair Kristin Rosan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Commission Member Bobbie Burba.

Present 7 - David K. Andrews, Joe Keehner, Donald R. Shepherd, Bobbie Burba, Jennifer Tisone Price, Kristin E. Rosan, and Thomas J. Wester

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

[2015-0054](#) Regular Meeting Minutes - February 25, 2015

Attachments: [PC Regular Meeting Minutes - February 25, 2015](#)

A motion was made by Wester, seconded by Shepherd, to Approve the Minutes of the February 25, 2015 Regular Meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Andrews, Keehner, Shepherd, Burba, Price, Rosan and Wester

[2015-0056](#) Workshop Minutes (for review) - March 4, 2015

Attachments: [March 4 Workshop Minutes](#)

D. HEARING OF VISITORS - ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA

None.

E. APPLICATIONS/PUBLIC HEARINGS: In accordance with Planning Commission Rules Section 6.10 A., if there is more than one application pending before the Commission for a particular address at a meeting, the public hearings on each application may be consolidated and held as one.

Chair stated Public Hearing Rules that would govern all public hearings this evening. Assistant City Attorney Thomas L. Weber administered an oath to those persons wishing to present testimony this evening.

[V-0003-2015](#)

To consider a recommendation to Council of a variance application to vary Section 1105.10 (c), Development of Land Within Plan; to allow a permit for construction to be issued by the City for a model home prior to all required improvements being accepted by Council; for property located at 4185 North Stygler Road; Schottenstein Homes, applicant. (Advertised in the RFE on 3/5/15)

Attachments: [4185 N Stygler Road/Schottenstein Homes - Oakgrove of Gahanna - Agenda Packet](#)
[Legal ad](#)
[Contiguous Property Owner Letter V-0003-2015](#)
[V-0003-2015 ROA](#)

Zoning Administrator Bonnie Gard gave a summary of the application; displayed area map and zoning map; property is zoned SF-3, Single Family Residential; reviewed Code requirements regarding this situation; applicant is asking to build a model home prior to all infrastructure being accepted by Council; Code does require City Engineer to certify improvements prior to Council acceptance; there is a punch list that needs to be reviewed and approved; Staff does not believe there are special circumstances in this case; in recent memory, this has never been done in this way; think it is a slippery slope; not going to affect the neighborhood; all conditions have to be met prior to any permit being issued.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

David Hodge, attorney for applicant, 37 West Broad Street, Columbus 43215; stated we are here without a positive recommendation from Staff; came up with an analogy for this situation: if you go to a bar and see a tip jar, typically the bar tender puts money in the tip jar because that encourages people to tip; same concept here; very experienced home builder; know what it takes to sell lots in a subdivision; they believe if they are allowed to start construction on this lot which has frontage on Stygler Road and was a building pad that had a home on it a few years ago, they will get drive by interest; believe they will

encourage home sales; notification on this is a long one; neighbors were interested in previous processes; believe they would want this to be granted because this will cause houses to sell and for the developer to get off the property and life to continue; truly believe this will help this subdivision and cause houses to sell; another thing is purely from a business perspective, this is good for business for developer and City of Gahanna; see no real health and safety reason not to grant this variance; fire safety is not an issue; committed to working with City Engineer on access; this is a common practice in today's market; it is the way homebuilders are doing things; this is not an isolated lot in a new subdivision; the lot where we're requesting to do this is right on Stygler Road; used to have a house on it; don't see a real health and safety reason not to approve this; developer has already posted a bond; there are certainly variance criteria in Code and the law; every jurisdiction has their own criteria; happy to answer questions.

Chair asked for opponents. There were none.

Shepherd stated we take variances seriously; if we start varying one application, can snowball; don't see any way to get around this; Code is Code; this developer is experienced; cannot claim ignorance; strictly monetary from my standpoint; see no hardship here; believe they are trying to capture summer market.

Hodge said in hindsight, they should have started construction before they platted the thing; the subdivision adjacent to this, there are houses existing where they came in behind them and built a subdivision; variances are serious; when you boil criteria down to it, it's "do no harm"; think this is in Gahanna's and neighbors best interest.

Wester asked what the alternate access points you made mention of are. Hodge answered there is the existing driveway; any place where we can work with your City Engineer and prove there are no clear vision issues and folks will be able to access and leave site safely; people driving this road are used to there being a house and drive here; can see clearly from every direction. Wester said he would prefer to see a different access; pulled back from intersection; can you get access from entry road. Hodge said eventually that is where it will take access. Wester said concerned with access on Stygler Road; would have to be further south. Hodge said would welcome a condition if this were sent to Council with a positive recommendation.

