



# City of Gahanna

## Meeting Minutes

### Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

*James Mako, Chair*  
*John Hicks, Vice Chair*  
*Michael Greenberg*  
*Sarah Pollyea*  
*Thomas W. Shapaka*  
*Michael Suriano*  
*Michael Tamarkin*

*Pam Ripley, Deputy Clerk of Council*

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Wednesday, January 24, 2024

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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

Gahanna Planning Commission met in regular session on January 24, 2024. The agenda for this meeting was published on January 19, 2024. Chair James Mako called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Sarah Pollyea.

**Present** 6 - Michael Greenberg, James Mako, Sarah Pollyea, Thomas W. Shapaka, Michael Suriano, and Michael Tamarkin

**Absent** 1 - John Hicks

#### B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA - NONE

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2024-0019](#)

Planning Commission minutes 12.6.2023

**A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Pollyea, that the Minutes be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 5 - Greenberg, Mako, Pollyea, Shapaka and Suriano

**Absent:** 1 - Hicks

**Abstain:** 1 - Tamarkin

[2024-0018](#)

Planning Commission minutes 12.20.2023

**A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Pollyea, that the Minutes be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 5 - Greenberg, Mako, Pollyea, Shapaka and Suriano

**Absent:** 1 - Hicks

**Abstain:** 1 - Tamarkin

[2024-0017](#)

Planning Commission Org. Mtg. minutes 1.10.2024

**A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Pollyea, that the Minutes be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 5 - Greenberg, Mako, Pollyea, Shapaka and Suriano

**Absent:** 1 - Hicks

**Abstain:** 1 - Tamarkin

**D. SWEAR IN APPLICANTS & SPEAKERS**

Assistant City Attorney Matt Roth administered an oath to those persons wishing to present testimony this evening.

**E. APPLICATIONS - PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Buckles Court North - Lot 4**

[V-0001-2024](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary Chapters 1167.18(c)(1) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, for property located at Buckles Court North (Lot 4); Parcel ID: 025-013813; Current Zoning SCPD; Medical Office Building; Larry Canini, applicant.

In accordance with Planning Commission Rules Section 7.4.1.1., if there is more than one application on the same project, they may be discussed as one.

City Planner Maddie Capka provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation.

Capka shared the renderings of the building and surrounding buildings. The Surgical Suites, directly south of Lot 4, and the Medical Office Building, directly south of the Surgical Suites, all match in materials.

The applicant requested one variance, which is the location of the dumpster. The zoning code requires that all dumpsters are located to the rear of the main structure. The proposed dumpster is located to the front of the main structure. The applicant states that no structures can be placed to the rear of the lot due to its topography.

Capka shared the variance criteria, all of which must be met in order to grant approval of a variance. The variance criteria are as follows: there are special circumstances or conditions applying to the land, building, or use referred to in the application; the granting of the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights; the granting of the application will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in such neighborhood.

Capka then shared criteria for final development plans, which are the following: the plan meets applicable development standards; the plan is in accord with appropriate plans for the area, it would not have undesirable effects on the area, and it is consistent with land use character and development of the area.

The design review criteria are as follows: It is compatible with existing structures; contributes to the improvement of the design of the district; contributes to the economic and community vitality of the district; and to maintain, protect, and enhance physical surroundings. Since the site is zoned SCPD, it falls within Design Review Districts 3 and 5, which have some additional criteria. Those are: landscape islands shall be in center and perimeter of parking areas; earth mounding and trees should be considered; generous use of vegetation encouraged; brick, stone, cement, decorative aluminum, and wood are encouraged materials.

Staff recommends approval of the variance. Only one variance is requested, and special circumstances exist due to topography. Variances to this requirement have been approved previously, and it is staff's belief that the variance will not have a negative impact on the surrounding area. Additionally, staff recommends approval of the final development plan because all applicable requirements and criteria are met with the variance. Finally, staff recommends approval of the design review. All applicable requirements and criteria are met with the variance, and the materials are an exact match to both additional Walnut Creek buildings.

Chair opened public comment at 7:11 p.m.

