



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

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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

Gahanna Planning Commission met in regular session on April 12, 2023. The agenda for this meeting was published on April 7, 2023. Chair Thomas Shapaka called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by James Mako.

Present 7 - John Hicks, Michael Greenberg, James Mako, Thomas W. Shapaka, Michael Suriano, Michael Tamarkin, and Thomas J. Wester

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2023-0060](#)

Planning Commission Minutes 3.22.2023

A motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Mako, that the Minutes of March 22, 2023 be Approved.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Hicks, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

Abstain: 1 - Greenberg

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

Starbucks

[DR-0008-2023](#)

To consider a Design Review Application for site plan, and landscaping for 1370 North Hamilton Rd.; Parcel ID: 025-013793; Current Zoning CC-2; Starbucks Coffee #2781; Katie Getz, applicant.

Director of Planning Michael Blackford provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. The property is zoned Community Commercial (CC-2). All the surrounding properties are zoned CC. They are proposing some landscaping and some modifications to their parking area to improve traffic flow. They are removing some concrete, landscaping, three trees, and 14 parking spaces. They will still have more parking spaces than code requires. They will be moving some of the signage around to be in an appropriate location within the drive thru. The drive thru will have enough stacking space for 11 cars. This is a big improvement. There is landscaping along the drive thru. Currently cars stack in the drive aisle and not on site. The Design Review criteria to consider is as follows: is it compatible with existing structures. Contributes to the improvement of the design of the district. Contributes to the economic and community vitality of the district. Maintain, protect, and enhance physical surroundings. The DRD-3 criteria to consider is entrances and exits from commercial sites should be well decorated and landscaped. Landscape islands and center and perimeter of the commercial parking area. Blackford said they are adding additional landscaping along the perimeter of the site. Staff recommends approval.

Chair opened public comment at 7:07 p.m.

Applicant Bill Skebba, 7965 N. High St., Ste 200, Kimley-Horn representing the applicant. He is available for questions.

Clerk confirmed there were no comments from the public.

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

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

Motion was made by Wester, seconded by Suriano, that the Design Review be approved.

Discussion on the motion: Hicks is in support of the application. It is a very congested area, and these improvements will help alleviate some of the congestion. Tamarkin agrees that it is congested and impedes the flow of traffic through the main drive. Tamarkin is in support.

Motion carried by the following vote.

Yes: 7 - Hicks, Greenberg, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

Roger's Market[V-0004-2023](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary sections 1163.01(a), 1163.08(h), and 1167.15(b) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, for property located at 1379-1391 Johnstown Rd.; Parcel ID: 025-009559; Current zoning NC; Roger's Market Limited; Eric Leibowitz, 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.

Director of Planning Michael Blackford provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. Blackford shared that the applicant Eric Leibowitz is out of town at another Planning hearing. The property is zoned Neighborhood Commercial and located just west of the roundabout at Morse and Johnstown Roads. This request is for a parking lot expansion. With the success of new tenants there are challenges with parking. The plan is to add 53 new spaces for a total of 156 spaces. Blackford showed the site plan which showed the new paved areas. The landscape plan includes an additional 35 trees to help screen the development. They are requesting a variance for a reduced setback along Morse Road. Staff feels this is an appropriate variance to grant. There are three variances, one is to parking space size. Current code requires a 10-foot space, they are requesting a nine-foot width. This is an existing condition. Their interior landscape island variance is the 10-foot strip of land in between the parking areas. This is an existing condition. They are requesting a parking setback variance. This applies to Morse Rd to reduce to two and a half feet and four feet on Johnstown Rd. This is an existing condition. Staff recommends approval of both the variance and design review request. This will solve the existing parking issues; the variances are minor in nature. The variance approval does not adversely affect safety but rather improves the safety by eliminating the need for offsite/overflow parking and walking across the roads.

Chair opened public comment at 7:17 p.m.

Applicant Brian Quackenbush, 5500 New Albany Rd, Columbus, EMH&T representing the applicant. He is available for questions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Timothy O'Donnell, 348 Sycamore Woods Ln, Gahanna. He was misled

on what was happening with the property and had prepared several statistics that are useless at this point. This is for a parking lot expansion as opposed to putting in a marketplace gas station. He apologized for taking up the commissions time.

Chair closed the public comment at 7:18 p.m.

