



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

John Hicks, Chair
Michael Suriano, Vice Chair
Bobbie Burba
Thomas Shapaka
Donald R. Shepherd
Thomas J. Wester

Krystal Gonchar, Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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

Gahanna Planning Commission met for a Regular Meeting in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 200 South Hamilton Road, Gahanna, Ohio, on Wednesday, April 10, 2019. The agenda for this meeting was published on April 5, 2019. Chair John Hicks called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., the pledge of allegiance followed.

Present 6 - Thom Shapaka, Thomas J. Wester, Michael Suriano, John Hicks, Bobbie Burba, and Donald R. Shepherd

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA: None.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2019-0054](#)

Planning Commission Regular and Workshop Meeting Minutes for March 27, 2019 and April 3, 2019.

A motion was made by Wester, seconded by Burba, that the Minutes for the Meetings on 3/27/19 be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Shapaka, Wester, Hicks and Burba

Abstain: 2 - Suriano and Shepherd

A motion was made by Wester, seconded by Suriano, that the Minutes for the 4/3/19 Meeting be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Wester, Suriano, Burba and Shepherd

Abstain: 2 - Shapaka and Hicks

D. SWEAR IN APPLICANTS & SPEAKERS

Assistant City Attorney, Kristin Rosan, administered an oath to those persons wishing to present testimony this evening. Rosan stated the rules for the public comment portion of the meeting.

E. APPLICATIONS - PUBLIC COMMENT

[CU-0003-2019](#)

To consider a Conditional Use application to allow for the construction of a single family home; for property located at 337 Goshen Lane; Parcel ID No. 025-001091; current zoning Two-Family Residential (MR-1); Ray Smith, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the application; showed the location on a map for reference; stated this property is designated MR-1, two family dwellings; this is the only use allowable by right; there are a significant amount of single family properties surrounding this location; said that single family must meet parameters of the R4 zone; showed a site plan; there are no issues with the home meeting setback requirements; the application went to Area Commissions in March; discussion there was positive in nature; property has historically been used as single family; he reviewed the criteria for granting Conditional Use approvals; staff recommends approval due to meeting all criteria for approval.

Chair opened the Public Hearing at 7:07 pm. There were no comments from the public. Chair closed the Public Hearing at 7:07 p.m. Chair called for questions from the Commission. There were none.

A motion was made by Suriano, seconded by Shepherd, that the Conditional Use be Approved.

Discussion on the motion: Suriano stated that he would be voting in favor, due to the surrounding area; seems appropriate for the area. Shepherd echoed those comments; seems a better zoning fit; as a single family, it will be a better fit for the community. Burba said that piece of property has sat there for a long time; this seems like a proper use.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

[CU-0004-2019](#)

To consider a Conditional Use application to allow for an automotive repair shop; for property located at 275 West Johnstown Road; Parcel ID No. 025-000850; current zoning Community Commercial District (CC); William Lind, applicant.

Blackford stated this is just to the east of the previous request; provided a summary of the application; it's located in Community Commercial

district; requesting to have an auto repair shop; the applicant has a facility to the west; this is not a new development, just a change in tenant; received positive feedback from Area Commissions when it was discussed in December; he reviewed the criteria for granting a Conditional Use; showed zoning map which listed other auto uses in close proximity; no code enforcement related issues; staff recommends approval.

Chair opened the Public Hearing at 7:12 p.m. There was no public comment. Chair closed the Public Hearing at 7:12 p.m.

Chair called for questions from the Commission. Shapaka asked if the new tenant anticipates additional parking or if that will be determined at a later date. William Lind; owner of Lind Automotive; stated there's plenty of room for future expansion but not sure that its needed at this time; neighbors are usually busy during the weekend, but not during the week; stated that he works with neighbors to ensure parking needs are met; stated that part of the lease says the cars won't stay on lots.

Shepherd said currently there are vehicles that sit out there; asked if they are vacating that property. Applicant confirmed. Shepherd asked if the cars will go inside. Lind said those cars are already gone; nothing will be left outside. Shepherd asked if lighting will change. Lind said no. Burba asked if the applicant is already occupying the space. Lind said no.

