



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Michael Suriano, Chair
Michael Greenberg, Vice Chair
Bobbie Burba
John Hicks
Thomas Shapaka
Michael Tamarkin
Thomas J. Wester

Krystal Gonchar, Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

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, January 22, 2020. The agenda for this meeting was published on January 15, 2020. Chair Michael Suriano called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Burba.

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA: None

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2020-016](#)

Planning Commission Minutes for the December 18, 2019 Regular and Workshop meetings & January 8, 2020 Organizational and Regular meeting.

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

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

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

[V-002-2020](#)

To consider a Variance application to vary sections 1150.04(f)(1) and 1150.04(f)(3) - Olde Gahanna Single-family District, of the Codified

Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, to allow for a reduction in front and side yard setbacks; for property located at 81 S. High St.; Parcel ID No. 025-000152-00; current zoning Olde Gahanna Single-family District (OG-1); Tracey & Jeff Girard, applicants.

City Planner Michael Blackford, provided a summary of the application; showed the site plan and zoning map for the property; reviewed criteria for granting variances; reviewed the code as it applies to setbacks; staff recommends approval; showed similar setbacks near the home; alternatives to granting a variance would be to have the applicant strictly adhere to the code; with these older homes, that makes it more difficult for residents to improve their homes.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:09 p.m. Applicant had no additional comments to add; there were no comments from the public. Chair closed the public hearing at 7:10 p.m. and called for questions from the commission.

Tamarkin asked about the front patio. Blackford showed the building plans; said the application had internal improvements listed; is an expansion of existing front porch; would reduce from 7' to 1' front yard setback; showed view from road; was 20' from road but 1' from property line; indicates that there was a right of way from city at some point. Tamarkin indicated that there was still plenty of grass up front.

Shapaka asked what happens to the parking and driveway. Blackford said in addition to the front driveway, there's one in the rear; the den that requires the setback will be within the same footprint.

Girard said that they have not fully decided about what to do with the driveway, but garbage and recycling cans still need to go out to the street; may grass over the current drive and build a walkway to the street for the cans. Shapaka said covering up the drive would make a big improvement.

A motion was made by Tamarkin, seconded by Wester, that the Variance be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

V-003-2020

To consider a Variance application to vary section 1171.03(h) - Fence Standards, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, for the purposes of relocating a fence; for property located at 272 Maybank Ct.; Parcel ID No. 025-006970-00; current zoning Residential District SF-3; David Wehner, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the application; showed the site plan

and zoning map; said that variances for fences have the same standards across the city; the applicant wants to relocate or replace the privacy fence; code only allows for privacy fences in the rear yard; showed the parcel lines; showed an image of the portion of the fence that would require the variance; this is common throughout the city; was unable to find any variances on this road; fence permits are administratively approved if a variance is not required; reviewed criteria for approving variances; decorative fences are allowed by code but those do not allow for privacy; staff recommends approval; would recommend code change to allow for these types of applications to be administratively approved since we have several throughout the year; showed street view of the fence.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:20 p.m.

David Wehner, applicant; all we are doing is relocating the existing fence that goes to the front face of the property; in the past, the fence was put up on the neighbor's property; now bringing it back to the new property line that we worked out; won't be able to see a difference from the street level; will not deter public viewing; fence is currently encroaching on neighbor's property line; to keep costs down, will use as much of the same material as possible.

There were no comments from the public. Chair closed the public hearing at 7:22 p.m. Chair called for questions from the commission; there were none.

A motion was made by Wester, seconded by Hicks, that the Variance be Approved.

Discussion on the motion: Shapaka thanked the applicant for coming before the commission for approval; this is so subtle that we may not have otherwise known of the change; appreciates the applicant respecting the code.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

V-004-2020

To consider a Variance application to vary section 1171.03(n) & 1171.03(f)- Fence Standards, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, for the purposes of replacing a damaged fence; for property located at 301 Worman Dr.; Parcel ID No. 025-003531-00; current zoning Residential District SF-3; Carletta Price, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the application; showed the site plan and zoning map; this is another instance of a fence setback; reviewed variance criteria; staff recommends approval; again, recommends a code change; the recent roadway improvements made the home sit

slightly lower than the pavement and the applicant has issues with car lights shining in the windows; showed street view image; 40' from pavement of Hamilton Road.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:28 p.m. No additional comments. Chair closed the public hearing at 7:28 p.m.

