



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

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

Donald R. Shepherd, Chair

David Andrews, Vice Chair

Joseph Keehner

Jennifer T. Price

Kristin Rosan

David B. Thom

Thomas J. Wester

Donna L. Jernigan, MMC, Senior Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, March 27, 2013

7:00 PM

City Hall

CORRECTED COPY

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 27, 2013. Chair Don Shepherd called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Planning Commission Member Wester; agenda for this meeting was published on March 22, 2013.

Present 4 - David B. Thom, David K. Andrews, Jennifer Tisone Price, and Joe Keehner

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA - None.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 13, 2013 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Wester, seconded by Andrews, to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2013 Regular Meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shepherd, Andrews, Thom, Price, Wester and Keehner

Absent: 1 - Rosan

D. HEARING OF VISITORS - ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA.

E. APPLICATIONS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Chair read the rules that would govern tonight's public hearings. Assistant City Attorney Tom Weber gave an oath to those persons wishing to address the Commission.

Z-0001-2013

To consider a Zoning application to zone 3.9 +/- acres located at 5593 Havens Corners Road; current zoning ROD/SF3 (Residential Overlay District/Single Family), requested zoning ROD/SF3; Brookewood

Construction Company, Inc., Doug Maddy, applicant.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:03 p.m. and asked for proponents; there were none. Chair asked for opponents; there were none. Chair closed the public hearing at 7:04 p.m., and said this will be postponed to the April 10, 2013 meeting.

A motion was made by Thom, seconded by Price, that this matter be Postponed to Date Certain to the Planning Commission. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shepherd, Andrews, Thom, Price, Wester and Keehner

Absent: 1 - Rosan

V-0004-2013

Chair said this will be postponed to the April 10, 2013 meeting.

A motion was made by Thom, seconded by Wester, that this matter be Postponed to Date Certain to the Planning Commission. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shepherd, Andrews, Thom, Price, Wester and Keehner

Absent: 1 - Rosan

CU-0003-2013

Evans said this is for 3.93 acres of a 15 acre site for agricultural purposes; want to have a working farm with fruits, herbs and flowers; would be a more intense use in RID zoning; that is why they filed a conditional use; variance is to allow an 8' fence as a deterrent for deer coming into the garden; we have a sample of the style of fence.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m., and asked for proponents.

Teresa Kobelt, Adult Services Director, Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and CEO of ARC Industries, said she is here tonight to discuss the project; our mission is to help people live, learn and work in their community; at our school in Gahanna we offer a school-aged program at Northeast School, and an adult program at ARC Industries East; ARC creates jobs and training opportunities for adults eligible for County Board services; came to our attention that approximately 4 acres of land on the site of the Northeast school was no longer being used for soccer fields we thought, "Let's grow herbs"; is an increasing interest throughout Ohio for local sustainable food production and urban farms; the number one goal established by MORPC was to increase the supply of local foods, and to do this they suggested preparing the next generation of food farmers; MORPC also discusses the importance of making this food and these opportunities accessible to all; our proposed project would do just that; we would be "growing growers"; growing local sustainable food, and the Gahanna economy; would refer to it as Sunapple gardens; Sunapple is a tiny division of ARC Industries created to connect people with sustainable skills and marketable talents, who just happen to have disabilities with the greater community, enabling both to flourish and grow; as the project grew we began vetting it with Gahanna leaders, community members, families and neighbors and were met with enthusiastic support. I understand the Commission has received communication from concerned neighbors, and I would like to address some of those; we are still researching market-demand to inform us as to what would be best to plant; no plants have been purchased yet; concerning beehives we would be glad to put conditions on them; concerning critters, question was asked about compost

attracting vermin; research suggests that vermin are only attracted to compost when it contains incorrect waste items such as cooked foods, meat, fish bones, etc.; we have engaged a number of local and national experts in the development of this project and intend to carry out all aspects of the farm in the most professional, safe and healthy manner; concerning property values, research shows that properties within 1000 ft. of community gardens experience a positive effect on property values; on sustainability both ARC Industries and the Franklin County Board are dedicated to fiscal responsibility and sustainability planning; both have a proven record within the community of accountability, transparency and partnership; we have invested our resources and engaged significant planning to ensure the success of this project; also we would be willing to accept a condition to return the property to its current state should the project be discontinued for any reason.