Larry Canini, Canini & Associates, PO Box 887, New Albany, Ohio. Canini introduced himself and noted Canini & Associates is the master developer for the Crescent project. With the development of a medical hub, they received continued interest from parties in the medical field. This building is an opportunity for Canini & Associates to provide smaller spaces for specific uses, primarily medical offices. With the fact that they now have two primary care practices within the Buckles

Ct. N campus, it will provide them with more disciplines due to the referral basis of primary care. They recently moved Optum Health into the building across from the one proposed in this application. This is an opportunity for them to offer smaller medical practices that don't need 8,000-10,000 square feet. This building is just under 12,000. It is design as an open palette, and they are waiting on the users. They have secured one user, a plastic surgeon, for about 3,500 square feet. That is the beginning, but they will allow the rest of the building to be used for whatever needs someone has.

Similar to all buildings at Crescent, they are also offering the practitioners to have ownership of the building. It is a key element to getting the doctors to invest in the community and being invested in the real estate will keep them in the area a long time. Canini concluded his comments and referred to the commission for questions.

Clerk confirmed there were no comments from the public.

Chair closed the public comment at 7:14 p.m.

Chair called on questions from the Commission.

Mr. Shapaka noted that typically dumpsters are preferred at the end of the building due to issues with cleanliness and odor. He asked if the tenant planned to move in has any concerns about waste that will be placed in the dumpster. Canini replied that in previous projects, they were not aware of the need for a place to put boxes due to the supplies and medications that come into these types of facilities. The dumpster is set up to have three units. Two will be trash and one will be recycling. They have set this up for other buildings on Buckles Ct. as well. The significant reason to that location is not only related to topography. As they move back, they have the reserve with the creek behind them. The practices like to be able to have nice views out of their offices and exam rooms, so on that side of the street they pushed the offices toward the creek. Critically here, the more important issue was not having the dumpster trucks circling the parking lot during business hours. This is because all the entrances are at the front of the building, along with the handicap accessible parking spaces. Therefore, people with walkers and wheelchairs will be in the area. Anytime they can get the trucks in and out of the lot quickly is ideal. They are no longer able to schedule pickup services for before or after hours.

Mr. Shapaka asked if there was a picture of the gates themselves and inquired as to what material they would be. Canini replied that the

gates will be identical to the Surgical Suites. They are brick walls with a metal louver gate. As mentioned in the report, there will be substantial landscaping and Canini does not believe it will stand out. Additionally, there will be cars around it. With medical offices, they may have two to three pickups a week. That is the driving force behind the request.

Ms. Pollyea noted that the dumpster will separate trash and recyclables. Since this is a medical office, she asked where the hazardous materials will be placed. Canini noted that no medical waste will leave the facility. It will all remain in the respective office buildings and will be handled by the offices themselves. Pollyea asked about the design of the enclosure. She wondered how tenants will access the enclosure where the dumpster will be located. Canini said it is three sided with brick, the front are gates that can be opened manually. The person bringing the trash out can swing the gate open. It is hinged. He said it is a standard specification within the industry and code. Pollyea expressed some concern about where the dumpster is in proximity to the building. She asked if there are any concerns about unauthorized dumping. Canini said it is a constant concern in the industry. They put signs up indicating the dumpsters are for private use only and dumping is not permitted, but it does happen. It is part of their role as not only the developer but the property manager as well to check the properties and ensure there is no trash. He said that in previous projects, they have surrounded the dumpsters with pine trees and the dumpsters became visible and were more prone to dumping. However, when the dumpsters are enclosed and gated, it is less of an issue because the dumpster is less visible.

Mr. Greenberg thanked Mr. Canini. He said as long as he has been sitting on Planning Commission, he does not remember anyone else installing recycling containers. He noted that there are large trucks that come in for collection, and wondered if the carts are ones that are pushed out on wheels. Canini replied that there is a heavy-duty concrete pad that extends beyond the gates. The bins do not get wheeled out, they are removed with lifts. He also noted that depending on how many tenants there are, they may be able to limit the number of pickups. He encouraged members to view Buckles Dr. now, stating that it is a clean area. Greenberg asked if the space has been measured appropriately for the trucks to pull in and back up, Canini confirmed. He said that is exactly why the location is the best option. A truck can pick up the trash, back up, and pull out easily. He said for traffic flow and safety this was the best option. He was wary of having the truck loop around the lot with patients moving in and out of the building. Greenberg asked about the number of tenants in the building. Canini stated there is currently one committed tenant that will take up about 3,500 square feet, and there will probably be at least

two more that move in. Greenberg noted that each tenant will possibly have infectious waste, which is different from hazardous waste. There will be a different truck for that. Canini said this will be a different, private truck for those purposes. Greenberg pointed out that if there are four tenants, there may be four trucks per week. Canini said it will depend and he could not speak to the number of pickups. He felt it would be dependent on each practice. Canini also said the first tenant is an eye surgeon. She will be using the surgery center next door. A draw of being near the Surgical Suites is the location.

