



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Thomas J. Wester, Chair
John Hicks, Vice Chair
Bobbie Burba
Rick Duff
Joe Keehner
Donald R. Shepherd
Michael Suriano

Krystal Gonchar, Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, December 19, 2018

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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

Gahanna Planning Commission met in Regular Session in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 200 South Hamilton Road, Gahanna, Ohio, on Wednesday, December 19, 2018. The agenda for this meeting was published on December 13, 2018. Chair Thomas Wester called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Joe Keehner.

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

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2018-0226](#)

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for December 5, 2018.

A motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Duff, that the Minutes be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Shepherd, Wester, Keehner, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Duff

D. SWEAR IN APPLICANTS & SPEAKERS

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

E. APPLICATIONS - PUBLIC COMMENT[V-0026-2018](#)

To consider a Variance application to vary sections 1165.04(a) Prohibited Signs, 1165.08(b)(9) for monument sign height and square footage, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, to allow for an electronic sign; for property located at 455 Clark State Road; Parcel ID Nos. 025-003975, 025-004261, 025-013004, and 170-000584; current zoning RID; Peace Lutheran Church; Jeffrey Murry, applicant.

Deputy Director of Planning & Development, Michael Blackford, provided a summary of the application and reviewed the signage code and variance criteria; other similar sign design applications were denied; the High School sign was approved in 1996; in 2011 McDonald's had a sign approved; in 2015 and 2017 another Church applied but they were denied. Blackford summarized the Hamilton Road Corridor Plan, as it provided recommendations for electronic signs; keep in mind that those are recommendations only, and not code; staff recommends denial because it is prohibited in code and not consistent with the land use plan; other things to consider if approved: frequency of message change, number of colors, intensity of light; staff does not object to increased height and square footage.

Rosan stated that the code section listed for the variance is incorrect; should be "b(9)" instead of "b(a)". Hicks said one of the parcels listed is in Jefferson Twp.; 170-000584. Rosan stated that the parcel would be excluded.

Jeff Murry, 735 Ulverston Dr. and Darrin Gray, 978 Claycraft Rd.; stated the purpose is to replace a sign that was removed when the round-a-bout went in; showed samples of the letters; stainless steel letters, timber tech, and stone; older style signs had hand-placed letters which are burdensome to maintain; showed examples of other electronic signs in Gahanna; the message will be stationary, not flashing; this is about practicality and modernization; property is 13+ acres; a mockup of a sign was done and all felt it was better to get away from the busy part of the intersection; want people to see the message but not be distracted when entering and exiting the round-a-bout.

Chair opened the meeting for public comment at 7:18 p.m.

Kai Nilsen, 610 Havelock Ct.; Pastor at the church; stated that we have

positioned ourselves in the center of the community; we are a part of the community in significant ways; in the fall we held a meeting for the City for Issue 29; also hold meetings for the schools.

Chair closed the public comment at 7:19 p.m.

Suriano asked if this sign has LED lights; would it have the ability to be something other than multi-colored. Murry said will have one color, amber.

Shepherd asked if this were denied, would the sign be smaller. Murry said they would have to talk about that, but does not want to use hand placed letters; this sign would allow for a remote to be used. Shepherd asked about landscaping around the sign. Murry said there will be a mulch bed and small greenery so they don't have to maintain landscaping. Blackford said the code is vague but mulch and some plantings would meet requirements if it were 50 sq. ft., and that is part of the sign approval process. Shepherd asked about decking material, if it is maintenance free. Murry confirmed; resin wood composite. Shepherd asked about a warranty. Murry said he thinks it is 20 years.

Hicks would argue that examples are not comparable. Murry said the Holiday Lights sign may be most comparable. Hicks asked what Murry is proposing. Murry said just to change daily with stationary message and one color.

Duff asked if there's any chance the sign could be installed without active LEDs while the zoning code was changing. Blackford said no zoning change yet by the City; even if lights were not on, could not approve. Murry said the code gives Planning Commission the ability to use discretion. Duff asked if the sign has technology to prevent hacking into the message board. Murry said Watchfire is the manufacturer and the company is top notch; but the remote could turn those messages off.

Keehner said the sign has the ability to flash, but wants to ensure that the message will be stationary. Rosan said they could include criteria in the motion as a condition to the variance approval. Keehner said creeping thyme would be a good choice for landscaping since we are the Herb Capital.