Chair asked for other proponents; there were none. Chair asked for opponents.

David Williams, 611 Millwood Ct., said I am not necessarily against the project, but the fencing they are proposing looks like chicken wire; I also have a row of trees that helps block the view; would rather see a 6' wooden fence.

Joe Mullin, 591 Haversham Dr., said I have a list of questions that need to be answered; how many hogs will be on the property; how often and by whom will inspection take place; an 8' welded steel fence would not be permitted in a residential area, why here; who will be running the farm; where will profits go; who will be directly responsible for maintenance and operations of the farm; to whom would people be able to complain and how long will the response time be; will manure be used as fertilizer; will it be an organic farm; who is responsible for attracted insect pests; what specifically will be grown; will there be limitations; is farm tax exempt; why were so few people notified; what are the dimensions of the 10,000 gallon tank; the compost windrow is located near existing housing; why; is this a smell problem; what machinery will be used and what hours of operation; what other sites for this experiment were considered; what specific educational program will be associated with this project; who will be employed; what truck traffic will this operation create and when; what structures will be permitted on property and what are the sizes; who is responsible for maintenance; what would be required to change the buildings; why not locate farm in farmland; why is it necessary to locate in an urban residential district; what agreements can be enforced if the experiment is abandoned after failure; who will legally be responsible for any damages to the community or injury to students, neighbors or others caused by employees, traffic or effluence of the farm; these are just a few of the questions we need to have answered.

Shepherd said we do intend to take this to workshop to investigate; will research it thoroughly. Mullin said you are an appointed board appointed by elected officials and you have a responsibility to me to answer all of these questions. Chair asked Commission members to extend the opponents time another 8 minutes; everyone agreed.

Gary Stewart, 593 Wickham Way, said my main concern is no buffer for the houses on the east side; would be 2' from the property line; concerned about the compost pile and the smell; this is what I would view out of my back door; will change my quality of life; would not have bought my house if I knew something like this would be in my back yard.

Mark Horowitz, 501 Haversham Ct. S., said I went to the meeting at the school; 4 acres is not a garden; also told at the meeting that the acreage was not going to be fully used; thought it was going to be a small garden; concerned about the swale; is at least one endangered species there; what will the environmental impact be; need a study; is considered a wetland.

Carl Tisone, 585 Wickham Way, said a small area to grow things would be fine; not 4 acres; thought a small area was the concept; does not cut the muster.

Dana Fox, 455 Millwood, said I like the privacy of our location; worried about aesthetics, property values and drainage; what about runoff.

Gerald Brown, 587 Wickham Way, said I have been there for 35 years; kids go over there and play football and soccer; where will they go if this is a farm; they will be in our streets; great outlet for boys; boys can be worse than bees; think this through.

Libby Miller 595 Wickham Way, said the school field is bordered by residential properties which will be detrimentally impacted by a commercial working farm in their backyards; when we purchased our house in 1975 we were assured that it was zoned only for a school; other home buyers in the area relied on that zoning when they purchased their houses; the area has no park provided and the field has served as a substitute; while the mission of the Northeast School is admirable, a commercial operation does not belong in this location; students are out of school in the main growing season; plan would fit in a rural area but is not suitable for this site; Hamilton Road corridor has been described in recent news articles as the gateway to Gahanna and millions of dollars are to be spent to upgrade; would ARC Industries and the Developmental Disabilities Board have considered asking to put this farm at the entrance to Dublin, Worthington or Westerville; we all know that a commercial farming operation surrounded by an 8' fence will instead devalue the surrounding residential properties and reduce the resale value; fence would be installed just 2' from the Wickham Way property lines; how would you mow that 2'; weeds will grow; I would respectfully request that the Planning Commission members deny these applications.

Chair said we will take this to workshop next week, and asked for rebuttal from the applicant.

