



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Donald R. Shepherd, Chair
Bobbie Burba, Vice Chair
David K. Andrews
Kristin E. Rosan
Thomas J. Wester
Jennifer Price
Joe Keehner

Kayla Holbrook, Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

7:00 PM

City Hall

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, May 25, 2016. The agenda for this meeting was published on May 19, 2016. Chair Don Shepherd called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Kristin Rosan.

Present 7 - David K. Andrews, Donald R. Shepherd, Bobbie Burba, Kristin E. Rosan, Thomas J. Wester, Jennifer Tisone Price, and Joe Keehner

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

[2016-0175](#)

Planning Commission Minutes - May 4, 2016

A motion was made by Rosan, seconded by Andrews, that these Minutes be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Andrews, Shepherd, Burba, Rosan, Wester, Price and Keehner

D. HEARING OF VISITORS - ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA

None.

E. APPLICATIONS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Chair stated Public Hearing Rules that would govern all public

hearings this evening. Assistant City Attorney Thomas L. Weber administered an oath to those persons wishing to present testimony this evening.

[V-0003-2016](#)

To consider a Variance application to vary section 1165.08(a), Permanent Signs, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna; to allow total sign area to be increased; for property located at 77 Granville Street; Parcel ID No. 025-000009; current zoning OG-2, Olde Gahanna Mixed Use Neighborhood District; Wendy's Restaurant / Doug Kincaid, applicant.

(Advertised in RFE on 05/19/2016)

Gard gave summary of the application; proposal is for three wall signs; showed the rendering from the application packet; City Attorney ruled that the existing ground sign needs to be counted as part of the overall sign area; therefore wall signage cannot be permitted without a variance; existing pole sign is 75 square feet; allowable area for this portion of Olde Gahanna is 40 square feet; sign code permits one sign per frontage; Wendy's has three frontages; they are requesting less than 75 square feet; specific factors that PC must weigh in on this decision.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:07 p.m.

David Hodge, attorney for the applicant, 8000 Walton Parkway, Suite 260, New Albany, handed out a packet of information (attached); Hodge asked Gard for an elaboration on the 75 square feet; Gard said the 75 square feet was one of the allowable areas for signage in the Olde Gahanna District when there were 5 different districts; have since changed to 3 different districts; still allowed the 75 number; these are things we are looking to clean up as we go through each section of code with staff; this was permissible in this section of Gahanna; along the north side of the map is a pink line, that is to point out as you travel east the road jogs slightly to the north; an image crossing the bridge is shown; the property is invisible from this location; due to the cubature and properties at a zero setback; next photograph is taken from the east side of the bridge; property is still invisible; can see the pole sign; the pole sign is very critical to this business; next image is from the east traveling down Granville; in the next property you only see the sign, you cannot see the building; it is the City's preference that the pole sign be removed; it cannot be removed; it is critical that this property has appropriate signage and motorist safety; want people to be aware of what they are coming up on and not have to stop quickly; purpose of the variance request is to ask for signage on three facades on the building; the green refers to the right-of-way on the map; there are some provisions within the code that say you are allowed one sign per right-of-way; allowed that square footage per frontage in a separate portion of the code; code is ambiguous and

vague. Chair extended the seven-minute time frame. Hodge said it is difficult to understand the signage restrictions; have an obligation to represent his client; believe in his clients position; have a practical difficulty to represent and he stands by those; Dunkin case says you do not have to meet all criteria; believes we meet all of them except for one; Hodge read from his handout, page one; need to separate the pole sign; there would be no determinate; this is consistent with the neighborhood; folks are used to this being a Wendy's and there being a pole sign there; property owner purchased the property not knowing the zoning; code was revised in 2011; this owner came in 1999; this has been a Wendy's since 1973; cannot be achieved with anything but a variance; the setback rears the building invisible and signage is critical; zoning regulations are in place to make sure neighbors are protected; if the sign is compatible with design standards; this is questionable; Olde Gahanna has a certain flavor and feel; this is not a type of use typically desired for this area; happy to answer any questions.

Chair called for proponents; there were none. Chair called for opponents; there were none.

Hodge referenced code that speaks to if this is hazardous to the property; there has been an advertising; there was a letter sent to property owners; if anyone thought this would be a detriment to them or a nuisance in any way, they would be here; there is no one here; this is a substantial improvement; this is a central Ohio business; this is a group we should be proud of; we meet the conditions for the proposal.