Hicks asked Blackford if it is ok for the Jefferson Twp. parcel to be included in the description. Blackford said that parcel is to the far north; we would not have jurisdiction; always better to specify for future reference. Rosan repeated that it would be proper to exclude that parcel in the motion to both variance requests.

Suriano said the applicant shows an older sign; is there anything that stipulates prohibition of hand-lettering. Blackford said no; that would be permissible.

Wester asked if this is double sided; are there two signs. Blackford said the code defines this as one sign.

A motion was made by Keehner, seconded by Hicks, that the Variance to Code Section 1165.08(9) be Approved, only regarding the height and square footage in 1165.09(b)(9), excluding Parcel ID No.170-000584-00.

Discussion on the motion: Shepherd said he is in support of the size of the sign due to the size of the property. Suriano concurred. Keehner said there was a large sign put up at the church north of this one and it does not look cluttered. Hicks said he is in support. Burba, Duff and Wester all concurred.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Shepherd, Wester, Keehner, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Duff

See discussion above.

A motion was made by Keehner, seconded by Hicks, that the Variance be Approved, for prohibited signs in 1165.04(a), excluding Parcel ID No.170-000584-00, and the following conditions are met: that electronic portion of the sign is limited to one color, message can only be changed one time daily, message cannot move or scroll in any way.

Discussion on the motion: Duff said Peace Lutheran is a wonderful member of the community and the community is here because of the church; likes the idea of the electronics of the sign and perhaps code should be reviewed in the future to allow for this type of sign; has an issue with the sign being a distraction at the round-about; the non-flashing sign would be less impactful. Hicks stated the question to ask is what is the purpose of the monument sign, is it to identify the location of a building or is it for something more, such as advertisement; feels the location of the sign is a concern; will not be supporting for the reason that it will adversely affect the safety of the travelers on Hamilton Rd. Burba agreed with Hicks, and a similar sign was denied for another church in a more commercial area. Suriano stated that this is a non-moving sign and will be changed once daily, so is not concerned with the distraction of it; appreciates the practicality of being able to remotely change the lettering; believes this is a vast improvement; agrees this should be

reviewed in code to accommodate technology as it comes forward and will support. Keehner will support since this is more of a hybrid sign, is less cluttered and looks appealing; this is in congruent with other church signs; there was a simple sign there before the round-a-bout went in and this is not more distracting; variances are for unique circumstances. Shepherd said aesthetically this sign looks better but does not want to distract people using the round-a-bout and so he will not be in support. Wester said this is a difficult decision but will not be in support because the sign will change the character of the neighborhood; land use plan calls for timeless design; City may need to revisit code; can appreciate the points about the sign being distracting.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Keehner, Suriano and Duff

No: 4 - Shepherd, Wester, Hicks and Burba

[FDP-0013-2018](#)

To consider a Final Development Plan for construction of a new elementary school building, for property located at 349 Shady Spring Drive; Parcel Id Nos. 025-005486, 025-008749, 025-005128, 025-009307, 025-008741, 025-008742, 025-008743, 025-008744, 025-008745, 025-008746, 025-008747, 025-008748; current zoning RID; GJPS- Lincoln Elementary School; Scott Lofton, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the application; reviewed property layout; stated that a Design Review is required to approve building materials, design, colors, lighting, etc.; this request does not include one; showed site plan; staff recommends approval with condition of a traffic impact study submittal, which is pending. Rob Priestas, City Engineer, stated if anything would change with the site plan; applicant would have to come back.

Jocelyn Krosky, 463 N. High St., Bexley and Scott Lofton, 1774 Harrison Pond Dr.; Krosky said school has been working with community on this project; we do have engagement meetings with staff and students; Lofton can go into more details. Lofton said Lincoln Elementary was built in the 1950s and is now dilapidated; excited that the community allowed permission to build this; wants to maintain as much green space as possible; our schools don't belong to us but to the community; want to build something they are proud of. Krosky said the parking area will be enlarged; showed new bus loop and student pick up and drop off; traffic on Helmbright Dr. is the reason for the flow.

Chair opened the public comment at 8:04 p.m.