Chair called for questions from the commission.

Burba asked about the fence in the picture, asked about the upper portion. Applicant said it was destroyed during a storm and the fence must be rebuilt.

A motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Wester, that the Variance be Approved.

Discussion on the motion: Suriano said that it is straight forward and will be in support.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[DR-005-2020](#)

To consider a Design Review application for a site plan and building design, for a building renovation; for property located at 350 W. Johnstown Rd.; Parcel ID No. 025-000936; current zoning Community Service (CS); Ohio HD Video; Scott Handel, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the application; showed site plan and zoning map; there was a previous design review application submitted; there are new entrances; showed renderings from the previous request; provided elevations that showed entrances; previously approved building is under construction and this will match that one; staff recommends approval.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:32 p.m. There were no additional comments. Chair closed the public hearing at 7:33 p.m.

Chair called for questions from the commission.

Burba asked if going east on Johnstown Rd., where there's grass on the left side, is that part of this property. Applicant said yes. Burba asked what will be there. Dan Cline, architect for the project, said the new sanitary storm system will go there. Burba asked if landscaping will go up after. Cline said yes. Burba said it is a big improvement and construction is going fast; asked if black awnings went up. Applicant said yes; some

time ago.

A motion was made by Shapaka, seconded by Greenberg, that the Design Review be Approved.

Discussion on the motion: Shapaka stated that he recalled the applicant stating the last time they were before the commission, that they would be back for this portion of their project; thanked the applicant for following through on that. Suriano said that for the sake of consistency, and respect for the applicant coming back before the commission, would be in support.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Trevi Enterprises, LLC: 870 Claycraft Rd.

V-001-2020

To consider a Variance application to vary sections 1108.01(f) - General Requirements & 1107.01(d) - Required Improvements, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna, to delay construction of a sidewalk; for property located 870 Claycraft Rd.; Parcel Id Nos. 025-013638 & 025-013639; current zoning Office, Commerce, and Technology (OCT); Trevi Enterprises, LLC.; David Poe, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the application; showed site plan and zoning map; stated that the request was seen in January of last year; the building was constructed and has tenants currently; the applicant is requesting to defer the construction of a bike path until paths are built on both sides of the property; the path would not connect to anything at this time; the applicant indicated that if the city will improve the roadway, the path would be destroyed during the project; city engineer looked at the request and he is not in favor; the city has no plans to widen Claycraft Rd. at this time; if the city did improvements, there is enough right of way so that the path would not be negatively affected; at one time, there was a proposal in a capital needs assessment to widen the road, but that is no longer a priority; the road is now mostly developed; if approved, based on construction of sidewalks, the properties on either side of this one were built prior to sidewalk requirements and do not currently have sidewalks; showed images that are a part of the FDP application; showed the 8' wide path; reviewed variance criteria; Thoroughfare Plan has sidewalks for the area; Land Use Plan suggests sidewalks be located in this area to connect buildings and properties; Planning staff cannot support this application.

Chair opened the public hearing at 7:43 p.m.

David Poe, with Value Recovery Group; partner with Trevi Enterprises;