Kobelt said there will be no hogs or livestock; can make that a condition that there will be no farm animals; will be growing food not animals; there will be rigorous inspections and audits; have health and safety inspections on a regular basis; ARC Industries is nonprofit; this is not for profit; would be glad to break even; would be a training opportunity; would be no manure or chemicals; if there would be complaints you can call the principal or call my direct line; I will be glad to give that to you; we are still figuring out what to grow; would like to grow culinary herbs for local residents and restaurants; many of the plantings will be in raised beds; if the farm fails we would return it to previous use; will only be using hand tools and tractor which is what is used now; would be an accredited education curriculum; we do have a summer center and ARC Industries people would be employed; would be well supervised; we did host a meeting and 2 people showed up; no chemical would be used and it would actually be safer than it is now.

Wester said I have a lot of questions similar to what has been asked tonight; what happens to the stalks; think we need an environmental impact statement; what about the swale and drainage; also what about the 10,000 gallon cistern; definitely needs to go to workshop.

Price said I do have concerns with the compost pile; what type of odor; how that can be mitigated; place somewhere else not so close to property owners; like to know the ratio of Developmental Disabilities staff to ARC employees; how many staff and how many ARC employees; are crops picked daily and how transported; what the yield might be; how will raised beds change grading and runoff; brought up the environmental impact study because the creek is there; what about the wetland

species; I understand the fence you've shown and that from a distance the fence may not be visible, but when it's your house and it is 2' from your backyard is probably very visible and not very attractive; I would like to see a much lusher barrier that would be cosmetic that would provide as much buffer as possible; for the property owners on Wickham Way there is nothing; looking for something that would almost duplicate a natural growth tree line where the fence would be hidden; when there is only a 2' section it grows wild; maybe something that was mulched would be better; how will that be maintained and by who; what effort would be made to market the produce; what about less coverage; less intense use; could still get you to your goal; what is proposed is not an urban garden.

Thom said I would like to know about other sites that you have investigated; have questions on water tank and the underground cistern; you would be willing to remove the bee hives; have you used this type of fence; any pictures you could bring in; trying to get away from it looking like a four sided box from the outside; see some hedge proposed along the east side along the fence; you said you hired a professional manager, I would like to hear more about that; how is it going to be managed 365 days a year.

Keehner said have you considered some of the hedge rows being on the outside of the fences as a deterrent to people's aesthetic concerns; have you considered vines like hardy kiwi that would have a market for the food that would grow on the fence; you said there wouldn't be any sales on the property, why wouldn't you consider selling to local residents; fresh from the farm; not from Chile or California; have a farmer's market; I would like to hear about the bee behavior; it sounds like it would be hard to have a lot of herbs without having pollinators; like to know value of bees in this whole picture; am impressed with scope of what you are trying to do in terms of local food production; have you considered extending growing into the winter so you have produce the whole year; compost could be more centrally located in that east field so it wouldn't be in view of the neighbors; why not have chickens; chickens help with composting because they actually scratch it up and it is not going to smell; but you do need to address fears of neighbors; do not want to push the neighbors.

Andrews said I am a big gardener; have a compost pile and use it daily; does not affect my neighbors; does not smell bad; is an interesting proposal.

Shepherd said I would like to see the footprint made smaller; even if it is just 10 additional feet from the neighbors; need a buffer; still have a lot of questions that need to be answered. We will hear this in workshop next Wednesday, April 3rd at 6:30 p.m.; public is welcome; this time will be for Planning Commission to have our questions answered, many of which the residents have asked tonight.

Chair closed the public hearing at 8:02 p.m.

Evans said in terms of inspections we would be inspecting the property; it would be a part of what we would have our Code Enforcement Officer regularly check on; being a specialty use we would make sure that was high on our priority list; we do not allow chickens in the zoning classification; ER-1 zoning classification is the only one where chickens are allowed.

V-0005-2013

See discussion above.