Mr. Suriano had one question. He noted the material used will be similar to Walnut Creek. There appeared to be a third material and asked if Mr. Canini could elaborate on what that would be. Canini replied that the material will be on the west elevation and part of the north elevation, which will not be particularly visible, will be EIFS. It is a popular material. They wanted to look for cost savings, as it is an expensive endeavor to build horizontally rather than vertically. They felt that other offices built in this way have been a success.

Mr. Tamarkin drew attention to the south and east elevations, which show seven doors. He asked if the number of doors would be determined based on the number of tenants. Canini replied that the doors would probably be left as-is, because practices often like having multiple entrances for staff and patients. Canini also felt that having more doors helped to break up the mass of brick. Tamarkin asked if 52 parking spots would be enough if there are 3-5 tenants. Canini replied that code requires 40, and he did not anticipate having more than 2 or 3 additional tenants. Anything else would limit the square footage. They want to see tenants have around 2,500-3,000 square feet, which only allows for 2-3 more tenants. The patients are not only visiting this building, but may be using the parking lot next door at the surgery center. He sees this as a symbiotic relationship. There is interconnectivity in sidewalks between the buildings. He found that some of the doctors who want that ease may opt to do a stepping stone path or something of that nature. Tamarkin expressed still having some concern with the parking, noting that if each practice has 4 or 5 employees, they would not want street parking or anything like that. Canini noted there was also a very large parking lot across the street and that if it became an issue, staff could begin utilizing that lot.

Mako raised a question about security and whether there was an on-site security team that monitored the property. Canini replied there is not a private company. They have not had any instances of break-ins or anything of that nature. If it became an issue, they would consider private security. Mako then asked for clarification, that there is another lot on the street. Canini pointed out an open lot that is at the end of the cul-de-sac but fronts on the freeway. He said the area in

the middle is a pond for stormwater management, which captures all the needs for the lots along the freeway.

Greenberg drew attention to the reserve. He said there is a sidewalk that goes along the property and a small portion in front of the reserve. He wondered who is responsible for building the sidewalk. Canini said that on lot number 1 on the corner, there is construction going on right now for Ohio Gastro's new facility. They will be required to connect the sidewalk per their contract.

Ms. Pollyea recalled Canini's earlier comments regarding doctors having a stake in the real estate aspect. Canini confirmed that doctors are allowed to be a partner rather than simply being a tenant and paying rent, as sort of a joint venture. They find it is good for the community. As tax abatements begin to expire around 8-10 years, practices begin to look elsewhere. The goal is to keep them invested in the project and keeping them around.

**A motion was made by Shapaka, seconded by Suriano, that the Variance be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Greenberg, Mako, Pollyea, Shapaka, Suriano and Tamarkin

**Absent:** 1 - Hicks

[FDP-0001-2024](#) To consider a Final Development Plan Application for property located at Buckles Court North (Lot 4); Parcel ID: 025-013813; Current Zoning SCPD; Medical Office Building; Larry Canini applicant.

In accordance with Planning Commission Rules Section 7.4.1.1., if there is more than one application on the same project, they may be discussed as one.

This item was discussed under V-0001-2024.

**A motion was made by Shapaka, seconded by Suriano, that the Final Development Plan be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Greenberg, Mako, Pollyea, Shapaka, Suriano and Tamarkin

**Absent:** 1 - Hicks

[DR-0001-2024](#) To consider a Design Review Application for medical office building, parking and utilities for property located at Buckles Court North (Lot 4); Parcel ID: 025-013773; Current Zoning SCPD; Medical Office Building; Larry Canini, applicant.