Clinton Allen, 419 Shady Spring Dr.; lives adjacent to the school and is

concerned with flooding; asked if there's a detention basin. Dan Biru, 1650 Watermark Dr.; civil engineer for the project; currently at the site there's a detention basin; stormwater is a concern and staff is constantly working on this; will work with the City to ensure we are meeting regulations; will have a controlled area, a dry basin, to prevent overflow into neighbors' basements. Allen asked if southern basin is above ground, and if so, how will they address the mosquito issue. Biru said a dry basin only fills up during a stormwater event and after 24 hours all water escapes; will work with landscape architect; not a specialist but believes it takes one week of standing water for larvae to produce; proposed moving the field and basin.

Kari Hawk, 765 Tabon Ct.; excited about the new school but concerned about having a ball field that close to her home; currently that area is very wet and concerned with foul balls landing in her yard; concerned that cars will be stacked in Dellfield Ct. and traffic impact study does not cover that; wants to see fence extended so that children cannot pass through there; spoke with neighbor and they also want a fence.

Tom Bott, 807 Ashford Glen Dr.; agrees with the drop off location; wonders about traffic; also concerned about the main address, would it be off Helmbright which is the main thoroughfare.

Applicant listed back the concerns; said traffic study is pending; waiting on growth numbers from MORPC; there's a 2,000 ft. stacking area for drop off; aware of drainage issues where field is proposed; team is looking at drainage issues. Buzz Foresi, 330 Spring St., Columbus, spoke about expanding the stormwater area; could expand landscaping too; expanded fencing could be an option. Krosky said could look at changing the address if that is a concern. Chair said there was a concern of the kids jumping the fence into the swale. Krosky said the likelihood of the kids on the playground accessing the stormwater area would not be a concern because of the new layout. Buzz said again, will consider extending fence.

Hawk asked how residents will be made aware of communication. Allen again asked about using the existing ballpark and relocating the basin.

Chair closed public comment at 8:28 p.m.

Burba asked if there would be a problem with moving the ball field. Krosky said existing field is staying put and the proposed ballfield may go to another school if not here. Lofton said two fields were used in the summer.

Hicks said he appreciates the communication with the public; attended those meetings; also a resident on Helmbright; asked about the address, could it be moved. Priestas said yes. Hicks asked what the City permits on a street like that. Priestas said a posted no parking sign is an option. Hicks asked what would cause the new ball field to go away. Lofton said detention issues. Hicks asked about stormwater. Krosky said it is being maintained currently; could be revisions. Hicks asked if preliminary study results could be provided. Lofton said there will be closer to one hour of traffic. Hicks said the applicant should be aware that a revision could be required based on the results of the final traffic impact study. Hicks asked if traffic will be supervised. Lofton said yes.

Shepherd asked about traffic impact study, how do we approve the FDP without the study. Blackford said the code does not require one; that is for re-zonings. Krosky said throughout the process, have been working with engineer and no concerns were brought up.

Keehner said there's a slope to the land and detention is a concern; what are the soils like in regards to infiltration; concerned about triangle southeast of the school, will that be grass or a potential place to catch water; those look like great areas for rain gardens, etc. Biru said will consider that; currently undergoing geotech testing RFP process. Keehner asked about the drain and settling. Priestas said he has not yet seen the design. Biru said working with staff to ensure all is up to code. Keehner said this is an educational opportunity.

Suriano asked about parking calculations; is the count based on middle school and elementary use or only elementary. Krosky said both. Suriano asked how much of an increase that is. Krosky said 100 more. Suriano asked about how many parents drop off and pick up. Applicant unsure; will be forthcoming with traffic study. Suriano asked staff if this would lock them into a footprint for a building. Blackford confirmed; said a Design Review could alter that.

A motion was made by Duff, seconded by Suriano, that the Final Development

Plan be Approved.