Price said in terms of 4185 and existing drive, would be uncomfortable with that; amount of traffic on that would have been minimal in comparison to people stopping to look at a model home; asked City Engineer Rob Priestas if another access is viable. Priestas said would

like to see access to lot be moved; could use existing construction gravel entrance further south on the lot; if Planning Commission were to recommend this, would recommend the existing gravel construction entrance. Price said when market was better, builders would send prospective homebuyers to other sites; is this not possible here. Hodge said this is more to show activity; there are other subdivisions underway in other areas.

Burba asked how many houses are being built. Hodge answered 13. Burba said if you had a model home there, where would people park. Hodge said one of the things that is very important here, we need a certificate of occupancy eventually; would not ask for one until we meet regulation we're held to.

Andrews said don't really see any hardship other than you want to get in there and sell properties; feel we're opening a Pandora's Box if we approve this. Hodge said respect that you have to be comfortable and not set a precedent; is a really small subdivision and not an isolated lot on an unplatted road; on a lot that has had a house on it before; got frontage on a public street; think that is a special circumstance that helps us meet the criteria for the variance.

Price asked how much time is really saved in terms of time differential if this is approved. Hodge said not sure. Priestas said upon review of the schedule we looked at, looked like it may save a month to get approval at this stage.

Keehner confirmed you want to build the house before you build the road; seems to me I'd want to see the road before I signed a contract; see your argument; maybe Staff could explain why everything is built and dedicated to Council. Priestas said don't know full meaning behind Code but intent is to limit our liability to ensure our infrastructure is correctly implemented; adhering to existing Code.

Chair closed the public hearing at 7:24 p.m.

Motion was made by Shepherd, seconded by Andrews to recommend to Council approval of V-0003-2015.

Keehner said seemed like the main issue is the safety with the access. Chair said the motion on the floor does not address that.

Shepherd said he will not be in support; do not see hardship; experienced builder; they understood the time frame before they got involved.

Wester said won't support at this time; preference is for access from

newly constructed drive; when site was replatted, existing drive was abandoned at that point in time.

Price said she is not supporting this for 3 reasons:

1. precedent; this is infill and see a lot of that in the future in Gahanna;
2. don't believe there is a hardship; doesn't limit applicant's ability to market; and
3. interest could be fueled in other ways including a temporary sales office which would not be prohibited.

A motion was made by Shepherd, seconded by Andrews, that the Variance be Recommended for Approval to Council. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 0

No: 7 - Andrews, Keehner, Shepherd, Burba, Price, Rosan and Wester

[V-0004-2015](#)

To consider a variance application to vary Section 1153.03 (c)(4), CC Community Commercial District, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; to allow a rear yard setback of less than 1/4 the sum of the height and width of the building; and to vary Section 1153.03 (c)(7) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; to allow lot coverage of more than 75%; for property located at 1115-1153 North Hamilton Road; Vista Plaza Redevelopment (Fresh Thyme Marketplace) Charlie Fraas, applicant.
(Advertised in the RFE 3/5/15)

Attachments: [V-4-2015 Vista Plaza - Fresh Thyme Farmers Market -1115-1153 N Hamilton Rd - Agenda Packet](#)
[Legal ad](#)
[Contiguous Property Owner Letter V-0004-2015](#)
[Staff Comments -Fire \(Submitted March 9\)](#)
[Trip Generation Comparison \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[Revised Plans \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[Revised Plans2 \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[Revised Plans3 \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[V-0004-2015 ROA](#)

Gard gave a summary of the applications; area map of existing shopping center displayed; property is zoned Community Commercial; this is a permitted use; looking to construct a 28,000 square foot store; overall footprint will be reduced by 4,000 square feet; lot coverage is and will remain at 79%; traffic study was requested and forwarded today; Staff asked for connectivity with residential area to west; will be tricky but will let applicant address that; new plans show wider parking spaces; Fresh Thyme is very responsive to customers and that was something that was requested from them; is a perfect fit for this center; was designed with a French country look; this is very

compatible with that; new lighting and signage; master sign plan has been modified to accept additional signage; proposed signage displayed; applications are a Variance to allow a bump out in the rear of building to encroach into setback; not the entire back of building; do support this variance; variances were part of the original construction; Variance for lot coverage; topography creates special condition; quite a drop behind center; very difficult for pedestrian connectivity

Weber administered oath to speakers.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:34 p.m.