**A motion was made by Shapaka, seconded by Suriano, that the Design Review be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Greenberg, Mako, Pollyea, Shapaka, Suriano and Tamarkin

**Absent:** 1 - Hicks

## Zoning Code

Michael Blackford, Director of Planning began his presentation by thanking Planner Maddie Capka and Planning Manager Logan Stang for their work on the new zoning code document. He gave a brief refresher as to what the project has been so far. Chapter 11 of the Codified Ordinances has been completely rewritten as a new document. The existing code is burdensome, is not formatted in a logical way, and is difficult for the public to read. The new document is formatted in a more readable way. Additionally, the existing document is no longer reflective of the community's vision. It was written in 1958, when Gahanna's population was less than 3,000. It was growing and the needs of the community are different now, than then were 65 years ago. The development constraints and goals are much different. However, Blackford noted that some things written in the existing code do work well, and those will be carried forward.

### Challenges

Blackford next moved to the challenges of the existing code. The main thing they experience from both internal and external customers is finding information within the code. As an example, there may be parking references in three or four different places. And the code uses terminology that is not reflective of today's vernacular. Another challenge is process improvement. A goal is to eliminate recurring variances where possible. Changes have been made to how items can be approved, whether administratively or via a public hearing process. There was also a need for more architectural and design standards. Blackford also noted that uses were much different in 1958 than they are today and needed to be refined.

Blackford pointed to successes, which are not changing. He said the majority of processes are working and will continue, with a couple of exceptions. These are primarily de minimis variances, preliminary plats, and final design plan/design reviews. Some applications were combined because they contain much of the same information. For uses, radical change was not necessary, and some areas simply needed refinement.

Blackford explained there was community engagement, both in person and online. He felt it was most successful community engagement for any zoning or planning item he had been involved in. The market on Mill St. saw 200-300 individuals, which was many times more than they would have had during regular office hours. There was a workshop in October. The Land Use Plan influenced zoning code as well. Finally, a consultant worked hard on the project and helped with



areas where day-to-day staff were not as familiar, such as legal aspects.

Blackford then focused on the formatting of the document. The proposed code has charts to simplify standards. It will be easier for external and internal customers. The new tables and charts take up significantly less document space, making the information easier to find.

The existing code uses language such as “universal harmony,” “high quality materials,” and “harmonious relationship.” The proposed code goes away from such subjective phrases and instead states permitted and prohibited materials, limits the number of colors, sets requirements for windows, has requirements for secondary facades to somewhat match the primary façade. Standards are more stringent in Olde Gahanna than industrial. Currently, the industrial has the most stringent standards. They don’t want to prescribe architecture but they need more consistency.

Planning sometimes receives development proposals in which uses come to the forefront. In the vast majority of Gahanna there is not a lot of change in uses. That was a lot of the feedback they received. Gahanna has an established development pattern and there was not a need to change that. Residential areas will stay residential. The major change is with Neighborhood Commercial zoning. There was feedback that the uses in these areas may be too wide-ranging, and scope needed refined. Another change is more residential opportunities in commercial areas. The biggest change was consolidation of districts, going from 26 to 13, and changing the permitted uses in Neighborhood Commercial. There was very little difference in commercial districts as far as uses. They wanted to be mindful of the uses in Neighborhood Commercial that might not be as appropriate anymore. They received feedback on uses that were 24/7, late in the day or at night, that are not appropriate around neighborhoods. Residential would be permitted in the Commercial General zoned district via conditional use.

The zoning map currently has 26 districts. There is very little difference between districts. An example is CC (Community Commercial) and CC-2. They allow the same uses and standards. The only difference is that one requires filing a Final Development Plan and curb cuts per the City Engineer. However, this applies to all developments. There are very few differences. There are two zoning districts that have no properties zoned, and three districts with three or fewer properties. These were consolidated. The proposed map is down to 13: six residential, six non-residential, and one mixed use.

Blackford shared the color-coded map, noting that the same areas that are residential in the current zoning code will remain residential. Based on feedback received, staff worked to be strategic about which properties would receive an Office, Neighborhood Commercial, or General Commercial zoning. General Commercial will allow for more uses. The dark red area on the map depicts the General Commercial area. The pink area across the street shows the Neighborhood Commercial area. They tried to locate General Commercial in areas that were in areas of major roads, and Neighborhood Commercial are generally found adjacent to major subdivisions. They are trying to be more mindful because Neighborhood Commercial allows for less intense uses, so there should be fewer impacts to the residential areas.