Discussion on the motion: Suriano said he is excited to see the plans for the school; this is much needed for the school district; understanding the traffic impact is important; will be voting in favor. Shepherd said he is concerned with the amount of changes that could occur based on pending results; there is not enough information yet. Duff said he is aware of the work that the schools have done to get the public involved in this process; historically when there has been an increase to traffic, the schools have been quick to resolve the issues; the plan looks good and this is a good use of space; fully in support. Burba agreed with Shepherd that there's not enough information to go on; this is not a final version. As a point of order, Rosan stated that the Design Review standards cover things like fencing and landscaping which would be a separate application. Hicks disagreed, believes we have enough information to approve a Final Development Plan; as a resident of Helmbright Dr., is interested in how the traffic will be impacted; will be in support. Keehner said he will be in support; this determines where the building will go. Wester said this FDP is fluid; there are many things that are yet to be determined and will be impactful; the school building will impact 250+ families; the school needs more meetings with the community; will not be in support; believes traffic impact study should include extended hours due to after-school activities.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Keehner, Suriano, Hicks and Duff

No: 3 - Shepherd, Wester and Burba

[Z-0005-2018](#)

To recommend approval to Council, a Zoning application for 3.87 +/- acres of property located at 219 North Hamilton Road; Parcel ID No. 025-002808; current zoning Community Commercial (CC); requested zoning Restricted Institutional District (RID); Mifflin Township Trustees; Nancy White, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the application; this is largely a single family zoning designation; additional applications are required if this is approved: FDP, DR for site layout, height, setbacks, landscaping, materials, etc. RID is the only zoning designation to permit government offices; site plan included is for information purposes only, it is not a FDP; showed comparison of CC and RID districts for setbacks, building height, lot coverage, and typical uses; there is a narrow scope of allowable uses; this went through Area Commission at 9/20/18 meeting; 2002 Land Use plan lists this area as single family but a new land use plan is pending which would designate this as mixed use, although those are not mandates; listed rezoning criteria; staff recommends approval; proposed use is less intense than current zoning; is a transitional piece of property; adjacent to single family and commercial.

Applicant, Jack Reynolds, 37 W. Broad St.; attorney with Smith and Hale; this is the first step; Trustees have been looking for a space and this is a

good sized site; if recommended for approval; additional applications will come back; reiterated that more intense uses could go here; feedback from Area Commissions was positive.

Chair called for public comment at 9:04 p.m.

Glenda Edwards, 373 Heil Dr.; lives north of property; zoning would have an impact; said her family moved from South Africa in the 1970s; has lived in Gahanna ever since; the first time she attended a Planning Commission meeting for this site there was an egress issue; was a proposed medical office; not clear about what kind of building will go here; don't understand what they envision; also Carpenter Rd. is very narrow; there are a lot of accidents there; also concerned with water issues because we have experienced water issues which is believed to be caused by that property; do residents have a say about the design of the building; not objecting, just have more questions.

Applicant called on Jamie Leeseberg, 300 Spruce St.; engineer for the project, here tonight in case there are questions for him; stated that he would recuse himself from the Council vote due to a conflict of interest. Reynolds explained the purpose of the building; stated that Leeseberg would be working to minimize the impact to neighbors; around 50 employees would be hired; due to a low number of employees there's no need for a traffic study; again, reducing impact on neighbors because we are going down from 40+ to 4 allowable uses.

Chair asked Edwards if the response from the applicant addresses her concerns. Edwards asked how many parking spaces will there be; asked if the public would be going to the property. Applicant said yes there will be offices there so there will be visitors. Edwards said is concerned with neighbors; will this be open 24 hours a day; had a concern that a fire station would be there. Applicant said it will not be a fire station. Leeseberg said the building is 200 ft. from the property line and zoning requires 10 ft. rear-yard setback and proposed is 40 ft. setback; will be a 2 story but building falls north to south so half story will be lower than the building to the north; there will be two 12 hour shifts for the dispatchers and some office workers from 9-5.

Fred Kauser, Fire Chief, 968 Crystal Cay Ct.; this drawing is preliminary to assess potential of site; this is simply a government office building; no

trucks; will have 7-8 911 dispatchers but no later than 7pm for shift change; staff will be there; business interaction is limited to mail services and interaction with architects and planners occasionally; this is a small building compared to size of property; appreciates the green space; will have a lot of landscaping; intend to meet with neighbors to discuss concerns; will take all feedback into consideration.

Edwards asked if there will be 24 hr. security. Kauser said it is heavily protected and highly secure due to it being a 911 dispatch center; will be low light impact; will have detectives and cruisers enter front of building during the day; all government employees. Edwards said in the past the high school students would pass through.

Jody Thomas, 391 Carpenter Rd; lives across from the building; asked if this gets sold will the use change. Applicant said no.