Charlie Fraas, Casto, 250 Civic Center Drive, Columbus, developer of center as well as homes behind; introduced Quackenbush and Mark Architect; want take responsibility for late submissions; width of parking spaces is the only thing to change; still exceeds Code requirement; customers like having wider spaces to load a car; lose two spaces in nearly every row but still substantially exceed Code requirements; Fresh Thyme has 2 stores in the area now; one on Sawmill and one in Worthington; looking at Westerville; cater to midwest; hope to have 60 stores by 2020; intent is to have fresh produce and midwest items; will be a very nice thing for the City; along the same lines as Trader Joe's and Whole Foods; can go for breakfast or dinner; have a growler bar; sell beer and wine; this opportunity allowed us to make sure this center will be here for next 20 years; going to be tearing down big part of the center; replacing square footage; could not keep all tenants; as a whole for Gahanna, think this is a positive; regarding the Variance, currently don't meet code on linear rear; typically have a much larger bumpout; challenge was the more we move this up, the more we have to tear down and lose critical parking; this was happy medium; from a visual standpoint doesn't affect that grade; other Variance was for lot coverage; losing parking added green space but did not change 79% lot coverage; removing an access to allow for additional green space; not adjusting spaces on north west because that will ideally be for employee parking; dealing with an infill location site that already has existing lot coverage; have to replace square footage of what we have; not asking for increase; condominium association to the north has a fair amount of turnaround traffic; allowed new cut in median to allow you into site without going up and turning around; maybe we can fix sign there to have better visibility; one reason that is happening is probably due to apartments on east side; be happy to help with some additional signage or any ideas Commission has; City has done a nice job with signage; submitted traffic study that shows we are not creating any additional traffic; happy to answer any questions.

Mark Ford, 1500 West 1st Avenue, Columbus, said had a long history

with this; worked with Solove when this originally went in; working with Fresh Thyme on another site here in Columbus; prototype is spot on for existing center; we have taken existing colors and materials at center and tried to blend them with Fresh Thyme's vision; match existing limestone there now; on the southwest corner, we are using same galvanized metal standing seam roof; replicating same on north corner as well; balance of building is combination of different block and stone materials; creating panels and pilasters across building; added board and batting around top of building; balance of building is going to be split face block; is cedar used on building; do have canopy you walk under; may have display of fruits, vegetables and flowers; they do go after farmers market aesthetic and operation; overall intent is to match what is there; west wall shows the bumpout; that is really the service end of building; in materials, can see same silver standing seam roof existing at center; stone and block matches; branded sign is arched panel and also have some tag lines to address offerings; will use a deep red on the building.

Fraas said one of the questions raised by staff was pedestrian access; we are going to build new sidewalk; no attachment from Hamilton Road; taking out a parking space and creating sidewalk and crosswalks; can access from Hamilton Road via pedestrian movement; challenge to the back, there is the great topography change and 2 ponds; looking into some other options; understand the need; like the idea; was not developed at the time to easily get pedestrians up to the site; have some ADA issues because of the grade; looking into it but there really isn't a good solution at this time.

Chair asked for opponents. There were none.

Shepherd asked how the drive that goes from dry-cleaners and circles around will work. Fraas said that entire area is not changing; when trucks come in they will come in along south and run at rear of building, up and out. Shepherd said know the area behind it; only thing I can think that you could do for pedestrian access would be if you did some kind of a railing on both sides and a boardwalk but the slope may be too much. Fraas said we have been challenged on that side. Shepherd said see tons of kids wanting to get to the store; not a good situation. Fraas said trying to really focus the new area at the northeast corner and keep northwest corner fenced in; see this as more employee parking; we would be happy to change that up if we have some management issues. Shepherd said didn't get traffic study until right before meeting; concerned with stacking leaving the area and the potential for problems there; looks like there may be room for 10 cars before stacking up and not being able to turn out; will that be a problem; didn't think traffic would be at same peak times as apartment traffic. Fraas said this is not going to cause traffic increase; closest

thing similar to this is Whole Foods on Lane Avenue; see cars there all day; going to be more around the clock; kept drive aisle at 30'; gives a more open feeling; hoping most folks will go out the other way if they are heading south. Shepherd asked about normal operating hours. Fraas said they are not 24 hours; produce, bakery, regular grocery items; do have some bulk items, health and beauty and vitamins; small quadrant of the Giant Eagle; they close at 10 p.m.