Chair called on questions from the Commission; Wester commented on being able to cross Johnstown Road or Morse Road. And asked if there has there been any consideration to putting in flashing pedestrian signs in or around the roundabout. Blackford said that when staff and the applicants were looking at some temporary offsite solutions it was discussed. It is hopeful with these improvements it will not be necessary. It would be a city responsibility and the city could look into in the future if it is required.

Mako asked if the proposed stormwater basin is being done because of adding some impervious surface. Quackenbush said that since they are increasing the impervious surface, they are adding volume to account for it in the stormwater basin. Mako asked if the stormwater calculations support the size of the basin. Quackenbush said they are still working through the final design of it. They will be submitting engineering and construction drawings to the engineering department for review. The basin size shown on the drawing is approximate and has not been finalized.

Suriano asked about the setback variance and it being an existing condition. Blackford said all the variances would be existing conditions, but they are increased slightly because of the redesign. It is already encroaching into what current code requirements are.

Motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Suriano, that the Variance be approved.

Discussion on the motion: Hicks said that a recent application in this area and one of the variance requests was a setback related to the right-of-way. His comments for that project were that it was a reasonable request. There are special circumstances relating to that right-of-way. His feelings are the same, to remain consistent he is in support.

Tamarkin thanked Casto for realizing that the parking lot is a problem and for spending the money to solve the problem. He is in support.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Hicks, Greenberg, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

[DR-0005-2023](#)

To consider a Design Review Application for a site plan and landscaping for property located at 1379-1391 Johnstown Road; Parcel ID: 025-009559; Current Zoning NC; Roger's Market Limited; Eric Leibowitz, 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. The application was discussed under V-0004-2023. See attached staff presentation.

Motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Suriano, that the Design Review be approved.

Discussion on the motion: Suriano is in favor of the design review. The orientation of the parking lot makes a lot of sense and gets more density and solves a lot of the problems

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Hicks, Greenberg, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

Lorenz Family Real Estate

[CU-0002-2023](#)

To consider a Conditional Use Application for property located at 6301 Taylor Rd.; Parcel ID: 025-010851; Current Zoning OCT; Lorenz Family Real Estate; Bradley Lorenz, 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.

Director of Planning Michael Blackford provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. The zoning is Office, Commerce and Technology (OCT). The majority of the properties in this area are also zoned OCT. The proposed use is a landscape company with outside storage. Landscaping is allowed by right, but the outside storage does require a conditional use. The site is two acres and contains a single-family home which will remain, and it has an existing four-foot chain link fence along the frontage of the property. The improvements they are proposing is a 1,950 sq. ft. metal prefabricated garage for storage. It is setback 230 feet from Taylor Rad and it is about 15-feet in height. There is about an acre of gravel lot. Gravel is not a permitted material for storage of vehicles and that is one of the variances requested. All screening requirements are met with the fencing and the proposed 61 burning bushes. There are 23 existing trees on site. They will remain and an additional tree will be planted as well as the burning bushes. The interior landscaping for the parking lot has variances requested. Blackford showed the rendering of the structure. The

variance request is to sections: Site Planning 1155.04(d)(1), you must provide a sidewalk from building entries to parking area. The applicant states that an interior sidewalk would be a hindrance to trucks and equipment. Engineering would like to see a sidewalk from the structure to the parking area. Landscaping and Screening 1155.06(g)(1) parking and vehicular areas shall be screened from the right-of-way. The applicant is restricted in what can be planted along the right-of-way due to overhead powerlines. There is an existing four-foot chain link fence between the gravel lot and the right-of-way. The fence does not provide a lot of screening. Outdoor Storage Areas 1155.07(a)(1) the placement of outdoor storage materials/equipment is prohibited in any setback. The gravel lot meets pavement setbacks, but code says that when you have outdoor storage areas those must meet the building setbacks. They are proposing to have it be located within the building setback but not the parking setback. The pavement setback is 10-feet where the code would require 30-feet normally. Outdoor Storage Areas 1155.07(b)(2) placement of outdoor storage materials/equipment must occur towards the rear of the lot. It has to do with the placement of the building and when you have multiple buildings it gets a bit tougher. Minimum Number of Parking Spaces Required 1163.02(a) one parking space per business vehicle plus two additional spaces, based on square footage. This is general standards for parking. They are required one ADA space. They are proposing to have a gravel area just south of access drive for employee parking, no other visitors to the site. engineering does not object since ADA parking is met. Surfacing and Maintenance 1163.05(a) all off-street parking must be hard surfaced, paved or cement. Gravel is proposed. There have been several similar variances approved in the past in the OCT district. The existing driveway is gravel, this is an expansion. Interior Landscaping Requirements 1163.08(c)(d)(e)(f)(g) the total amount of interior landscaping shall be five percent of parking area and one tree per every 100 sq. ft. dispersed throughout the area. Applicant states that meeting these requirements would take up space necessary for the proposed use. There are 23 existing trees that will help obstruct the view.