Chair closed public comment at 9:24 p.m.

Burba asked about the size of the building. Kauser said expecting to be about 16,000 sq. ft. for one story and 4,000 for the other story. Burba asked about plans for expansion in the future. Kauser said not expecting that. Hicks said the application is for zoning; has all info needed. Keehner asked about city owned parcels. Applicant stated one is right of way and city owns largest square. Keehner said change is more beneficial to residents.

A motion was made by Suriano, seconded by Burba, that the Zoning be Recommended to Council for Approval.

Discussion on the motion: Hicks said this property used to be the site of the Masonic Lodge; cannot think of a better use than for public service; will be in support. Suriano will be voting in favor because the proposed zoning is a great transition between Carpenter and Hamilton Roads; this is more restrictive than the current zoning.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Abstain, COI: 1 - Duff

Hicks motioned for a 10 minute recess at 9:29 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 9:37 p.m.

Columbus Academy

[FDP-0014-2018](#) To consider a Final Development Plan for the construction and renovation of school facilities; for property located at 4300 Cherry Bottom Road; Parcel ID No. 025-004421; current zoning RID; Columbus Academy; Michael Turner, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary if the applications for FDP and DR; summarized the request of the applicant; this is not creating a new footprint; is consistent with past approvals; showed site plan and renderings; reviewed criteria for FDP, this meets those requirements; staff recommends approval.

Applicant Michael Turner, 1100 Superior Ave., Cleveland; Blackford Provided an excellent summary; brought along Doug Bennet from the school and civil engineer for questions; this will add locker room facilities; the wellness center is an expansion of a weight room; existing maintenance building is at the end of its life, is old and wooden; trying to replicate existing materials and has no deviations; brought along a color board if interested in seeing materials.

Chair called for public comment. There was none.

Hicks is a parent of a former Columbus Academy student; regarding parking there's already a traffic and parking problem; how many additional spaces will be added with the plan. Wolf, civil engineer, said 35 dedicated and 438 already on campus. Wolf said this is an addition but not for new students; we are adding to spaces. Doug Bennet said we have 2 areas for gyms now; the problem now is that students stay late for practice; this is only for practice fields so kids can go from class to practice and get home at a reasonable time. Hicks said outside groups use facilities. Bennet said the swim team uses the pool and they park at the upper school. Hicks said traffic issues exists because of entrance and exiting allowed on Beecher Rd. Priestas said roadway can handle the traffic. Duff asked about any other sports that could be played inside the field house. Turner said is lined for basketball and volleyball; can bring tennis indoors and lacrosse; could bring in batting cages; not hardwood so truly multipurpose; no bleachers for viewing.

Wester said they are improving the facility but what can be done to help residents at Academy Woods; does not expect an answer tonight but hopes they can address that because they are a good neighbor. Bennet said we are aware of how it effects the neighbors; widened that road at an \$80,000 cost to get more traffic off the road.

A motion was made by Shepherd, seconded by Duff, that the Final Development Plan be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Shepherd, Wester, Keehner, Suriano, Burba and Duff

No: 1 - Hicks

[DR-0029-2018](#)

To consider a Design Review application for a site plan, landscaping plan, building design, and demolition; for property located at 4300 Cherry Bottom Road; Parcel ID No. 025-004421; current zoning RID; Columbus Academy; Michael Turner, applicant.

See discussion above.

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

Discussion on the motion: Suriano said the architectural materials are consistent with what is already on campus. Duff said this is a thorough and well thought out plan.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Shepherd, Wester, Keehner, Suriano, Hicks, Burba and Duff

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

G. NEW BUSINESS

None.

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS

Assistant City Attorney

No report.

City Engineer

No report.

Planning & Development

Blackford stated that there will be an Area Commission meeting tomorrow night at 6 p.m., to talk about an auto repair business relocating to Johnstown Road.

Council Liaison

Burba said Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone.

CIC Liaison

Hicks said the CIC monthly meeting was held on Tuesday. The development department mentioned some applications that will be coming our way in 2019; it will be an exciting year.

Chair

Wester said he appreciates all the hard work from everyone this year.

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS

None.

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Suriano wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. Duff wished the same and is looking forward to next year. Hicks thanked the Deputy Clerk.

K. ADJOURNMENT

By Shepherd at 9:57 p.m.