Other important changes discussed include green initiatives, ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units), temporary signage, and administrative approvals. Accessory Dwelling Units will be a conditional use. They were identified in discussions pertaining to the housing crisis. Temporary signage will not change significantly. Overall, it is the same standards but simplified. Previously, it may have been the most confusing section of code. Administrative approvals include minor items such as parking lot modifications, repainting, site lighting, and small additions.

Some items were discussed during previous meetings but were not implemented in the new code. Green infrastructure is related to zoning but not the most appropriate item in zoning code, and there would be better places for green initiatives within city code. Short term rentals were discussed. Again, it is related to zoning but is not a zoning matter. Rules on short-term rentals would be better placed in another section of city code. Housing trends were also discussed. MORPC, Kerwin Institute, and the consultant have presented information on housing trends. A lot of the trends include removing barriers to housing through zoning. Blackford suggested that some of these housing trends, such as tiny houses and small and no lot sizes, are not appropriate in Gahanna. This concern was addressed through incorporating ADUs into the code. Finally, there are also no minimum parking requirements.

When the new code is adopted, there should be slightly fewer Planning Commission applications. Many of the benefits are subtle and will be noticed more by Planning staff. What should not be expected is for certain development to stop. Staff can make recommendations but cannot prohibit landowners and businesses from developing. Radical and rapid change should also not be expected. There are not sunset provisions in which owners need to comply by a certain date. Therefore, there will not be sudden changes

in terms of building design or signage. The changes will be put into effect when new issues come forward.

In December, there was public comment specific to schools and properties in the Office, Commerce, Technology Zone. In areas of office reuse, a recommendation from Planning Commission was to propose language. Secondary Schools were a conditional use in the Innovative Manufacturing (IM) district, which is essentially the new OCT zone. They added language to code that tied it to a specific geographic area. It must be east of 270 and have frontage on Tech Center or Morrison. The location requirements address concerns about schools growing into the more industrial area. They also proposed language that requires a proposed site plan with specific information such as traffic circulation, hours of operation, and enrollment. These items were previously identified as areas of concern. The proposed change would require a conditional use and would not be administratively approvable. Therefore, Planning Commission would have the opportunity to evaluate for appropriateness. Temporary signs were previously missing from code. The proposed change is not significant. It is more of a simplification. It was based on materials. It now identifies prohibited materials. If it requires a temporary sign permit today, it will still be required in the future. Blackford asked for some direction on certain items. They added the de minimis variance. It talks about numerical standards and needs refined. He did not want someone to think it could be applied to density, for example. Rather, it would be applied for items such as setbacks. Additionally, Planning staff was uncomfortable with hotels in Neighborhood Commercial. In the proposed code, hotels would be a permitted use here. Blackford would like feedback from Planning Commission. Additionally, traffic circulation signage came up in an email from Mr. Tom Liskay.

The chair opened public comment at 8:12 p.m.

Mr. Tom Liskay, 457 Tresham Road, Gahanna. Mr. Liskay brought the Commission's attention to wooden stop signs, specifically in the Stoneridge Plaza. He shared they have fallen over and been replaced at least once, and noted that they are difficult to see, especially at night and in adverse weather. A small portion of the sign is reflectorized. He suggested that internal signage that directs stop, yield, one-way, and do not enter, meet the standards of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways. He noted that a metal stop sign would be cheaper. He was unsure if it could be written into the zoning code. He suggested giving two years for non-conforming uses to be changed. He thanked the chair for the time to speak.

Mr. Charlie Adams, 2501 Fair Avenue, Columbus. He attended on behalf of the Daimler Group. Mr. Adams attended a prior meeting to advocate for an

overlay in the proposed IM district. He came to express support for the overlay and appreciated the thoughtfulness for the conditional use. He understood the concerns. He stated that Daimler Group, and the project developer, would be trying everything for adaptive reuse and again expressed appreciation.

Mr. Mako invited the administration to respond to public comments.

Mr. Blackford stated he appreciated Mr. Liskay's comments. He provided them ahead of time and it gave Mr. Blackford an opportunity to communicate with the Director of Engineering. He said that staff would have no objection to this change. Again, conditional use for secondary schools was discussed. Blackford invited Planning Commission to give feedback on this issue. Staff also has no objection to those changes.

The Chair closed public comment at 8:17 p.m.