A motion was made by Shapaka, seconded by Burba, that the Conditional Use be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

National Church Residences

[DR-0005-2019](#)

To consider a Design Review application for a site plan and building design for property located at 0 Ridenour Rd.; Parcel ID No. 025-013236; current zoning L-MFRD; National Church Residences, George Tabit, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the applications, and his report included discussion on all applications as they are tied together; he stated that the zoning was recently updated; an overlay limits this to senior housing; there is a parcel to the south zoned Suburban Office; the applicant is requesting a 4 story, 129 bed facility; this project went to a Planning Commission Workshop in late January, at which time, the footprint and design were discussed; the building height is 51' and city code allows for that; no variances are necessary for that portion of the

development plan; code also allows for Planning Commission to determine if that height is a good fit; he showed the site plan; stated there's only one access point; the secondary access point is only for emergency vehicles; has a first floor parking garage; there is a large amount of trees, and the elevation changes greatly from east to west; the code requires tree planting; 700 tree inches will be planted/reserved which is 10x what the code requires; the main material for the façade is stucco, which is recommended for the zoning district; the Parkside facility is brick; he reviewed the criteria for Final Development Plans, Design Reviews, and Variance requests; stated that the applicant cannot meet the building and parking setbacks; parking setback along Olde Ridenour can't be met; the average lighting intensity is ½ foot candles and the ask is for 1; also asking for LED lighting; also requesting 0' buffer along the southern border; instead of working to stay within the code, the applicant is asking for variances in order to be further away from residents; staff recommends approval; there are special circumstances due to the land.

Chair opened the Public Hearing at 7:29 p.m.

Applicant George Berardi, architect for the project; regarding the variance on the south side, there's a retaining wall along the south side, and a privacy fence will be installed as well; thought about eliminating the parking spaces on the front, but would like to have spaces for visitors by the main entrance; stated there's nothing more to add, but will answer any questions.

Kyle Fabing, 153 McCutcheon Rd; stated that he lives at the upper left corner; asked if there are any 4 story structures in Gahanna currently. Hicks said he's unsure. Fabing said there are mature trees but there are none on the side where his house is; the 3rd and 4th floors would look down into his yard; wants to know what would protect the area there; wants a hickory tree saved; unsure which trees will stay because there are many trees with marks on them.

Berardi said the wing to the west is only 2 stories, the 4th story only appears on the front side by Ridenour; the dwelling units face to the north and to the south, balconies won't be facing to the west and so they won't be looking down onto the residents' yards.

Chair closed the Public Hearing at 7:33 p.m. Chair called for questions from the Commission.

Shepherd asked why we need a variance on the southern border, other

than the fact that the building is too large, which needs parking to fit; asked why the applicant can't make the building smaller; stated there needs to be a good reason for approving the variances.

Berardi said there's a requirement by fire code, and there's a convenience to the residents; much of parking won't be used by residents, except for the parking garage; was hoping for 1 space per dwelling unit and we are just shy of that; trying to meet the city's mandated parking requirements. Shepherd asked if the building itself goes into the 25' setback. Berardi said no. Shepherd asked if the variance is only for parking that the applicant says is necessary. Berardi confirmed; needed a good access to fire lane.

David Hodge, 8000 Walton Pkwy; attorney for the applicant National Church Residences; the provision is to protect residential zoned property from office zoned property; the way these are developed we have limited the allowable uses; there's no real necessity for the buffer because it's parking lot against parking lot; not adjacent to the office on the lot over; we are proposing to install a fence.

Wester asked what necessitates the abandonment of McCutcheon Rd., why does it turn into a cul-de-sac. Hodge said he's unsure; looks like it was partially vacated at some point; thinks it may be incorporated into parks and trails. Blackford said there was some document located by the city engineer in regards to this, that said this was vacated, but unsure why and the timing of it; staff did look into it roughly 6 months ago.

