City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission Workshop

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Krystal Gonchar, Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 **6:30 PM** **City Hall, Committee Room**

OPEN MEETING

Chair Suriano opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.; requested the Wester lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Members present: Burba, Suriano, Wester. Additional attendees, Director of Planning & Development Anthony Jones, Deputy Director of Planning & Development, Michael Blackford, and Aaron Domini, consultant. The Chair stated that we have the presentation slide show followed by a Q&A; asked for the public to hold their comments until after the presentation.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- Gahanna Land Use Plan Presentation

Domini presented a slideshow of the Land Use Plan; and informed those in attendance, how the plan was developed. The plan and overview, as well as other information, is available at www.gahannalanduse.com.

Wester asked about development where architectural requirements overruled, referenced a site on Beecher Rd.; asked if this plan will override something of that nature. Blackford said at this stage, the land use plan will set guidelines and the zoning code would have to be revised; the site off Beecher had a site specific overlay, that is in place until the property would be re-zoned. Domini continued with the presentation.

Suriano opened the meeting for public comments.

Wester complimented Jones and Blackford on the study and the firm who

created the document; the plan and study provides reams of data for evaluation; the timing is impeccable; some early slides show what the people of the city want and where they want to go and what they want to maintain; this plan reflects the input of the residents; it is very forward. Burba agreed with Wester, that Jones and Blackford did a great job. Suriano said he had the pleasure of sitting on the steering committee for this; this is very helpful; data and metrics support a vision. Wester said this will clarify a lot of things; it's difficult when an applicant brings a proposal forward and it's in conflict with the land use plan; this will bring clarity, which is appreciated by the members.

Brenda Hoffman, 279 Highmeadow Dr.; in regards to future planning, all the economic market research indicates we are about to have a market reset; expect a housing reset again; asked how the land use plan is effected by that; also, having worked with the City of Indianapolis on a comprehensive plan, can attest that this does impact zoning; we have 1.5 zoning code enforcement officers and for 25 years only had 1; how does that get considered into this plan.

Domini said regarding the market, one of the foundations of this plan is flexibility; which breeds resiliency; not prescribing a single use type here and there; allows for mixed use; allows for development to pick up; many communities looking towards that model.

Wester said regarding having 1.5 code enforcement officers, the city is facing a budget crisis; can only have so many resources; costs have gone up; the city has a challenge on where to put resources; government exists for safety, roads, sewer and water; other functions are supported by city taxes; this Commission has no authority to allocate resources; this is one of the toughest jobs I've ever had; people question why we don't have more resources but dollars make decisions easy.

Jeanie Hoffman, 708 Waybaugh Dr.; how does this plan address traffic.

Wester said you must look at a consolidated traffic plan, not resolved or softened by this plan; that takes dollars. Domini said we are engineers at OHM; this was by no means a thorough traffic study; challenged with not knowing the future; trying to understand the future of transportation; trying to reduce trips; tried to create an environment where you could do multiple stops in one trip; enhanced non-motorized connections; did not study roadway capacity; traffic is not a unique local problem to Gahanna; it is a regional problem. Wester stated that State Representative, Mary Lightbody reached out to us for input on gas tax; responded in support; would like to see some money come back to Gahanna.

Diana Redman 598 Codrington Cr.; stated that communication is important and we can't rely on Facebook; some people rely on the newspaper; reiterated that traffic is in an issue here in the city; COTA removed a bus route; takes 20 minutes to get from east/west end of the city; imperative when looking at economic development that we have transportation routes; must think vertical and horizontally when planning for the future.

Michael Greenburg, 1581 Harrison Pond; stated that our HOA has a list of emails for 400 homes if the city would need to utilize it; wants to understand the process; planning commission will use this land use plan as a guide, to see if development fits; asked if Council will make the decision; also noted that Dublin announced that the North Market would move a store to their city, how do we attract things like that.

Wester said that it takes money; Canal Winchester is only 7,500 people but had matching funds for a park and ride stop from COTA; businesses look for partnership and incentives. Domini said North Market is going to Bridge Street in Dublin; intense development there to support something like that; there was a foot bridge over the river which costs $2million; a lot of investment from the city of Dublin.

Blackford said regarding process, some applications go on to City Council after Planning Commission, some are approved at Planning Commission; when changing zoning, that goes to Council.

Ryan Spatt, 211 Carlin Ct. East; don't like the way this is framed with 2050 Insight plan; does not like the idea of 80+% childless households; telephone and online survey have conflicting results; what you build is what people will come here for; who do we consider our peer cities and have we asked them about lessons learned from quick urbanization; have we engaged those cities; asked if this has legal standing; would you need to go through zoning for codification; seems piecemeal; Easton was not built store by store, required planning.

Domini said he worked on Hilliard's plan 8 years ago; what you see today is what the plan was; the city followed through; we will have places where there are lots available, but the developers must look at trends and see what's the best fit based off the city's vision, etc; the demographics have nothing to do with Insight 2050; was just one more data set to consider; this group wanted to create flexibility and creativity and not have a prescribed formula like Dublin. Suriano said having worked with other municipalities wanted to establish good practices and support different styles and to be mindful of quality.

Jones stated that when his department asked for permission to do this plan, it was based on GoForward Gahanna Plan to define character and unify our plans into one; when we got the money for this plan, also secured funding for next phase, to codify; to modify code; taking an approach to simplify the code so it's easily understood; that will be a difficult process; want to create design elements in code to implement land use plan; will have in depth discussion.

Mary Lightbody, here tonight to commend Gahanna for the very forward thinking plan; appreciates the responses she got back for gas tax; looking to find additional revenue for city roadways. Brenda Hoffman asked if anyone thought of retirees. Lightbody confirmed.

Joe Keehner, 116 D. Town St.; living in Olde Gahanna for 3 decades; the strength of this plan is that there's mixed use outside of residential areas; zoning was first tested in Euclid, Ohio during a time when there were issues with noxious gases, etc.; bottom line is not what is on trend but what we want our community to be like; we live in a culture where government is vilified, but we need taxes to pay for things; we have one of the smallest tax rates in the region so we are in a budget crisis; we must think about what we want our community to be like, not just look at trends; think about the future, if gas is unavailable or costs more than $10 per gallon; must think about walkability and growing food locally; lifestyle choices are a strong factor for the younger generation.

Suriano thanked everyone for coming out tonight.

ADJOURNMENT