Ms. Pollyea thanked the staff for their time and effort put into the code. She has viewed many zoning codes and commended staff for making a user-friendly document with charts and graphs. She wondered about short-term rentals. She noted staff's belief that they belong somewhere other than zoning code, and wondered where they would be best included. Mr. Blackford replied that Chapter 7 includes rental registration code. He said it would not be administrative, but it would be in another section of code. The consultant that worked on the code agreed. Short-term rentals would include rentals along the lines of Air BNB. There is already code and a registration process in place. This would simply be a revision of the chapter. Zoning code typically does not get involved in ownership. Pollyea then asked for a summary of changes regarding ADUs from the existing code to the new, proposed code. Blackford said there is no language in the existing code for Accessory Dwelling Units. It has been discussed in the different engagements, so it was newly created. It is allowed in four different zoning districts, which are all Single Family zoned. It would be a conditional use, so they will be approved by Planning Commission and not administratively. There will be restrictions on the number, which will be one if he recalled. Pollyea asked if there was anything discussed about who can be in the ADUs. Blackford believed it had been discussed, but it would be difficult to monitor. They wanted to avoid language like that. With ADUs sometimes it is limited to family members and other times it is not. He thinks that recent codes are going toward fewer restrictions. The code does not limit the ADU to family members, but it does limit the size to 1,000 square feet. Pollyea expressed concern about the transient nature. If it is not limited, she wondered if it could turn into a longer-term rental situation. Blackford said they are primarily used for that. Blackford said there can be conditions added on.

Mr. Greenberg inquired about the traffic flow. He asked who is responsible for internal signage in areas such as Stoneridge. Blackford replied the Planning Department is not heavily involved in that part of the process, but he believed the developer was responsible. Greenberg clarified that where stop signs go would not come to Planning Commission. Blackford confirmed.

He said he felt it would be better placed in Chapter 9, where there are Engineering standards. He said there are still several things in Zoning that are not traditionally in Zoning, and suggested they may be moved to a different chapter in the future. He had no objections to adding it at this point in time. Greenberg appreciated the mention of de minimis and asked about the numerical standard. Blackford believed it was 10%. He mentioned that density is also numerical, and they try to anticipate these things. He felt it would be good to clarify that de minimis should be applied to specific items such as setbacks, lot coverage, and a couple others. Greenberg noted that when needed there is an environmental plan and asked in what cases that would be needed. Blackford said that is very specific to cell tower cases and the last time it was modified was 2020. It is new code. Greenberg asked for clarification: the environmental plan just sits at the cell tower section of code. Blackford replied that as far as he is aware that is the case. Greenberg also noted that Planning Commission's previous comments were taken into consideration, and he appreciated that. He wondered what the timeline would be for adoption of the new code. Blackford stated that if it is approved by Planning Commission during this meeting, it will be discussed during the February 12 Committee of the Whole meeting, and then will be heard for a second reading and public hearing. It would take effect 30 days after being adopting. Any applications received in the next couple of months will fall under the existing code.

Mr. Suriano said the zoning code is being brought into the 21st century. He appreciated the simplification and expressed that he has difficulty reading municipal codes, even as a professional. He also appreciated the pictures and glossary, which simplify the code. He said the city is trending toward transparency, access, and making something less intimidating for the community and professionals. He specifically wanted to comment on the signage. He does not fundamentally oppose what is in the standard that was highlighted, but he would be reticent to add it into code. He suggested it work itself out through Engineering and permitting processes. Blackford thanked Suriano for his comments on the ease of use of the new code. He noted that burdensome, confusing documents are not useful for the public or professionals.

Mr. Tamarkin thanked the Planning Department for their work on the document. He also commented on signage on private property. He said when he owned a business off of Cherry Bottom, there were many accidents in the complex due to signage issues. He also added comment to the issue of hotels. He would like some clarification. Some hotels have approached the city through the Visitor's Bureau over the years. One was behind Giant Eagle, another was at Creekside. He noted hotels are important to the Visitor's Bureau and the city. The Mayor is cognizant of where these are located and they do not want to turn hotels away, but want to be careful about where they go. Blackford drew the Commission's attention to a set of Neighborhood Commercial lots shown in pink on the proposed zoning map. It is next to a very established residential community. It is a Neighborhood Commercial area that they specifically looked at and felt hotels would not be appropriate. However, in an area such as Old Gahanna, an area the city is actively pursuing for development, it would be allowed in both the existing