FDP-0004-2013

Evans said the Columbus Academy wants to redevelop an interior loop road that moves traffic into and out of their development; also to construct a new maintenance facility on site; would be a corrugated metal building 128' X 40' with an asphalt single roof; will actually gain parking by this design; project is over close to the tennis courts on the northern side of the property; project will assist in planning for new middle school in the future; have a lighting plan and landscaping plan because of the redevelopment of the parking lot; you will see they are planning on doing 19 new trees by the maintenance facility and a total of 80 new trees installed in conjunction with the loop road; is a natural site with mature trees; beautiful campus; almost 100 new trees; this should help people going in and out of the development; as you know from previous projects we have had comments about the access off Beecher and people speeding through there and into the site; would ask if there are any speed controls that could be implemented in that part of the project as well as completing the sidewalk off Beecher Road.

Chair opened the public hearing at 8:04 p.m. and asked for proponents.

Doug Bennett, Director of Facilities & Grounds, said this is a roadway project that joins the northeast part of campus to the northwest part of campus and continues the loop road allowing improved traffic; it will also improve our parking as well as being the first phase of our proposed construction of a new middle school; in order to do the roadway two of our small facilities buildings needed to be relocated about 500' to the northwest to approximately the same size facility that is in place; did bring Todd Wales, our Landscape Architect; we are open to any questions.

Chair asked for opponents.

Dion Manley, 107 Highmeadow, said I am not necessarily an opponent; received a letter; live right behind it; would question noise levels and traffic impact issues; really enjoy the wooded area behind me; saw 12 deer in our backyard; feel extremely privileged to live where natural environment has been preserved; hate to see that change; have seen other wildlife; think there should be an environmental impact study or plan; know there are traffic problems on Cherry Bottom; thank you for your work.

Shepherd said we would like to take this to workshop next week to discuss some of these questions. Bennett said we are proud of our campus and wildlife; strive for the best possible campus conditions. Wales said we will save all the trees we can during this construction; all the trees in the upper right shaded in green are all staying.

Thom said I see you are proposing a new middle school which will be removing some of the parking; once that middle school is built how will that affect traffic into the entire Academy site; I know you have some area that goes clear through to Morse Road; know we have had some problems with Beecher Road traffic with students going to and from the Academy. Bennett said this is the first phase of the project that allows us to begin the development; this is not to increase the number of students we have; not bringing in more traffic; just for better traffic flow; should help with Beecher and Cherry Bottom traffic.

Wester said I echo what Thom said; do you have a 5 year plan to share with the Commission relative to this roadway project and how that fits in overall with the traffic on Cherry Bottom, Morse and Beecher Roads; it has only been a few weeks ago that we had people in here about traffic on Beecher Road; I'm sure that Columbus Academy is a good corporate citizen, but not sure some of the students are; would like to see some information relative to a 5 year plan with projections for traffic and how this is going to help the Beecher Road situation, and whether there are plans for exits on Beecher or Cherry Bottom. Bennett said we have not determined, at this

point, that a 5 year plan is something we are doing with this project; everything is dependent on funding as a private entity; it is our understanding we will not be bringing in additional traffic to the school; hopefully we will improve traffic, make it safer and emergency vehicles can go completely around the loop; no plans to make an entrance or exit on Morse.

Chair asked about the variance that is coming to reduce the size of parking spaces. Wales said mainly trying to be stewards of the land and reduce the footprint of paving and impervious areas; help the storm drainage; facility where people are coming once and leaving once; is very common parking spaces smaller like this; will more efficiently use parking.

Chair closed the public hearing 8:24 p.m., and said we will hear this in workshop at 7:00 p.m. April 3rd.

DR-0008-2013

See discussion above.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None.

G. NEW BUSINESS - None.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Hamilton Road Corridor Committee -Andrews

Evans said we will be bringing the revised draft to workshop next week and hope to move that along.

I. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

City Attorney - None.

City Engineer - None.

Department of Development.

Evans said Otterbein is hoping to break ground late summer or early fall on their project.

Chair - None.

J. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS - None.

K. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT.

Thom asked about the Mill Street encroachment easement with Lew Griffin, and Sherwood said there should be a piece of legislation on the Council agenda for next Monday.

L. ADJOURNMENT: 8:26 p.m.; Motion by Shepherd.**M. POSTPONED APPLICATIONS:**

S-0001-2013