Suriano asked if Berardi could talk more about the elevation to the west side, as it was a concern of the resident who spoke. Berardi said the elevation of the 1st story is 15' above grade; 2nd story is 827' and then it goes up to 838'; the top of the building is 850'. Suriano confirmed that the second story is 11'; Suriano asked what trees are being proposed or saved. Berardi said there's a line of trees, referenced the documents that showed where all the circles are, those will be new; the large trees in the document are existing; invasive species will be removed. Suriano asked about the site lighting on the west side of the parking. Berardi said there will be minor lighting around the perimeter, but no poles, but the lighting will help for residents of the facility, who may be outside in the evening. Berardi showed a materials board, to show what will be on the building.

Shapaka stated that he was not present when the project originally started; appears to be looking at conflicting info; fire access has 92 units but the application says 129. Berardi said there's a combination of 2

bedroom units.

Burba said we are familiar with other facilities in Gahanna; asked if this is a subsidized facility too; is it based on the residents' income. George Tabit, 2245 North Bank Drive; stated that it will not be subsidized in the same way that Stygler Village is. Burba asked how much the prices will be. Tabit said the cost includes housing and services, transportation services; rents range from \$2,000 for one bedroom and upwards from there. Hodge said there's a range for independent living and nursing care facility; there could be range of 25% of residents living independently and 75% of residents have services on some level depending on their needs, for an example only. Burba said she was also wondering about transportation for the residents; if they are not walking distance from much, then they would require a great deal of transportation.

Shepherd asked foot candles; stated that on the edge of the property, based off the document, it refers to foot candles of 1.7, 1.4, etc. Blackford said it is an average intensity; the average must be 1ft.; is throughout the parking area; this is not at the property line, but overall intensity. Shepherd asked about the roofline in relation to the south. Berardi said the ridge of roof to south is 850'. Shepherd asked if the roofs will line up. Berardi confirmed. Shepherd asked about noise from air conditioning units. Berardi said sounds travels vertically; our units are split systems and condensing systems are on the roof top; the units are mounted and exhaust is inside the balcony unit; all service areas are located on the north side of the building. Shepherd asked if utilities will be viewable on the south side. Berardi said they are inside except the ones on the roof. Shapaka asked about generators; asked where those will be. Berardi said they will face northeast; one sits on the ground. Berardi said there's a dumpster area behind a 10ft high retaining wall.

A motion was made by Burba, seconded by Shepherd, that the Design Review be Approved.

Discussion on the motion: Suriano stated that regarding the material selection, the neutral tones, more natural appearance, and the quality of products is what we are striving towards when talking about the character of the area, as was mentioned last week during the discussions on the land use plan; someone had submitted a comment via email about making this brick, but that is not compatible with what we are trying to achieve; there are many other materials besides brick, that are just as long lasting; appreciates the amount of trees being saved.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

[FDP-0002-2019](#)

To consider a Final Development Plan for a building development, for property located at 0 Ridenour Road; Parcel ID No. 025-013236; current zoning L-MFRD; National Church Residences, George Tabit, applicant.

See discussion above.

A motion was made by Burba, seconded by Shepherd, that the Final Development Plan be Approved.

Discussion on the motion: Suriano stated that given the disposition of the building on the site, the cruciform plan supports this and is minimally invasive to the property line; given the grade change and how the parking is treated, will be voting in support.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

[V-0004-2019](#)

To consider a Variance application to vary sections 1149.02(e)(1) Conditional Uses, 1163.06(a) Lighting, Striping and Traffic Control, 1167.15(b) Building Lines Established, 1167.20(b)(1) Property Perimeter Requirements, and 1197.09(b)(1)(A)(4) Design Review District Standards, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, for property located at 0 Ridenour Rd.; Parcel ID No. 025-013236; current zoning L-MFRD; National Church Residences, George Tabit, applicant.

See discussion above.

A motion was made by Burba, seconded by Shepherd, to Approve the Variance to Code Section 1149.02(e)(1). The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

A motion was made by Burba, seconded by Shepherd, to Approve the Variance to Code Section 1163.06(a).

Discussion on the motion: Shepherd stated that the code related to photo metrics should be reviewed; if the city is happy with this lighting, will not object. Suriano concurred; in terms of average light and where the light is concentrated, will be voting in support.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

A motion was made by Burba, seconded by Shepherd, to Approve the Variance to Code Section 1167.15(b).