and proposed code. He pointed specifically to the red area at Creekside on the map. Tamarkin said that if a hotel wanted to go into Neighborhood Commercial they could apply for a zoning code change and go through the process. Blackford confirmed and added that staff could provide guidance, but overall they would have to apply for a rezoning. Tamarkin noted this would also apply to other businesses, such as an automotive business looking to establish itself in an area where automotive businesses are not allowed. Blackford confirmed. He said automotive is something they have refined over the years, as there have been issues related to automotive uses in the past. Tamarkin's last question was about the notification process. He noted that transitioning from 26 zonings to 13 means there will be many properties whose zoning changes. He asked if this happens through the City Council motion. Blackford said that when City Council adopts it, the zoning map gets adopted with it. He said around 97% of properties will have a different name, but most of the stipulations are the same.

Mr. Mako inquired about the sign standards. He recalled issues with electronic signs in the past, and wondered if that standard would change at all. Blackford said that electronic signs have consistently been brought up as the least desirable sign type. No changes are proposed to the electronic signs, so the same standards will be in place. The community did not want a change, so there will be no change. Mr. Mako asked about section 1113 - Watershed Management. He asked if some of these standards were review and approved by the Engineering staff. Blackford said these are holdovers from existing code. Engineering did review and requested a few minor changes. Things like reflective signage may live in this code short term, and then long term be moved elsewhere.

Mr. Shapaka had follow-up questions regarding signage. He stated that when there is a new complex being built, the developer creates a master sign plan. He asked if the verbiage for the traffic signage could go into that language. He is not in favor of incorporating that into the code change and expressed concerns about liability. Blackford noted that Planning staff is not involved in that process, and it would be up to a different group to determine. He suggested it would be best incorporated into a different area of code. Shapaka asked if the ADUs being 1,000 square feet were detached. Staff said it can be attached or detached. Shapaka also commented on the overlay discussed by Mr. Adams. He felt it could be handled through conditional use and bringing it to Planning Commission.

Mr. Mako asked Mr. Blackford if he felt Planning Commission provided enough feedback to answer Blackford's questions. Blackford replied yes, and that the main thing was reflectivity of signage. If needed, they can have additional discussions with Engineering. If it is appropriate in the zoning code, they can keep it there and expand on it.

Part Eleven - Planning and Zoning Code of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna.

Mr. Mako thanked Mr. Blackford and his staff. He expressed awareness at the heavy lift.

**A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Tamarkin, that the Code Change be Recommended to Council for Approval. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Greenberg, Mako, Pollyea, Shapaka, Suriano and Tamarkin

**Absent:** 1 - Hicks

**F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE**

**G. NEW BUSINESS - NONE**

**H. OFFICIAL REPORTS**

**Director of Planning**

Blackford stated there were a lot of applications in review and noted the cyclical nature of projects. Upcoming months will have heavier agendas. BZBA met the prior week regarding the signage at St. Matthews. He felt BZBA overall agreed with Planning Commission, but that the frequency at which the sign could be changed was altered slightly. Blackford said they will see some changes to the Design Review application that was previously brought forth.

**Council Liaison**

Blackford referred to the Mayor regarding Council updates. Mayor Jadwin noted that the administration recently took permission to bid 825 Tech Center Dr. construction to City Council, and it was approved the prior Monday. The overall budget was presented, along with bond legislation. Mayor Jadwin is hopeful that construction will begin on April 30th. She noted that while weather and other occurrences can alter the timeline, the projected move-in day is Christmas 2025 to early 2026. She encouraged Planning Commission members to watch the previous livestreamed meeting at which this discussion happened.

**Mayor**

Mayor Jadwin noted that before arriving at Planning Commission, there was a walk-through of the renovations done to Gahanna Middle

School East. She expressed that the building is beautiful with wide open spaces. Next Wednesday will be State of The Schools at Middle School West. Thursday, February 28th will be State of the City.

**I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS - NONE**

**J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT**

Ms. Pollyea noted it was her first full meeting and she looks forward to future meetings.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

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Sophia McGuire  
Clerk

*APPROVED by the Planning Commission, this  
day of 2024.*

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James Mako