



# City of Gahanna

## Meeting Minutes

### Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

*Thomas Shapaka, Chair*  
*James Mako, Vice Chair*  
*Michael Greenberg*  
*John Hicks*  
*Michael Suriano*  
*Michael Tamarkin*  
*Thomas J. Wester*

*Pam Ripley, Deputy Clerk of Council*

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Wednesday, December 20, 2023

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 December 20, 2023. The agenda for this meeting was published on December 14, 2023. Chair Thomas Shapaka called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The pledge of allegiance was led by member John Hicks.

**Present** 5 - John Hicks, Michael Greenberg, James Mako, Thomas W. Shapaka, and Michael Suriano

**Absent** 2 - Michael Tamarkin, and Thomas J. Wester

#### B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Chair Shapaka stated that comments from Mr. Wester would be read at the end of the meeting. Additionally, as an item under unfinished business, there would be a zoning code discussion to accommodate an individual who requested to speak.

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2023-0218](#)

Planning Commission Workshop minutes 12.6.2023

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

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

**Absent:** 2 - Tamarkin and Wester

#### 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

### [V-0025-2023](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary Chapter 1143.08(c) Yard Requirements of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, to allow for a seasonal enclosure installation on property located at 155 Rivers Edge Way.; Parcel ID: 025-012841; Current Zoning SF-3; Kevin Farrell, applicant.

City Planner Maddie Capka provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. The property is zoned SF-3 with a limited overlay, which is a Single-Family Residential district. The applicant is requesting approval of a variance to allow for an addition within a side yard setback. The addition is a 10 x 16' seasonal enclosure that would be located to the rear of the home. The side yard setback for all sites zoned SF-3 is 7' 6". The proposed addition is 7' 1" from the west side property line so it would encroach 5" into the required setback. However, the existing home on the lot is located 6 ft from both the east and west side property lines so it already encroaches more into the setback than the proposed addition. There is an overlay text for the site, but it doesn't have any additional requirements that would apply to this application. All other setback requirements are met. Capka shared proposed west and south elevations.

There are three criteria to consider when approving a variance. 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. Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted because the request is minor in nature as the addition only encroaches 5 inches into the setback. In regard to the zoning code rewrite, this would be considered a di minimis variance, which would be approved administratively. The existing home is already closer to the side property line in the addition so it would not be visible from the right of way. The addition has already been approved by the neighborhood's Homeowners Association.

Chair opened public comment at 7:06 p.m.

Applicant: Marcus Bonner of 2097 London Rd, Delaware introduced himself as an employee at Great Day Improvements. He assisted Abby Kent with the addition. His only additional comment was that it

was necessary to put the addition in this particular spot because of a bump out window in the layout of the house, which prevented them from placing the addition elsewhere. Shapaka thanked Bronner for the clarity.

Chair closed the public comment at 7:08 p.m.

Chair called on questions from the Commission; there were none.

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

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

**Absent:** 2 - Tamarkin and Wester

## **F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **Zoning Code Discussion**

Charlie Adams, Daimler Group, 1533 Lake Shore Drive, thanked the commission for the ability to speak on the zoning code. Daimler Group is involved in the Ortho One building in the new Crescent Development, and thanked Mr. Blackford for his fine work on drafting a new, easy-to-read code. There was one small comment they wished to bring up regarding redevelopment of office in the Innovation and Manufacturing District. There are certain types of offices that have fallen out of favor from the market, and some will not be returning because of their inability for adaptive reuse. Particularly, single story type buildings originally meant for call centers have completely moved to at-home jobs. They have worked on two such properties in the Innovation and Manufacturing District. He said there is currently an exclusion for charter schools, and they are asking for this to be a conditional use instead. That way, if there is a prospective tenant, the issue could come before Planning Commission to be determined if it meets the needs of the community. He stated they do not want the blanket "yes," rather, they want a "maybe" to offer the opportunity for a discussion.