Conditional use criteria to consider is as follows: Is it a conditional use of the zoning? Is the development in accord with appropriate plans for the area. Would the proposed development have undesirable effects on the surrounding area? Is the development in keeping with the existing land use character. Variance criteria to consider is as follows: Are there special circumstances or conditions applying to the land, building or use referred to in the application? The granting of the variance 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?

Design Review criteria to consider is as follows: Is it compatible with the existing structures? Does it contribute to the improvements of the design of the district? Does it contribute to the economic and community vitality of the district? Does it maintain, protect, and enhance physical surroundings. Final Development Plan Criteria to consider is as follows: Does it meet all the applicable standards, it does not unless the commission grants the variances. Is it in accord with the plans for the area. There is not a lot of specifics in this general area with the Land Use Plan. Would it have undesirable effects on the area? Is it consistent with the Land Use Plan? Staff recommends approval of the Conditional Use and has no objection to the Final Development Plan, or the variances.

Chair opened public comment at 7:40 p.m.

Applicant Brad Lorenz, 6301 Taylor Rd. Gahanna. Mr. Lorenz has a landscaping business and would like to move it to Gahanna to this location. He currently has five employees and four trucks. They will be storing some equipment and materials on site. He is available for questions.

Clerk confirmed there were no comments from the public.

Chair closed the public comment at 7:41 p.m.

Chair called on questions from the Commission: Hicks asked what is going to be stored on site. Lorenz said there will be some trucks, mini skid steer, sod cutters and typical landscape tools. They specialize in landscape construction. There could be a pile of gravel that they will load into a dump trailer. They do not have large equipment like semis.

Wester said staff has no objections to the variance except the sidewalk. It mentions that a sidewalk will be installed from building entries to the parking area. Lorenz said he didn't know about that objection until this evening and is a little confused what it means. He doesn't know how a sidewalk would be practical. The entire lot is gravel, and it is just a building for storage. His employees will park in front, load up and leave. Blackford said that engineering was objecting because it is an ADA requirement. Wester asked if it has to be installed to comply with ADA. Blackford said that is correct.

Shapaka said they are looking for a pad for someone to come in and park for it to be ADA compliant. Blackford believes that is the case. Shapaka said the request is for a variance not to provide that. Blackford said they are requesting not to have the sidewalk going from the parking

area to the entrances of the building. Lorenz said they can agree to that. They have agreed to put an ADA spot next to the building. If they need a sidewalk right to the door, he is fine with that. Blackford asked that it be included as a condition of the approval.

Suriano said if this didn't get picked up here it seems like it is a building code that should be flagged in a review. Blackford said he believes that is correct. There is zoning code, building code and engineering code. Even if they got the variance there might be an issue when getting the building permit.

Mako asked the hours of operation. Lorenz said Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mako said normal working hours no night work. Lorenz said no it will be business hours. Mako said one of the variances is for a gravel lot and asked how they were going to do dust control. Lorenz said they will be using 57 limestone; it is a three-quarter inch clean stone.

Tamarkin said in the front of the building there is a lot of gravel forward of the house
how do they anticipate using that space. Lorenz said that there will be a main drive right down the middle and then to the right and to the left would be parking for employees. There is a chain link fence across the front and there will be a drive gate. During non-operating hours there will be nothing there, no storage, no piles of gravel. Lorenz said that is correct.

Greenberg asked if any product is made on site. Lorenz said they will not be making anything. They are really close to their suppliers. Greenberg asked about having a sidewalk in an area where there are not any. As a commission it has been our position to have sidewalks and as we approve new applications. Blackford said that they will be a sidewalk along the street frontage installed. Greenberg referred to the site plan and asked about the stormwater retention at the back of the property. And if there will be some run off to it from the site and if it was big enough to handle the amount of run off. Lorenz said he assumes so.