Rosan referred to the sign that is on the front now; asked if he knew the square footage; Hodge said 15.5 square feet; pole sign is 140 square feet; Rosan said as it is now it exceeds code; Hodge confirmed; Rosan asked if status quo is more or less; Hodge said less than what is proposed by about 31 square feet; because presently there is only signage on the front; this proposal is showing signs on three sides; Rosan said there is text on the rear of the building; asked if that is part of the signage; Hodge said it is not; those are considered safety signs and do not need to be included; Rosan confirmed we are discussing the Wendy's sign and the red-headed logo; Wester asked relative to that location, what other signs support that business; if there is an ODOT sign off the highway; asked if he can Google the site; Hodge said all likely true; Keehner said the writing on the wall is not a sign; have seen other Wendy's where the signage is in a color that matches the building more; the white will be signage; argument about pole sign is valid; will not disagree; asked that the west and east wall signs are useless because the building is invisible; Hodge said valid point; those signs are far less important than the pole sign; Keehner

said signage on east would be invisible if driving from the east; Hodge does not disagree; Keehner asked if the sign on the side with the drive-thru is a safety issue; Hodge said understands the point; Keehner said it may be useful to not attract use to that entrance; Hodge said he appreciates the discussion; Keehner asked if that would eliminate the variance need; Hodge said that is up to the City Attorney; needs anything outside of the pole sign; Andrews said the need for the signage on the sides of the building is questionable with the argument about the visibility of the property; agrees with Keehner; Andrews said this is a modern style building with what we have going on downtown; we love Wendy's; find it hard to believe that people will have trouble finding where it is; have a friend with a business nearby; have went into Wendy's at lunch and it is very busy; lunchtime the traffic is backed up; not that hard to find with that many people; do good business there; does not believe eliminating the pole sign will impact the business financially; only fast food restaurant in that area of Gahanna; Rosan said there is reference to the City Attorney; asked Ewald to comment; Rosan asked for clarity as to what is before us as he sees it; we have the wall signage and the non-conformity; Tom Weber swore Shane Ewald in for the record; Ewald said generally we looked at the variance application; current sign limitations are by size; it exceeds what we believe in the code as the maximum threshold; not opposed to the wall sign; current sign is non-conforming; it is allowed to be where it is; if you add additional signage it will have to meet requirements for maximum threshold; Rosan asked if we are not considering the pole sign and only look at the building; asked if we are looking at both together; Ewald said the nonconforming sign is legal so it was calculated in the total square footage; Rosan asked if the pole sign exceeds 40 square feet; confirmed; nonconforming but legal but code would need to be varied because it exceeds 40 square feet; Rosan said replacing the face of the sign would be permitted; Ewald agreed; Rosan said permitted even though it is exceeding square feet; Ewald confirmed; Rosan said the issue before us is because the pole sign is just having maintenance, what we are varying is whether to allow any additional signage because it will go over the 40 square feet; if we vote this down they can modify the facing and the pole sign stays; Ewald confirmed; Shepherd said corporate usually requires that franchisees adhere to some of the signage requirements; asked if this is a demand; Hodge said this is corporate's preference; Shepherd asked if we deny the signage on the building, does it pose a problem with the franchisee and corporate; Hodge said does not know the answer to that question; Wendy's is sophisticated enough to know it is not a one-size-fits-all world; various cities will have different code; signage proposed here is consistent with every other location; Clintonville and Dublin included; Shepherd said the signage on the building appears to be useless as he stated the property is invisible; asked if franchisee is okay if we vote this down; as the side signage