Discussion on the motion: Shapaka stated that he will vote in favor of the Variance, due to the site; believes the applicant has done a great job in accommodating the residents and finding solutions.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

A motion was made by Burba, seconded by Shepherd, to Approve the Variance to Code Section 1197.09(b)(1)(A)(4).

Discussion on the motion: Suriano stated that he will be voting in favor of the Variance; led lighting is very common and is more sustainable; offers a wider array of colors and warmth. Shepherd in agreement with Suriano; lighting that is approved is outdated; this option is easier on the eyes.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

A motion was made by Burba, seconded by Shepherd, to Approve the Variance to Code Section 1167.20(b)(1).

Discussion on the motion: Suriano stated that given the retaining wall and grade change at the south portion of the site and due to the building already sitting back, parking at the south location of site is not harmful to the adjacent property; will be voting in favor. Shapaka stated that he agreed with Suriano, that the change in elevation warrants the retaining wall, and the extra parking there is a good idea; will be voting in favor.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

Gahanna Land Use Plan

Blackford stated we would not be going as deep into the details as he did at the previous meetings; last week we had a lengthy presentation on the land use plan; received a good amount of public comment; a lot has gone into shaping the land use plan; stated that he wants to discuss how this affects us when looking at applications: future land use map, focus areas- recommended zoning changes, programs and policies, concept plans; character guidelines; stated this is a guide and not the law like the city code; in GoForward Gahanna plan discussions, people said we were lacking character guidelines; showed a breakdown of future land use distribution; encouraged everyone to review breakdown of use types; showed there are currently 9 different land use/area plans; mixed use

would increase by nearly 7%; single family would decrease by 5.36%; parkland would increase by 10%; decrease of industrial by 5%; showed focus areas; stated this would involve a re-write of our zoning code to bring these recommended changes; reiterated that this is not a mandate, just shows potential redevelopments; not asking for a vote tonight but would ask to recommend approval to Council; asked for the members to review and let the Planning & Development department know if there are concerns; told the members to ask themselves if they think guidelines give enough guidance to appropriately revise the zoning code; are there concerns with uses and intensities; there are a lot of overlaps in existing plans with conflicting goals and guidelines; wants to transform this in order to turn it into zoning code.

Chair opened the Public Hearing at 8:24 p.m.

Joe Yurasek, 1244 Villa Oaks Ct.; stated that he is here as a concerned citizen; believes that the Clerk and Blackford have done a great job at communicating with the public; stated the document mentions branding; stated he has only lived here for 2 years but has had family in the area for 30 years; believes there needs to be a perspective for development, to ask what the vision is; asked if the waterways should be some kind of a brand; asked if we should we go back to the time of John Clark, and when the name of the city was derived; the trees and rivers are a big part of this city; would also like to comment that there's been really good progress on the future land use plan; believes zoning suggestions are good; with a doubling of parks space, believes trees can be preserved; thinks the designated planning areas should make developers stop their vision at the borders; think about the Hamilton Towne Center development for example; encourage soft borders so that it does not become an issue; stated that he thinks the Planning Commission is doing a great job.

Steve Wittmann, 3383 Mana Rd., Blacklick; stated that he owns a property in Gahanna; have been paying attention to this plan; came in with a group from the Board of Realtors, in order to come up with improvements to entrances to the city; we have a chance to make this better; on pg. 87, there are content features; would like to see those things planned down because over time those things look tired; we have a big opportunity; stated he has lived here for 30 years and the community has improved; for focus group area 6, is unsure why that's in the plan when it's outside of Gahanna, but it has low density and preserves green identity; views Jefferson Twp. as a green amenity; stated that he is the president of Jefferson Twp. Land Conservation

Assistance Network.

David Hodge; stated that he is often before Planning Commission, working for developers; stated that Wittman is also a member of the Columbus Downtown Commission and he knows what he's talking about; stated that he is pleased to see how Gahanna is moving forward with this plan; believes good things are coming; thrilled to see the treatment of Granville street because that's a terribly missed opportunity; it is in proximity to so many things; with the adoption of the plan, developers will embrace the city; from Creekside to Hamilton, this can be a regional destination where people can come for recreation and dining and shopping; is a step in the right direction; reiterated that plans are guidelines.