Shapaka asked when the sidewalk at the street frontage is installed if they are adding a concrete apron from the driveway to the street. Lorenz said it has not been proposed but he wouldn't mind putting in an apron. Shapaka encourages him to make the apron pretty long to knock down some of the gravel. Shapaka asked Blackford if there was any kind of verbiage to ensure that could be a condition of approval. Blackford said that he believes with all the applications there can be conditions added. He believes the apron is part of the engineering process and the right-of-way permits. The commission can make it a condition of the

variance request.

Hicks said for clarification that Lorenz is fine with complying with the ADA parking with a short sidewalk to the building. He asked if he would be open to the commission amending the variance application to exclude that specific variance from the request. They would not approve the variance to the ADA space and the sidewalk. Would he agree to the commission amending the application to remove that variance from the request. Lorenz agreed to this amendment. Another potential amendment is to require a condition of the gravel surface to include a concrete apron to the entrance. He asked if he would be open to that. Lorenz said he is open to it depending on how far in it goes. He is a small company and does not have the funds currently to spend a lot on concrete. He said he is willing to do an apron but thinks 100 feet is a little far. Hicks asked how far he would suggest. He suggested going from the telephone poles forward to the street. Shapaka said that seems like a fair compromise. If he puts the apron in and other parcels along the road put the sidewalk in. The sidewalk can be tied in a lot easier if he has a concrete apron. Shapaka thinks there is a compromise by not putting the sidewalk in and getting that apron in. So that in the future when the city or other property owners get together to put in the sidewalk, they can do so at that time easy if the concrete apron is there. Shapaka asked if there a compromise there for the commission to do away with the actual sidewalk so that we can get the longer concrete hard surface into the property. Suriano said it seems as though the apron would do more good than the sidewalk would at this point. Blackford said that the sidewalk along the roadway is a code requirement and engineering is going to object to that. That is not part of the application so that would need to be added to an application that goes on to city council. That would be about a couple more months if that's something that's going to happen. Staff is going to have an objection to that. It is a great idea, but it changes the path forward for this request. Tamarkin said as a commission they have been consistent requiring sidewalks. He is opposed to varying that. Shapaka said the apron going back to the telephone poles would be about 30 feet.

A motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Greenberg, that the Conditional Use be Approved.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Hicks, Greenberg, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

[V-0007-2023](#)

To consider a Variance Application to vary Chapters 1163.05(a), 1163.08(c)(d)(e)(f)(g), 1163.02(a), 1155.04(d)(1), 1155.06(g)(1), 1155.07(b)(2), and 1155.07(a)(1) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, for a 1.986-acre located at 6301 Taylor Rd.; Parcel ID:

025-010851; Current Zoning OCT; Lorenz Family Real Estate; Bradley Lorenz, 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. The application was discussed under CU-0002-2023. See attached staff presentation.

Hicks asked for clarification; the rules of procedure allow the commission to amend. Is it proper procedure to make the original motion and then a second motion to amend the motion on the floor or can they move right to the amendment. The commission wants to amend two items on the variance application. Roth said they need to make any changes, amendments, or conditions prior to making a motion to pass the variance application.

Motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Wester, to amend item V-0007-2023 to remove the variance to section 1154.04(d)(1) relating to the ADA parking and sidewalk and to modify the variance to section 1163.05(a) to require including a concrete apron 30-feet from the pavement.

Discussion on the motion: Greenberg wanted to clarify that they are only doing one amendment. The rules of procedure 7.5.9 the motion shall be susceptible to one amendment. The amendment shall be declared in the motion. A motion to amend that fails shall not be moved again in the same form. Shapaka said the two items are one amendment.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Hicks, Greenberg, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

Motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Wester, to approve item V-0007-2023 as amended.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Hicks, Greenberg, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

[FDP-0004-2023](#)

To consider a Final Development Plan Application for a 1.986-acre located at 6301 Taylor Rd.; Parcel ID: 025-010851; Current Zoning OCT; Lorenz Family Real Estate.; Bradley Lorenz, 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. The application was discussed under CU-0002-2023. See attached staff presentation.

A motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Greenberg, that the Final

Development Plan be Approved.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Hicks, Greenberg, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

[DR-0009-2023](#)

To consider a Design Review Application for site plan, landscaping, building design, and other for 1.986 acres at 6301 Taylor Rd.; Parcel ID: 025-010851; Current Zoning OCT; Lorenz Family Real Estate; Bradley Lorenz, 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. The application was discussed under CU-0002-2023. See attached staff presentation.

A motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Wester, that the Design Review be Approved.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Hicks, Greenberg, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

Code Changes

[CC-0002-2023](#)

To recommend approval to Council, changes to Chapter 914 - Tree Preservation, Planting and Replacement, Chapter 11 - Planning and Zoning Code, and Chapter 1311 - Building Code of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna.

Blackford said that at the last meeting there were some revisions to the code changes proposed. Blackford has made those revisions. It was requested to amend the rear yard setback to mirror the side yard setback. Unattached accessory structures are sheds. They are proposing in most of the single-family districts going down to about five feet for the rear yard setback and the side yard setback. That was changed for all the residential categories which were amended for unattached accessory structures. There was discussion about schools and conditional uses and what some of those impacts may have. It was requested to keep the code as it is, which is those are prohibited within the OCT zoning district. That was changed back and is no longer proposed. Discussion about storage tanks in the OCT zoning district was discussed. Tanks small in nature and size could be approved administratively. Originally proposed was 2,000 gallons. Added back in, is the height limitation that was previously in place. Blackford said that there are members of the development community who has an interest in some of the proposed changes. They were supportive of the change as it will make it a bit easier especially for some of the variances, like the parking lot landscaping.

A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Hicks, that the Code Change be Recommended to Council for Approval.

Discussion on the motion:

Greenberg said that a couple of the proposed changes are for administrative approvals. If staff gives approval/disapproval who can the applicant appeal to. Blackford said they can appeal to BZBA.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Hicks, Greenberg, Mako, Shapaka, Suriano, Tamarkin and Wester

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

V-0001-2023

To consider a Variance Application to vary Chapters 1143.08(a) and 1167.17(b) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, to allow for a shed installation on property located at 60 Savern Place; Parcel ID: 025-003993; Current Zoning SF-3; Bradley Rhoads, applicant.

Shapaka said that Mr. Rhodes has withdrawn his variance application.

G. NEW BUSINESS - NONE

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS

Mayor

Mayor Jadwin said that there were two great decisions made this evening solving the congestion issues at Starbucks and Rogers Market. It is a great problem having successful businesses that continue to grow and develop. There have been multiple directors meeting with the Casto team to find a workable solution for the parking issues. They engaged with the Franklin County Engineer's office as well. She applauds Casto for the work they did trying to find a solution to address the congestion. To Mr. Wester's point there was a conversation about a pedestrian crossing and the city will be exploring internally with the engineering department as pedestrian traffic continues to evolve in that area. There is a trail sidewalk project on East Johnstown Road that doesn't go that far. The hope is to eventually expand it all to there. Mayor Jadwin said Director Blackford gave an update to City Council on the about the zoning code rewrite project that has been underway for about two years. Blackford is spearheading the project and working with a consultant who is one of the experts in the field of rewriting zoning codes. We are getting near the public input and public participation phase of the project, which should be in the next 30 to 60 days. Council would like to have further discussion to better understand what is allowed in each of the

zoning districts. The goal is to have a final code adopted by the end of the year that is reflective of what the current trends are for our community and looking to the future. What to see given how we are built now and what fits within certain areas as we go forward. Things like design codes, colors, and materials and all those issues. She attends these meetings to hear the questions that the commission has and the challenges they have in dealing with some of the applications.

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS - NONE

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Wester commented on the workshop prior to the meeting and asked if a code update is needed to the OCT zoning. Do we want out of the auto storage in that area. He is thinking back to when Fine Line Auto Body on Hamilton Road was in. While the commission was debating it, City Council passed legislation that no longer allowed body shops on Hamilton Road. Speed Way Auto seems to have a disregard for city requirements. They are willing to ask for forgiveness after permission. He believes the answer they gave the commission on fire protection was evasive. The fire department has some strict regulations. They didn't seem to be able to address it.

Tamarkin asked Blackford since the Mr. Rhoads withdrew his variance application does that mean the shed is coming down or moving. Roth said Mr. Rhoads had the shed for sale and has reported it will be removed by this weekend.

K. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

*APPROVED by the Planning Commission, this
day of 2023.*

Thomas W. Shapaka