regarding this variance, we agree a path is necessary and appropriate and our only objection is timing; we based this decision on three elements: when plans were submitted and approved, we believed this delay was considered appropriate and acceptable, there is precedence for this, and there is no current need for the sidewalk; the approved construction plans are provided in the application; a note was included that said "sidewalks would be determined at a later date, upon construction of sidewalks on either side of the property"; the city stated that the engineer did not have the authority to vary that requirement; the city has been inconsistent to how this was applied in the area; plans for Reliant Capital on 670 Cross Pointe Rd. did not include a sidewalk but the commission conditioned that; Bell Equipment 1045 Taylor Rd. was granted a waiver to delay sidewalk construction; plans for a flex property located on 663 Cross Pointe Rd. did not include sidewalks but the commission required them; a self-storage business located on Blatt Blvd. was approved with a variance granted, to allow for delayed construction until sidewalks were built around it; Villa Home Health on Taylor did not include sidewalks in plans but was approved; 6579 Taylor Rd. had plans that did not include sidewalks; again, there is precedence for this, and the commission has granted it in the past; there is no need for a path today; the city has stated that widening the road is not a priority, so widening our bike path would be in isolation; would be willing to have this requirement recorded on title for the future, since it is difficult for the city to monitor; we work in many cities in central Ohio, your team here, especially Blackford, are great to work with; he is excellent at explaining expectations and ensures that projects are successful; however, he included in his report that the city has helped reduce the cost of the property by providing a tax abatement; those abatements do not reduce the cost of construction; they are economic tools that the city uses to compete with neighbors; all tax savings are passed on through the businesses; the project would more likely be built in a different city if not for those tax abatements; they are not a handout to developers, but a price cities are willing to pay for development; we appreciate the work of the city but wanted to address that point.

There were no public comments. Chair closed the public hearing at 7:49 p.m.

Hicks asked Poe what would be an acceptable delay on this; asked if 5 years in the future is acceptable; asked for any thoughts; Poe said this would be a path to nowhere; ideally the gateway would be connected, but does not want to be the only one constructing a sidewalk.

Wester stated that he feels a city's shortcoming is that it lacks lighting, sidewalks; cannot support this for a couple of reasons; would hope the city would consider adding orphaned sidewalks to annual resurfacing programs; the only way to get a sidewalk or path is for someone to start it; put the onerous on the owners; if we don't do something to start it, we will fall further behind; asked if the applicant would consider an escrow account. Poe stated that there was a requirement for that, they do have money in escrow. Wester said if you look at the city, looking at Tech Center Drive, it is amazing how many people are using that walk way; we need more of that in the city; understands concern of project costs.

Burba asked about the cost of the path. Poe said \$50,000. Burba said this is one of the biggest buildings in the city; asked how many people are employed there. Poe said only 2 tenants in place currently.

Suriano asked how many people use the facility at one time. Poe said approximately 60; it's primarily warehouse. Suriano said this is tough and can appreciate that it's a sidewalk to nowhere, but can agree with Wester that the city lacks mobility; this is important to think about moving forward; cannot support this.

Wester said when looking around the region, there are ADA ramps at intersections; when a street is improved, the city is required to put those in; ramps will be put in eventually; a path will be there.

Hicks said the property to the west is a residential hotel. Poe said it is zoned commercial. Burba asked about the cost of the building. Poe said \$15 million. Burba said in comparison, \$50,000 does not seem to be a cost issue.

A motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Wester, that the Variance be Approved.

Discussion on the motion: Shapaka said he would encourage the city to get more involved; hates to see a path to nowhere, but will be in support of the Variance because he is sympathetic to the applicant that there were no better plans by the city before. Tamarkin thanked Poe for the analysis; voted "no" on a previous variance application to delay sidewalks because he feels this must start somewhere; in order to be consistent, will continue to vote no going forward. Hicks said he is sympathetic, and thanked Poe for his business with the city; said he is a great partner with the city; remembers being involved in previous discussions for those variances mentioned; this must be a city wide effort to get these sidewalks constructed; but cannot support a permanent variance. Suriano said he echoes those comments of his colleagues; we have to start somewhere; cannot be in favor of this.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 1 - Shapaka

No: 6 - Suriano, Burba, Greenberg, Hicks, Tamarkin and Wester

[DR-003-2020](#)

To consider a Design Review application for a Master Sign Plan, for property located at 870 Claycraft Rd.; Parcel ID Nos. 025-013638 & 025-013639; current zoning Office, Commerce, and Technology (OCT); Trevi Enterprises, LLC; Amy Biondi-Huffman, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the application; showed the site plan and zoning map; the zoning code requires that a master sign plan be approved prior to the sign permit being issued, for new multi-tenant buildings; there's a lot of flexibility for the applicant to determine what type of sign they want and the size; reviewed sign requirements for color, size; this is in line with a previously approved master sign plan; not much to evaluate other than that; staff recommends approval.

