



City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission Workshop

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

City Hall, Council Chambers

*Immediately Following Planning Commission Meeting

Michael Suriano, Chair
John Hicks
Bobbie Burba
Michael Greenberg
Thomas Shapaka
Michael Tamarkin
Thomas J. Wester

Krystal Gonchar, Deputy Clerk of Council

OPEN MEETING

Chair Suriano opened the meeting at 8:57 p.m., with all members present. Additional attendees included Interim Director of Planning & Development, Michael Blackford, David Hodge, attorney for the Mill Street Development team: Andrew Wappner, Sr. Project Manager, Brad Parrish, Architect, Doug Maddy, Developer.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

[2019-0181](#)

Preliminary Design Review for the Mill Street Development Project.

Hodge informed the commission that eventually, they will weigh in on the vacation of a part of North Street since part of the project will sit on that road; would request from the commission, any preliminary comments on that; said there has been discussion on the character of the architecture; would appreciate definitive direction on that; the Gahanna zoning code is outdated; when it was created, the city was a suburban area without an urban core; urban development in Olde Gahanna will require some variances.

Wappner said the last time we were before the commission we did not have a full variance list ready; we have most of those ready tonight; provided those in the attached file. Parrish said the last time we spoke, we discussed the contemporary design and asked if that was

appropriate for the area; after review, we added to those drawings, attached in the file; we have units with some town homes; tried to create a departure from the sidewalk; we wanted to create the amenity area on the corner of the south side to give back to the urban core; we felt it was important to choose high quality materials to compliment the architecture; see the attached renderings for flat elevations; also they have developed the landscape plan further.

Chair asked if there were any questions from the public. There were none. Chair thanked the visitors for the overview and then opened the meeting for questions from the commission.

Greenberg stated that this is one of the most important developments in the city of Gahanna and will be here for years to come; which is why the decisions made surrounding this project are so important; asked about the parking on the west side, which now goes to the creek; is concerned that will limit the public access to the creek; asked if the parking lot is still planned for that side; asked if the residents will have access to the creek. Applicant said the grading there is steep so it is difficult for anyone to get down there in that area as it is; there is an existing stub of a path that allows for access; our development agreement does include altering that path slightly. Greenberg asked if parking will be gated. Applicant said no; will have passes or stickers for residents, as the parking is reserved for residents; Lintner Park is still available for public use, which is not affected by this project. Greenberg said the design is very modern and it looks like many other new apartments that have been developed; not sure that is the look that ties into Creekside; feels very big at five stories and going up to the edge of the street; wants to make downtown walkable and livable, but wants this to fit in with the community.

Wester asked what the city's vision is for this; the view on the screen tonight, labeled number 3, regarding that image, where does the snow go when that street is plowed; this has been a problem in other districts; can the sidewalk accommodate wheel chairs; what will happen to the short term parking spaces; where would visitors to the apartments park. Applicant said there are entrances off the back of the parking lot. Wester said setbacks are right on the property line and the sidewalks don't look inviting; what will transit look like in the future; will Gahanna need transit down that street in the future and if so, how will we accommodate for that; how will the area accommodate for events; population will grow by another million people; will this development accommodate a growing and aging population; asked if the balconies are placed in the correct place for sunrise and sunsets.

Tamarkin said overall, this would be an asset to Gahanna; it is complimentary to the downtown district; bringing in adults would be complimentary to the businesses already there; to make Creekside work, residential is important; to get business, you must have people; suburban development with parking garages is a tough sell, especially with a lack of parking; to bring people downtown is important; we do need to respect neighbors, the creek, the area; we would have a city feel with a five story building but also a suburban feel with the parks; this could be good thing.

Shapaka said this is a complicated issue; there are a lot of good things that could come from this but we have a duty to serve the people; stated that the neighbors would have to be diligent to get information about this; likes the architecture, but there are one story buildings near this that we could see become five story buildings, we could fill this in; what is the vision; the city has to determine if this is the direction they want to go; agrees with Wester on the sidewalk issues; asked if we know the current occupancy of the Creekside apartments; if the rent is too high, will these apartments be full; need more public input; this is blocking the northeast side; the thoroughfare plan which was discussed at the regular meeting indicated how terrible traffic already is in that area and this would add to that; asked if it's worth the commerce.

Burba asked if anyone attempted to purchase the building where Shampooch is located. Applicant said they tried. Burba said something should be done to unify the area; asked if there are enough parking spaces at the one building; looks like the parking is lacking there. Applicant said they are short on parking by 12 spaces; is likely that there are 12 spaces over on the side where the larger building is; there is at least one space per unit, but some units have multiple tenants. Burba asked about the size of the units. Applicant said they range from 600-1,400 square feet; did demographic studies and there is a wide range of renters in the area. Burba asked how they compare price-wise to the Creekside units. Applicant said these would range from \$1,100-\$1,800 per unit.

Hicks said we need something here; there's a reason this is in a community reinvestment area; the design is growing on me; was recently walking in downtown Columbus and passed townhomes similar to this; asked about growing horizontally and not vertically, what did the applicant mean by that. Hodge said mixed use doesn't need to be parcel by parcel, it could mean commercial integrated with residential above on the same parcel; that is what is meant by vertical; that was derived from the

Gahanna Land Use Plan. Hicks said although it was not discussed tonight, would be in favor of vacating part of North St. for a project like this; the financial piece is up to Council; in looking through variances for this project, in general, would tend to be more favorable, especially when it comes to lighting and setbacks; regarding the opposition from local businesses, thinks those businesses would be in favor of having residents and customers; again, generally in support of the development.

Suriano stated that he appreciated that the applicants brought back more images; they may want to consider more images showing elevations; appreciate the thinking around the streets and stoops; there should be a recess or something separating the door and street; echoed Wester's comments about having a more gracious sidewalk; was on the sub-committee for the Land Use Plan and we don't have a guiding document; the Land Use Plan establishes where we see our greatest assets and where we want to develop; Creekside is the most urban area in the city; this corridor necessitates an urban solution; in terms of appropriateness, this is one of the best places for this development; don't believe that Gahanna has a distinguishing style like other places; what I look for is quality of materials, is it contextually relevant, is it scaled appropriately; would recommend articulating this in a larger context, when coming down the other streets like Carpenter; what do you see at the back of the building.

Wester asked what would happen if North Street could not be vacated. Applicant said we would have to talk about that internally. Wester said he has a fear that everything will look good and later they will find out that residents were harmed by this; very leery of vacating a street. Hodge said that is a very good point and that will be investigated. Applicant said Wester had asked earlier about outside gathering for the residents; showed from the image where that would be.

Greenberg asked again about parking, since they are 12 spaces short on the one side; did they ever look at going up for parking, such as a multi-level garage that could serve residents and the city. Applicant said that was looked into a year ago, and that was cost prohibitive.

Hicks said there can be a paralysis by analysis; tries to step back and look at the bigger picture; trying to approach this by looking at the future; the future will be different from what is there now; would be in favor of something like this.

Shapaka said the walk around the property will need to be addressed

more; will be listening to the residents about what they want; asked if this were to happen on the vacant lot near there, would the residents be concerned; thinks vacating North St. is creating a headache; if it's complicated, then don't vacate; maybe put an arch across the street; this project has a chance, but you will need to sell it.

Hodge said this has been very helpful and they appreciate the time; would like to say there has been a lot of interest on this project; when we are before the commission for votes on this project, don't let the vocal minority dictate this development; we have work to do and will come back with a plan that the commission feels is acceptable.

CLOSE MEETING

Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:52 p.m.