Wester said have concerns about traffic in general area; whether there is adequate stacking on Hamilton Road; have eliminated one entrance; like to know what time the additional trips in morning and evening are; Vista Drive is signalized; have concerns where trucks will be coming in; dry cleaners has a drive-thru window. Fraas said there is enough room but most people go and pull back; don't bother to go all the way around the building; curb side service instead of a true drive thru. Wester asked if there has been any thought to moving one access further down Hamilton Road. Fraas said we like that it is further from main entrance; center is starting to age; very important to try to modify it without tearing down and putting up 3 outparcels; traffic counts are staying about the same; may be distributed differently.

Brian Quackenbush, EMH&T, 5500 New Albany Road, Columbus; said want to better understand stacking concern on to Hamilton. Shepherd said pulling out on south side leaving center, turning to go up to light; looks like you can hold 8-10 cars; worried about the flow in that area. Quackenbush said even though we are eliminating second access point; the westernmost only gets you to the back of the center; that drive can be used by customers that park in that southern parking bay; still will have relief valve; not funnelling everything to easternmost driveway; important to realize if you are going south, people still use northernmost drive.

Keehner said see you are adding landscaping; do you have plans to add perennials and herbaceous plants; Gahanna is the Herb Capital of Ohio. Fraas said not sure; maybe we can do some stuff out closer to right of way; don't mind looking to see if that is something we can work with staff on; slope is big issue there.

Price said thrilled with this project; am a Whole Foods, Trader Joe's shopper; huge market for this in Gahanna; in terms of signage solution, you mention willing to work with City and staff to improve signage there; is that something we can flesh out a little more rather than it just being a concept; like to explore connectivity to apartments more; don't know if boardwalk concept could be explored more; Fraas said have to take a look at how something like that would affect the feasibility of the area; walking that piece, it is very close to that water and edge; is a safety concern. Price asked if it would be possible to do

it on the northwest corner; like to further explore the walkability. Fraas said he'd be happy to look at it. Price referenced these seas of asphalt that we have; trying to move toward being more pedestrian friendly; you mentioned you were overparked; is there an opportunity to do something to create more green space and not create additional safety issues and still maintain functional drive aisles. Fraas said we are overparked for Code but at bare minimum for what we can operate the center by tenants' rights; have to meet requirements of leases; like the idea; in today's world, creating more green spaces and getting rid of seas of asphalt is a great thing; do have gigantic parking fields, this unfortunately, is not one of them; maintaining some restaurants there; feel it's going to get pretty tight; want to make sure it operates in a way that doesn't lose customers. Price said love the landscape plan; along the south side is beautiful; along Hamilton Road could you do something. Fraas said if there is something you would like to see maybe we could modify a portion of that mound and soften that; not a problem. Price said have a great start here; like to see it fleshed out a little more; maybe with answers in a couple of weeks.

Burba said do think it's a wonderful addition to Gahanna; have same concerns everyone else does with traffic.

Andrews said great improvement for Gahanna; also go to Trader Joe's and Whole Foods so this will be nice; regarding a bridge over the lakes, a lot of times, residents don't even use those sidewalks because of all the ducks that use those ponds; don't see how you are going to be able to create any connectivity there.

Chair asked about workshopping; what is applicant's timing; would a two week delay cause concern. Fraas said if we feel like Commission is moving in a positive direction, would be willing to take that risk.

Chair reviewed Commission's issues: landscaping and green space, finalizing walkability, traffic study; are those things we want to workshop or are we comfortable getting staff approval.

Shepherd asked Priestas about reviewing traffic study. Priestas said he did not have a chance to review it. Shepherd said worried about traffic but happy with look and feel of project; would normally just ask City Engineer; like to at least get his input on that.

Fraas said love to be able to respond in some way positive but it is possible we won't have a lot of changes; open to looking; critical element is cutting guys lose to do drawings without approval.

Chair asked if it would be helpful if Planning Commission voted on Variance now and Final Development Plan and Design Review for

subsequent night. Fraas was amenable to that.

Chair closed the public hearing at 8:26 p.m.

A motion was made by Andrews, seconded by Price, that the Variance be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Andrews, Keehner, Shepherd, Burba, Price, Rosan and Wester

[FDP-0001-2015](#)

To consider a Final Development Plan application for demolition of shops, a new 28,700 square foot store and adjustments to parking area; for Vista Plaza Redevelopment (Fresh Thyme Marketplace), property located at 1115-1153 North Hamilton Road; Chris Fraas, applicant.