Chair opened the public hearing at 8:03 p.m. No additional comments.
Chair closed the public hearing at 8:03 p.m.

Tamarkin asked about the image that showed the location of the signs; said some appear to be in the blue space and some do not. Applicant said it's tenant specific; the tenant would have to come back to have their sign administratively approved.

Amy Biondi-Huffman; stated that the intent is that the center units will have sign over top their entrance; end tenants can offset; both ends will match, ideally; need to do what's best for the business of the tenant. Suriano asked in the elevation, will the signage height be consistent. Applicant confirmed.

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

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

[DR-004-2020](#)

To consider a Design Review application for paint color, for property located at 870 Claycraft Rd.; Parcel ID Nos. 025-013638 & 025-013639; current zoning Office, Commerce & Technology (OCT); Trevi Enterprises, LLC.; David Poe, applicant.

Blackford provided a summary of the application; the applicant requests approval of the red colored band; when the commission saw this last year, there was a condition that the color be neutral and administratively approved; when staff did inspection, made the applicant aware of the inconsistent color; there is no code that speaks to the color; reviewed

criteria for granting approval of design review; staff has no objection or preference; showed neighboring buildings with red accents.

Chair opened the public hearing at 8:12 p.m.

Poe said they should have never agreed with the color change; this is a big beige building and so a splash of color was needed; the first tenant was a bank, whose corporate color was red; they were excited that the color matched; fits in with the neighborhood, which is why we came back before the commission.

Chair closed the public hearing at 8:13 p.m. and called for questions from the commission; there were none.

A motion was made by Hicks, seconded by Wester, that the Design Review be Approved.

Discussion on the motion: Suriano stated that he was a dissenter before; did not realize the amount of red that was on surrounding buildings; can see now that this is consistent and acceptable; thanks the applicant for coming back.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

G. NEW BUSINESS: None

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS

Assistant City Attorney

No report.

Planning & Development

Blackford said tonight is a reflection of the need to change city code; would like to get working on that but timing is not right due to transition; perhaps at the end of the first quarter, would like to get something before the commission; would be common variances.

Suriano asked about the process for that; asked if it would go under "new business." Blackford said it is a code change, would be written by staff, presented to the commission, and recommendations would be made by

the commission to city council.

Greenberg said the Land Use Plan website still says "draft." Blackford asked if it was on the Gahanna Land Use Plan site or city website. Greenberg said it was not the city website. Blackford said he will speak to the consultant about removing that; that it should be taken down and the correct information is available on the city website.

Burba asked about the status of the Mill Street Development. Blackford said the comments are still pending on the Final Development Plan; the economic incentives are still going through council.

Wester asked about the Access building off James Rd. Blackford said that is with the legal department; cannot comment on that.

Council Liaison

No report.

CIC Liaison

Hicks said the CIC met yesterday for their organizational meeting; discussed plans regarding board composition changes, bylaw changes, and the direction of the organization; and the following were elected:

Betty Collins- President
Jodelle Carder- Vice President
George Mrus- Secretary
Jeff Kessler- Treasurer

Chair

No report.

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS: None

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Suriano stated that there was a good discussion tonight, surrounding the sidewalks; moving forward, would like to be consistent and get to the land use plan vision; must think about mobility.

Wester asked for the commission to think about 2-3 things we think the city needs; sidewalks, lighting, those are things that he can think of; we could suggest these things as part of the capital improvement plan; would

encourage everyone to think about the question and be ready to discuss at a future meeting; asked how we can lead the city with those things in mind.

Blackford said he would like to comment on the importance of the permitting process and how consistencies by the commission members, when voting, is beneficial to that process; it is beneficial to development in the city.

Suriano said he would like to add that he's been on the other side due to his job; would ask the commission to consider things like the cost of construction; when doing a cost benefit analysis, it all adds up; referring to the sidewalk discussion.

K. ADJOURNMENT

By Wester at 8:25 p.m.