does not appear to matter anyways; this variance may not be necessary at all; Hodge said they will choose the pole sign to stay over wall signage; if the Wendy's script would go away; we are still above the total aggregate square footage; if Wendy's corporate believes this is important to their branding and is what is done in other locations; argument goes both ways; Burba asked how big the Wendy's sign on the front is; Hodge said all the same size, 15.62 square feet; Rosan said we have now about 30 square feet over status quo right now; we are effectively two signs over; said if she had to pick one, what the preference would be; Hodge said would remove the east side, drive-thru side signage; Rosan asked if they lost two, what would they be; want a ranking; Hodge said will check with Mr. Kincaid; difficult choice; can assure you that design professionals have debated over this image for 100's of hours; know exactly where they want signs to go and why; knows the blade sign is strictly important to their image; the west elevation, is still important; Keehner said no door faces west to the public; Commission said that it is hidden there on the rendering; Keehner said understands the sign on the front for aesthetics; would be an identity issue; asked about getting rid of the signs on the east and west side; Rosan said we have not discussed the aesthetics of the building; what will it look like without any signage; if the sign is gone over the building, asked if it would look better or worse; on the west side, the sign is above the door, asked if it impacts the entrance for customers and would it look okay to remove it; take away code and look at the aesthetics; possibly we can take the words out and leave the red-headed logo; her thoughts on how the building would look; Hodge said that is a compromise we would accept; Shepherd asked what they would be allowed to do with no variance; Gard said nothing without the variance; Price wants to touch on the white writing; likes how it reads; it is decorative rather than signage; wanted to ensure that is out of this discussion; have no issues with the script Wendy's; that is the sign; not having the script and the logo attached is not preferable; Wester said we talked about square footage but did not discuss materials; said plastic and vinyl signs are not permitted; Rosan said that is her understanding that is not before us; not part of the variance application; Gard said that sign code was written to prohibit box signs that had plastic panels; Andrews said agrees to have the sign on the front of the building; appreciates that they have been here for over 30 years; deserves the logo; did not believe we need the signage on the side; Shepherd said other members have said it is not useful as for the sign but the decoration breaks up the wall and is more pleasing to the eye; Keehner said that is a valid argument but the walls are not flat, they have back and forth; that may weaken that argument; aesthetics is relative to the holder; could be considered less invalid; not arguing the pole sign; have few issues with the Wendy's sign on the west; find it useless on the east; Rosan said we get caught up in the rules; building is very well designed; lucky to

have this; this is 30 square feet more than exists; makes it more attractive to have the signage on both sides; a few weeks ago with Kindred Ales we wanted more signage to make the building more attractive; now we are on the opposite end; package as presented is appropriate; may not be necessary but the applicant wants it; if less people see it, no harm, no foul; would support approving the package as presented; Wester said we have to give thought to what we are doing; looking at something that will be there for 10-15 years; asked if we are paying respect to Olde Gahanna; asked what the intention and the City goals are for that area and how this plays in; has a hard time supporting; read staff comments; suggested possibly a workshop; Weber asked if needed a workshop; Shepherd said it may not be necessary; we can vote accordingly.

Chair closed the public hearing at 7:55 p.m.

A motion was made by Rosan, seconded by Burba, that this Variance be Approved with the following conditions:
that the final inspection be approved within 12 months; that the Variance only applies to the current approved design application.

Discussion on the Motion: Rosan said will reiterate her comments earlier; each of these applications require a case by case basis; why we have the ability to vote; the standard for the variance that the applicant needs to establish hardship; needs to show practical difficulties; the lot that the building is on and the fact that it is not easily seen from the road; also in the context of a nice renovated building; need to consider what the building will look like without the signage; does not want to have a poor design based on the signage requirements that will most likely be amended in the near future; will be in favor of this application as presented; Andrews said this is Olde Gahanna; we will look at this for 30 years; there is a famous design remark, less is more; sleekness can look absolutely beautiful; does not believe the sides add any value; believes the signage on the blade on the front will look nice; reference Kindred Ales, that was a different building; want it to look good; it is a more modern building for downtown; Keehner said less is more or less is bore; there is a fine line; ambivalent about voting yes; currently the building only has a sign on the front; already a precedent to not have it on the east or west; not comfortable voting yes but does not feel he is a complete no; the building would look different without the signs on the east or west, not better or worse; the fact of Olde Gahanna has some value; Burba said Wendy's has been a longtime business in Gahanna; have added to Gahanna; believes they should cooperate with them as they presented it; in the context of being cooperative with them, that is what makes it look nice; doesn't see a reason to water it down or change it; will vote yes; Wester said will not support this; does not support the goals of Olde Gahanna; does not take into consideration changes in the advertising market; recently there was an article that Victoria Secret will take away their catalog as we move digital; same for wall signs; you can Google it; believes it has an impact on the Olde Gahanna area; that is his biggest thing; there is a lot of redundancy in the signage; with the pole sign; sure there are other Wendy's without a pole sign; will not support; Price said will support tonight's application; aesthetics are subjective; the sign breaks off a large expanse of the building; this is a long, narrow building; everyone has a