Monica Bolte, 886 Taylor Rd.; stated that her home is placed in a multi-use category on this plan; have only lived there for 3 years; asked if her home will still be there. Hicks asked if she's west or east of Helmbright Dr. Bolte said she's right across the street from the warehouse; asked if there's anything we can do about this; stated that she moved to Gahanna for the small town feel and the schools; we can have development and keep a small town feel.

Blackford said the plan does not mandate that development occur; this does not make her home non-conforming in any way; these are large lots on Taylor Rd., a major roadway; already there's development occurring, so it's likely it will continue in the future, but again this does not mandate anything; a single family home use would be allowed as long as that home remains there; would not force her out of her home.

Chair closed the Public Hearing at 8:30 p.m.

Shepherd asked if any other meetings were scheduled. Blackford said we have had a number of public meetings and have been at this for 16 months; have had 6 public meetings; plan will get modified and will have at least one more discussion at Planning Commission; there was a phone survey and web feedback; now looking closer to adoption; all future meetings will be public; we are at the stage of fine-tuning the plan now.

Hicks said, should Bolte be approached by a developer, this would facilitate those interactions. Blackford said she would not be required to participate in any of those discussions. Hicks asked for parklands, is this increasing to 11 percent or an absolute to 21%. Blackford said from

10% to 21%. Hicks said there's a lot of input needed; requests to postpone action to a future date.

A motion was made by Wester, seconded by Suriano, to Postpone discussion of the land use plan, due back on May 22, 2019.

Discussion on the motion: Suriano stated that this is a great opportunity for our city; an investment in the city; trying to organize ourselves in order to make better decisions in order to make everyone's lives better; we are transitioning from something that appears to be a patchwork quilt to something unified; we have had a lot of documents and applications come before us and it is difficult to not have a single guiding document to reference. Hicks stated that they have received great input on this tonight; welcomed the feedback from residents and thanked them for speaking.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

[2019-0053](#)

Gahanna Land Use Plan

[CC-0001-2019](#)

To recommend approval to Council, changes to Part Eleven - Planning and Zoning Code, Chapters: 1105, 1108, 1131, 1133, 1153, 1165, 1169, 1177, 1181, and 1193, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna.

Blackford stated that the code changes were a multi-department effort; stated that there are changes to two zoning districts that would allow us to modify uses; we try to be proactive at times and reactive at other times to the trends in development; in this case, community commercial and community service; we would like to add gyms, gymnastics, etc., as an allowable use in CC zoning districts, which make up about 4 parcels in the city; for CS zoning districts, would like to allow for motion pictures, t.v. productions, which is based on a request from a developer; the uses would be for indoors; would also like to change the code for electronic signs; the current electronic signs were allowable through a Variance application process; would request that the signs go before Planning Commission in the form of a Design Review application; the signs would be one color, only take up 30% of the sign, would be limited to monument signs which are lower in height; scrolling and flashing would be prohibited.

Gonchar stated that the requested changes, suggested by the Commission at the last meeting, had been added in; the changes went through the legal department for review before being presented tonight; stated that she has nothing further to add, but will answer any questions. Hicks stated that the last code change discussions were in a Workshop

meeting, not a Public Hearing. Gonchar provided a summary of the changes; stated that we are requesting to move away from publishing legal ads in the newspaper due to inefficiencies and increased costs; doing so would also speed up our internal process; we have tried to modernize the process; taking these additional steps of posting public hearing notices at City Hall, on social media, and the city website, reaches more people than before; we will continue to send out contiguous property owner letters in the mail.

Chair opened the Public Hearing at 8:52 p.m. There were no public comments. Chair closed the Public Hearing at 8:52 p.m. Chair called on comments from the Commission. There were none.

A motion was made by Shepherd, seconded by Wester, that the Proposed Code Changes be Recommended to Council for Approval. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shapaka, Wester, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Shepherd

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

G. NEW BUSINESS: None.

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS

Assistant City Attorney

No report.

City Engineer

Not present.

Planning & Development

No report.

Council Liaison

No report.

CIC Liaison

Hicks stated that next Tuesday, the CIC would have their regular meeting.

Chair

No report.

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS: None.

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

No comments.

K. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:54 p.m.