Mr. Blackford noted his awareness that there is a need to look at alternative uses. Gahanna may not be as hard hit as others, but it is something all communities are dealing with. It does not look like the market is coming back for re purposing office buildings. Blackford stated a couple of charter schools reached out to the city around a year ago. Staff did propose an amendment to the code to add charter schools as a conditional use. At that time, Planning Commission thought it was best to not add it as a conditional use. Blackford said that if the outlook has changed, it is a very easy change to make in the

code. He requested guidance from Planning Commission.

Shapaka asked if this would currently be a full variance. Blackford replied that it would be a rezoning. He added that the proposed IM district, which is currently OCT, is essentially a geographic district. Rezoning may be more difficult in areas like this, where there is a specific vision. Schools are in a governmental kind of zoning, so it would be a fairly drastic change. Zoning wouldn't allow for the office and commercial type use in that area, so it is a scenario in which one would have to be chosen over the other.

Mr. Hicks said that when this issue was previously discussed, there was a concern about school use. It is not an area conducive to children being around due to a lack of sidewalks and so forth. He would keep this same position.

Mako stated he has run into this in his day job. There was once a situation of a commercial property wanting to turn into a charter school and it did not turn out particularly well. He appreciated the comments, realizing each situation is different. He would be cautious going down this road.

Suriano stated he is sympathetic from the development perspective in terms of adaptive reuse. He stated it can be difficult to retrofit structures and adaptive reuse and reposition can be good ways to renew structures. He is not fundamentally opposed to something like this in this zone. He could potentially see it being an appropriate use if it is closer to a residential area. He said it is hard to visualize something like a charter school in the middle of an OCT. Again, he is not fundamentally opposed to it, but he questions the compatibility of use in a primarily industrial use.

Mr. Blackford noted this is not staff's call and would defer to Planning Commission. He presented the zoning map and pointed out the general area for which requests have been made in the past. He stated they could work on some things, if desirable.

Shapaka added that he would be in favor of an overlay, and if not, there is an avenue for rezoning. He stated it could be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Blackford stated he has no additional comments related to this particular issue but offered an update to the zoning code in general. A draft was provided around Thanksgiving. The hope was for the formal document to be on the January 10, 2024, agenda. He stated there is time to make adjustments, if there is anything the commission would like to see changed or added.

Shapaka asked if the document would be available for review before the 9th. Blackford said it would be attached to the agenda. The only substantial change so far is related to signage. Otherwise, it will look similar to the document that went out in November.

**G. NEW BUSINESS - NONE**

**H. OFFICIAL REPORTS**

**Council Liaison**

Director Blackford said City Council passed the 2024 budget on December 17, 2023. Initiatives are being worked on. The CIC contract for 2024 was renewed.

**I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS**

**J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT**

Mr. Shapaka read comments forwarded by Mr. Wester:

"Mayor Jadwin, Members of Council, Plan Commission Members, Michael Blackford, Matt Roth, Pam Ripley, Jeremy, Gahanna City Employees, Gahanna Residents and those who I've missed. Previous plans precluded my attendance at this evening's meeting. I have asked that the following be included in the agenda as correspondence received. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you as a Plan Commission Member under three Mayors. During this period, Gahanna has experienced tremendous development. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to contribute to that growth. I am confident the Planning Commission will continue to successfully meet future challenges. And with that I thank everyone for their patience and support and pass the motion, "Move to Adjourn" to a yet to be identified Commission individual. Best Wishes and Happy Holidays to everyone."

Shapaka stated Wester has been a staple and pillar. He knew what Mr. Wester would look for and comment on, and he relied on Mr. Wester for these things. Mr. Wester was steadfast in his opinions and hoped that his replacement will have the same passion for the position.

Mr. Hicks stated he would like for the commission to move forward with the set timeline for the zoning code. He noted that Mr. Wester set a great example for the commission to follow, and he will be missed.

Mako echoed the comments shared about Mr. Wester, who brought passion and knowledge to the group. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mr. Greenberg stated Mr. Wester was an inspiration to the group and said he would be missed. He thanked Mr. Shapaka and Mr. Mako for their leadership as chair and vice chair.

Mr. Suriano said Mr. Wester had been on the commission since he had. He appreciated Mr. Wester's perspective. He also is looking forward to the zoning code updates taking place and wished all a happy holiday season.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.