different taste and design for their home; from a design perspective, believes it is an asset; will support the application; Rosan wanted to clarify, Keehner said not okay with east and west but on the north, if the variance is voted down, there will be no signage on the building; Weber confirmed; Rosan said signage on the building or no signage on the building; asked if they could reapply within 12 months; Gard said that is not the case for this signage in the code; Shepherd said his preference is for the pole sign to be gone and the signs to remain on the building; said the pole sign is dated and ugly; visually does not need all the signs to tell you where you are; does believe the signage is needed on the building; hope the franchisee would want a modern look and not have a pole sign; does not appear to be the case; will support this case; if you need a pole sign to make money, the business is in trouble.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Andrews, Shepherd, Burba, Rosan, Wester, Price and Keehner

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

G. NEW BUSINESS: None.

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

City Attorney

No report.

City Engineer

No report.

Planning & Zoning Administrator

No report.

Department of Development

Blackford commented on tonight's discussion; great to hear the balance on property rights and the planning efforts; the initiative is to review all of our area plans; obviously we had discussion on Olde Gahanna; believe we will bring code to Planning Commission this year; want weigh in on what we want for the future.

Council Liaison

No report.

CIC Liaison

No report.

Chair

No report.

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS

Clerk read the following titles into the record.

[PWSF-002-2016](#)

A Personal Wireless Service Facility application to allow the removal of three (3) antennas and installation of three (3) antennas and three (3) remote radio heads; for property located at 511 Havens Corners Road; AT&T Network Operations / Virginia Roth, applicant. Administratively Approved by the Planning and Zoning Administrator on 04/20/2016.

[PWSF-003-2016](#)

A Personal Wireless Service Facility application for an antenna swap on an existing cell tower; for property located at 981 East Johnstown Road; AT&T Mobility / Ronald A. Gainar, applicant. Administratively Approved by the Planning and Zoning Administrator on 05/03/2016.

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Rosan wanted to tell PC that Bonnie, Kayla and herself attended an Ohio APA conference; one day conference; attended a series of breakout sessions; attended one on downtown on revitalization; gave case studies; most interesting one was a talk about autonomous automobiles and how it will impact roads, parking, etc. and other planning issues; estimated we will see this within the next 10 years; based on price of technology; said thank you for the opportunity to attend; suggests you take advantage of these; believes it helps her to make a better decisions.

Keehner also attended a symposium; Planning Creative Cities; the importance of finding what the soul of your city is; thinking about sense of self is important; number of interesting talks; including one by Tony from OHM; another architect in that symposium worked in the city; the car wash on Mill Street was apparently sold; pretty interesting; Tony did a talk on happiness in regards to building and development, based on national growth happiness; in the US we are fixated on an

evergrowing national profit; if you maximize profit, you are not maximizing your happiness; questions what we would look like if we developed based on happiness.

K. ADJOURNMENT

8:15 p.m. by Wester.

L. UPCOMING APPLICATIONS: June 8, 2016

[FDP-0006-2016](#) To consider a Final Development Plan application for a single story building for child daycare/school; for property located at 5515 Morse Road; Parcel ID number 025-011237; current zoning NC, Neighborhood Commercial; The Goddard School / Scott Harper, applicant.

(Advertised in the RFE on 5/26/2016)

[FDP-0007-2016](#) To consider a Final Development Plan application to construct two medical office buildings for FMC-Medical Clinic, Gahanna; for property located at 4251 E. Johnstown Road; Parcel ID number 025-008946; current zoning CC, Community Commercial; King Avenue LLC / Chad Middendorf, applicant.

(Advertised in the RFE on 5/26/2016)

[CU-0003-2016](#) To consider a Conditional Use application to allow a daycare center in a NC, Neighborhood Commercial zoning district; for property located at 5515 Morse Road; Parcel ID number 025-011237; The Goddard School / Scott Harper, applicant.

(Advertised in the Dispatch on 6/2/2016)

[DR-0013-2016](#) To consider an application for Certificate of Appropriateness for site plan, landscaping and building design; for property located at 5515 Morse Road; Parcel ID number 025-011237; The Goddard School; Scott Harper, applicant.

[DR-0014-2016](#) To consider an application for Certificate of Appropriateness for site plan, landscaping, building design and signage; for property located at 4251 E. Johnstown Road; Parcel ID number 025-008946; FMC-Medical Clinic; King Avenue / Chad Middendorf, applicant.