

Gahanna Planning Commission Notes. 25 April meeting.

Name: Thomas Cartwright

Address: 1016 Ridge Crest Drive (Plat 5). Contiguous property owner for about 25 years

I'd like to thank Messrs. Priestas, Blackford, Dugger and Sugar for responding to my questions over the past week. And thanks to Ms. Holbrook for all her help.

I am not against development. The property owned by a developer and zoned PCC.

What I want to ask the Commission to do is to ENSURE that all MATERIAL aspects related to USE, DESIGN, and COMPATABILITY are fully known and vetted before a final approval.

I think that is a more than reasonable request. AND one that is in the best interest of Gahanna and its citizens.

I believe there are at least 3 MATERIAL FEATURES that are too ill-defined at this point to provide a full and complete final approval. I also have a list of other concerns about the proposal that, in the interest of the time restriction, I will cover briefly at the end of my comments.

First, the 6300 sq ft restaurant. We have no idea if this will be a:

- Restaurant where food is the focal point perhaps accompanied by a beer or wine, or
- If it will be a bar disguised as a restaurant like a wing joint, sports bar or Hooters where alcohol consumption is the main event and food is a convenience.

Safety is a significant concern here. The exit on to Beecher allows right turns. Yes, there will be a "no outlet" sign but we all know that after a day or night of drinking some may miss, or disregard the sign to avoid the congested signal to the right. That will send them driving frustrated through the residential neighborhood full of kids and also driving impaired through the safe passage to Columbus Academy trying to find a way out.

We already know the congestion here will be significant so why add impaired drivers to the mix and

-There is no channeling to forbid that turn and that is a risk we should not take. Perhaps you can require that at a minimum.

In my view it is not prudent for the City to approve the restaurant proposed without much more transparency. I ask the Planning Commission members to at a minimum deny the restaurant element of this plan until the tenant is known and to hold another public hearing and review at that time.

Second, I believe it would be prudent for the City not to approve this proposal until the **final engineering study that includes a contour map** is complete and presented. And, until the **storm water management study** is completed and a public review is completed.

I am no engineer but there is a massive parking field here and it is not clear how and to where all the storm water will be removed. MCKENNA CREEK is in a preservation zone so this is a significantly more important factor than perhaps in other projects and the City should take that seriously and require the final engineering and water studies and design in advance of a final approval.

I am especially concerned about the final topography and contours which I don't believe we have DO WE?? IF so you can let me know now. I am no engineer but I did not notice any contour lines or elevation markings on the drawings.

I am particularly concerned that the Western section of the property and the West building will be elevated which will require a substantial amount of fill dirt abutting the preservation zone. Will this mean a massive retaining wall?? What would it mean for water impacts to the stream and preservation zone?? Does anyone know...If so you can let me know now.

Again, I do not believe the City would be acting prudently approving this proposal without the engineering plan and water studies.

Third, we have no idea of the **signage package** at this point. I understand there is a city code, but I am concerned not just about code, but also compatibility – especially on Beecher, our residential road.

I believe the Commission should exercise their responsibility to not just ensure simple adherence to the code, but to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area and I believe the public should have the opportunity to be provide real input.

And I believe that this would best be done within the context of the entire project. This too I think is a very reasonable approach and request, so again I ask the Commission to not provide a final approval in the absence of understanding the sign package request.

There are a number of other things that concern me and in the interest of time I won't go into much detail unless you like me to do that.

Traffic safety, congestion and channeling – I assume it will be covered earlier in meeting.

Economic viability - I know Collier's offered an opinion but provided no analytics. I would just ask the Commission how much vacant Retail space exists within a 10-minute drive That number is knowable and critical. Does anyone have that or a similar statistic? It seems to me like we already have more than our fair share of vacant space.

Vacant space is a blight on a City and makes it significantly more difficult to attract high quality businesses. It is not just about vacant buildings but also the risk of accepting 3rd rate tenant uses to cover sunk and fixed costs which is not an immaterial risk.

Landscape and Tree retention – as you know this is a fully wooded lot. Outside of the preservation zone, 11 trees will be preserved That strikes me as an environmental and aesthetic/curb appeal offense.

Parking Field – the code requires a massive parking field of 200+ spaces. Another reason to reconsider approving the restaurant which requires an incremental 100 spaces over Retail space. And the landscaping design within the parking field reminds me of an asphalt desert. Not very appealing for the City and businesses it may want to attract. Can you require a more substantial landscape plan to soften the asphalt expanse?

West Building design - reminds me of just a basic 80's era strip shopping center. Why not require incorporating more elements from the East building to make it more appealing?

Corrugated steel panels - as a skin for the buildings does not sound appealing to me. I would have loved to have an opportunity to see real samples to get a better view of appearance. Did the commission view real samples?