



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Pam Ripley, Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

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 November 16, 2022. The agenda for this meeting was published on November 9, 2022. Chair Michael Tamarkin called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mako.

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

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA - NONE

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2022-0316](#)

Planning Commission minutes 10.26.2022

Motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Greenberg, that the Minutes from October 26, 2022, be approved.

Motion carried with the following vote:

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

[2022-0319](#)

Planning Commission minutes 11.2.2022

Motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Greenberg, that the Minutes from November 2, 2022, be approved.

Motion carried with the following vote:

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

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

[Z-0002-2022](#)

To recommend approval to Council, a Zoning Application to rezone ~0.299 acres of a 3.4 acre site for property, located at 348 Granville St.; Parcel ID: 025-000276; Current Zoning SO, Proposed Zoning CC; Project Kassel 348 Granville, LLC; Matt Von Bargaen, applicant.

Director of Planning Michael Blackford provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. Blackford said the property is currently zoned Suburban Office (SO). They are requesting the zoning be changed to Community Commercial (CC). A significant amount of the surrounding properties is zoned CC. There is a mix of uses in the area. CC zoning allows for retail restaurants and offices. The current building was built in 1982 and it is a dated site in meeting code requirements for parking and landscaping. The site is about 0.3 acres. Our zoning code does not have a minimum lot size for general commercial uses. The proposed use is a coffee shop with a drive through. Blackford said this application is for a rezoning, and the commission is not necessarily adopting a specific tenant or use or a site plan. The site plan shown is conceptual. If the rezoning is approved, the applicant must come back before Planning Commission for a final development plan review and possible a variance application. It is an older developed site that will need some variances to current code requirements if approved.

Suburban Office is a very limiting zoning category. It only allows for general professional, medical, and dental offices. Non-office uses are banks, library, and daycare. CC is a little more intense from a zoning standpoint as far as uses. It also allows for automotive uses, but those require conditional use. Given the size of this property, a lot of those activities would not fit. It is limited what could be physically constructed because of the size. Access is off Granville Street with shared access to the apartments to the rear of the property. If approved, what's out there today wouldn't meet any code standards for setbacks or landscaping. The Land Use Plan designates this area as mixed-use. Retail and restaurants are two uses. Building height and intensity are far greater than what would be achieved on this site. Rezoning criteria to consider: is it consistent with the goals of the land use plan? The zoning is consistent with achieving that mix of uses and having mixed-use of land use be more of a retail destination. Suburban office does not allow for any retail types of activities. Is it compatible with the property with the allowed uses? In this case, this property is essentially 100% impervious. It's all developed. Availability of sites elsewhere with the same zoning, compatibility of all potential uses. Again, this portion of the property to be

rezoned is adjacent to the same zoning on the east (CC), same zoning to the South and across the street on Granville (CC). It's adjacent to suburban office, very similar zoning. Capacity of infrastructure and demand for the uses that is the rezoning criteria. Staff recommends approval. It consistent with the Land Use Plan recommendations. It is consistent with the surrounding development. There are a lot of restaurants in this area.

Chair opened public comment at 7:13 p.m.

Applicant Matt Von Bargen, owner of the property, shared the request is to rezone so the site could be consistent with other sites in the area. The site plan is only conceptual. They have not yet identified a user and are trying to figure out what the best use of the site is. It could be office or a new retail restaurant use.

No comments from the public.

Chair closed the public comment at 7:13 p.m.

Chair called on questions from the Commission: Tamarkin asked if the zoning is changed, could it still be office? Blackford said that CC does allow for office uses by right, essentially the same office uses that suburban office allowed. It just allows for significantly more retail kind of uses.

Motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Mako, that the Zoning application be recommended to Council.

Discussion on the motion:

Suriano is in favor of the recommendation. It's consistent with properties in and around the area. Understanding the site is limited in its footprint and the plan was just conceptual, he said at some point we need to start thinking about what we want the street life to be like on Granville. He thinks right now it's very car centric. He thinks with some planning adjustments, in terms of the way we're thinking about whether it's setbacks or circulation, there may be some better strategies. In terms of the infrastructure, you're pushing things forward towards the street and pushing vehicles towards the rear of the sites. That may be helpful. While it might impact this as we get into further discussion on planning and design review and things like that, it is just something to consider how we want our street vision for that part of town.

Greenberg is also in favor of the rezoning and was pleased to see in the application that there was a phase one environmental site assessment that was provided for review. There are some sites within a quarter mile that have underground storage tanks that may cause issues in the future, not with this site but other sites down the road. We will need to make sure that we get those environmental site assessments when they're available.

Shapaka echoed what Mr. Suriano said. He would like to see a workshop with this prior to any kind of final design development plan. He thinks there is a sensitivity to the street front and massing they are trying to do with other buildings that have been recently built. He is in favor of the rezoning.

Mako is also going to be voting in favor of the rezoning and thinks it fits very well with the existing land uses in the area. He hopes that when getting into the design review they can make it look appealing to the eye with the aesthetics.