(Advertised in the RFE 3/5/15)

Attachments: [FDP-1-2015 - Vista Plaza - Fresh Thyme Farmers Market - 1115-1153 N Hamilton Rd -Agenda Packet](#)
[Legal ad](#)
[Contiguous Property Owner Letter](#)
[Staff Comments -Fire \(Submitted March 9\)](#)
[Trip Generation Comparison \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[Revised Plans \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
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[Revised Plans3 \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[Request for Postponement](#)

See discussion of previous agenda item.

Set FDP-0001-2015 and DR-0001-2015 for next public hearing on March 25.

[DR-0001-2015](#)

An application for Certificate of Appropriateness for Site Plan, Landscaping, Building Design and Signage; for Vista Plaza Shopping Center (Fresh Thyme Marketplace), property located at 1115-1153 North Hamilton Road; Charlie Fraas, applicant.

Attachments: [DR-1-2015- Vista Plaza - Fresh Thyme Farmers Market - 1115-1153 N Hamilton Rd - Agenda Packet](#)
[Staff Comments -Fire \(Submitted March 9\)](#)
[Trip Generation Comparison \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[Revised Plans \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[Revised Plans2 \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[Revised Plans3 \(Submitted March 11\)](#)
[Request for Postponement](#)

See discussion of previous agenda item.

Set FDP-0001-2015 and DR-0001-2015 for next public hearing on March 25.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

[DR-0002-2015](#)

To consider a Certificate of Appropriateness for a Patio Enclosure; for property located at 81 Mill Street, Suite 150; Pigskin Brewing Company, Tarry Summers, applicant.

Attachments: [DR-2-2015 - 81 Mill Street, Ste 150 - Pigskin Brewing Co- Agenda Packet](#)
[DR-0002-2015 ROA](#)

Gard gave summary of application; stated this is for Pigskin Brewery located in Creekside Development; patio enclosure necessary for Board of Liquor Control requirements; position of railing is up, will have to be metal clad to meet building code; will be entry and exit points that aren't there now; minimalistic design; more of a shelf to put food and drinks on; metal clad shelf tied nicely into signage; even though it is a bit angular, still works with design.

Tarry Summers, 4290 Groveport Road, Columbus, said this is a lot more simple than other applications; put up something that looks good and gave us some additional standing room; especially with events at Creekside and some Crew and OSU events we have planned, we want to maximize space; want to thank Ken Fultz, Chief Building Official and Bonnie Gard for working with us; will have two access points; wrapping with same metal that is on sign and top of building.

Burba asked if you going to have heaters. Summers said yes; 4 out there now; they sit on the ground.

Keehner said one pole there looks cheesy; not aesthetically pleasing. Shepherd asked if applicant checked with Department of Liquor Control. Summers said there was an existing hole there; didn't want to tap into other brick without working with you guys. Keehner said when first saw it, thought if there were two poles, it would match better; not against it, just doesn't look visually comfortable to me; might be okay once you get the metal on it. Summers said would you feel more comfortable with two poles instead of one. Keehner said if you put poles in all the holes, it would look more finished. Shepherd said have we asked for a letter from Department of Liquor Control. Gard said they will not do that. Shepherd confirmed it is not our obligation. Wester asked what was originally planned there. Summers said holes were there but never anything put there. Shepherd asked if that is

public space. Gard answered no.

Price clarified this is the old Seekers.

Summers said Department of Liquor Control already came out and approved it. Price said think this is a great addition to Creekside; really does fit with the theme of the inside that you've done; have no concern with it not being purposely a decorative element.

Burba asked if you're going to put planters out there; decoration is nice. Summers said we can definitely do that.

Keehner said glad you did the sign thing; your sign really improved the facade significantly.

A motion was made by Burba, seconded by Price, that the Design Review be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Andrews, Keehner, Shepherd, Burba, Price, Rosan and Wester

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

City Attorney

No report.

City Engineer

No report.

Department of Development

No report.

Council Liasion

Price attended meeting on Monday; lot of discussion on Parks Master Plan; asked Clerk to forward to Commission; GRIN lease fell apart; they are definitely looking for new place to locate.

CIC Liasion

Burba said next meeting March 17th.

Chair

Chair gave a reminder of workshop next week at 6:30.

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS

[SWP-0002-2015](#) A Subdivision Without Plat to split 0.294 and 0.095 acres of a 4.422 and 4.008 acre tract; for property located at 690 and 700 Taylor Road; Settle Muter Electric, applicant; administratively approved March 4, 2015.

Attachments: [SWP-2-2015 690 & 700 Taylor Road - Agenda Packet](#)

Clerk advised that the subdivision without plat as read was administratively approved March 4, 2015.

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

No comment.

K. ADJOURNMENT

8:41 p.m.