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

[DR-0022-2022](#)

To consider a Design Review application for a site plan, landscaping, and building design for property located at 789 Science Blvd.; Parcel IDs: 025-013637, 025-013666 and 025-013667; Current Zoning OCT-L; Golf Depot Expansion; Curtiss L. Williams, Sr., applicant.

Director of Planning Michael Blackford provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. The applicant is requesting a modest sized accessory building. There was an identical request submitted to Planning Commission in August 2021 that was denied. There was a final development plan and variance request that was approved, and he believes the applicants are working on some of those elements related to the construction of the parking area. In looking at the minutes from the August 2021 meeting, the comments were in favor and unfavorable on some of the concerns with the building and that the building design wasn't in character with the existing buildings. It was taller than the original buildings and that the scale should come down. There were also some comments made about landscaping and the landscaping around this building was appropriate and did a nice job, considering some of the limitations of the landfill. There was an opportunity for improved design. Blackford showed the commission information from the application and said all the information is the exact same from the August 2021 application. The design review technically is for landscape, lighting and building design. What's most germane to this request is this golf academy building, which he believes is 20 feet in height and just over 1500 square feet. It is about just over 500 feet from the right-of-way of Science Boulevard and is partially shielded by the Wesley Construction building. There is a landscape plan and a significant amount of landscaping in and around this building. He believes it was talked about a little last time. He believes the cap on the landfill prevents certain types of trees from being planted. The overlay that's associated with this property does require plantings around the building. This meets the overlay requirement and is above and beyond what code would normally require. Most facilities in town don't require this type of building, foundation plantings. This is a unique characteristic of the overlay. Hopefully it will soften some of the views of the building. Blackford shared the renderings within the application. They are the

same as last year. He believes the building is a little bit taller than some of the other buildings out there. The doors face the driving range and not Science Blvd. Design review criteria to consider: is it compatible with the existing structure? Does it contribute to the improvement of the design review district? Does it contribute to the economic and community vitality? Does it maintain, protect, and enhance the physical surroundings? It is a similar material, building color and style. It is a relatively modest size. It's limited visibility. It's partially screened from Wesley Construction. Staff recommends approval of the application.

Chair opened public comment at 7:29 p.m.

Applicant Curtiss Williams, President of Central Ohio Community Improvement Corporation who owns the property. Mr. Williams said that after the last meeting with the commission they spent a lot of time trying to incorporate the Commissions recommendations. What the commission didn't know at the previous submittal was that they had already purchased the building. It is a metal-built building, and it was in transit to them. They had to look at the design elements and talk to the manufacturer of the building.

One of the concerns was that, since they already had the building, they can't go back and make changes to the material. They had a lot of conversations with the manufacturer and the installer of the of the building. Because the building had already been prefabricated, any kind of modifications would cost a lot of money. They spent \$80,000 for the building and now any modification will cost an additional \$30,000 plus. They became more concerned when they found out that the modifications would void the warranty on the building. As a small nonprofit dealing with just the landfill, this is another hiccup that they didn't want to deal with in terms of having problems with property on the landfill. They thought about it. They didn't do anything at this point. They had not even gathered labor cost. They couldn't get the labor costs until we have a contract. There is \$80,000 on initial expenditure and \$30,000 for modifications and additional labor and a voided warranty on a new building. It is a little much for the building and the improvements they are trying to make at the landfill and the golf course. They tried very hard to meet the Commission's requests and recommendations. They could not get there because of the cost. They appreciate the chance for the Commission to reconsider the request and approve the initial request and design review.

No comments from the public.

Chair closed the public comment at 7:33 p.m.

No questions from the Commission.

A motion was made by Suriano, seconded by Hicks, that the Design Review be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Discussion on the motion: Shapaka abstained from voting on this issue. He was one of the original architects of the complex.

Suriano said that he understood some of the difficulties around the fact that this building is prefabricated and problems with voiding the warranty. He is sympathetic to these problems. When looking at design review, the commission looks at compatibility. He believes the comments from the previous meeting still hold true. He thinks the building is the same color as the surrounding buildings, but he thinks that's probably where the compatibility ends in terms of architectural features, shade, shadow, things that were discussed that or may not have an impact on the functionality of the building. He will be in favor of the design review.

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

Abstain: 1 - Shapaka

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

G. NEW BUSINESS - NONE

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS

Assistant City Attorney - none

Director of Planning - none

Council Liaison

Blackford shared that Council is hearing through December 19th the city's annual budget discussions. Public comment on the budget is next week. Also on the last agenda, the economic development team has been working with the folks at the Crescent at Central Park on a revised development agreement that if it goes through, there will be additional requests before Planning Commission for more development in that area.

Chair - none

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Hicks shared that on Friday, the city of Gahanna and the Gahanna CIC will be hosting the November breakfast with *Columbus Business First* at The Peak at Edison.

K. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.