



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Michael Tamarkin, Chair
Thomas Shapaka, Vice Chair
Michael Greenberg
John Hicks
James Mako
Michael Suriano
Thomas J. Wester

Pam Ripley, Deputy Clerk of Council

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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

Gahanna Planning Commission met in regular session on August 10, 2022. The agenda for this meeting was published on August 8, 2022. Chair Michael Tamarkin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Wester.

Present 6 - John Hicks, Michael Tamarkin, Michael Suriano, Thomas J. Wester, Michael Greenberg, and James Mako
Absent 1 - Thomas W. Shapaka

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

New Business: Facilities For the Future, Presentation by Administration

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from July 17, 2022 are not available for approving and will be on the agenda at the next meeting.

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

[SWP-0005-2022](#) To consider a Subdivision Without Plat Application for property located at 294 S. Hamilton Road/298 S. Hamilton Road; Parcel IDs: 025-013435; Current Zoning PUD; Hunter's Ridge Shopping Center; Matt Ellish,

Applicant.

Director of Planning Michael Blackford provided a summary of the application; see attached staff presentation. The PUD zoning regulations are unique in that they identify standards for residential development, but they don't have standards for commercial development. This request is to create two lots. Lot A would be Taco Bell at 1.04 +/- acres and Lot B at 1.25 +/- acres is the McDonald's parcel. There are several out parcels already created in the Hunters Ridge Center. There is no minimum lot size within the zoning classification and no minimum setbacks. Staff looks at that the minimum parking standards, access, and signage. All those items are met. All code requirements are met. There is similar lot size as configuration as other parcels in Hunters Ridge. Staff recommends approval of the application. Blackford shared the applicant is an out of state applicant and is not here. Blackford is available for questions.

Chair opened public comment at 7:06 p.m.

No public comment

Chair closed public comment at 7:06 p.m.

Questions from the Commission: Hicks has no questions but has comments. Whenever this parcel is discussed, he likes to ask about the traffic flow in between the Kroger and the Taco Bell, it is not striped. It is very confusing for the customers of Taco Bell, the fuel station, Burger King, and Kroger as to where the traffic flow should be. If the applicant does read these comments or review the video, he asked if they could consider that traffic flow between these parcels that and Kroger. The southeast corner of the shopping center has an exit onto Morrison Road. The owners should consider making that a right in, right out. Just west of there is a right in, right out. Huntington Bank has a right in, right out. On the southeast corner currently, you can turn left into it from Morrison Road. You can turn left out of it onto Morrison Road. That creates a traffic issue as well.

Tamarkin commented that on the Burger King location there was an agreement that there would be no restrictions on these divided parcels. They would have free access to the other parcels and the Kroger lot and that was in writing. Is there a chance they are doing the split so they could sell a parcel and it is separate ownership? Blackford said he believes that is the reason to splitting the parcels. He did not have conversations with the applicant. He did see an email or had a discussion with staff there was an agreement or something regarding parking and access and how that's not changing.

Motion was made by Greenberg, seconded by Hicks, that the Subdivision Without Plat be approved.

Motion carried with the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Hicks, Tamarkin, Suriano, Wester, Greenberg and Mako

Absent: 1 - Shapaka

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

G. NEW BUSINESS

Facilities for the Future

Mayor Jadwin said that as Planning Commission members, they are representatives of the city and are volunteering their time to serve on the commission. They are valued stakeholders in the community and administration wants to make sure they are informed on what the city has been working on. There has been a town hall and discussions at several council meetings. If council decides to proceed with this project, portions of it will come before the commission. The city values the commission's input and experience and want to hear your opinion. Over the last two years, the administration has been doing an evaluation of city facilities as part of the development of a long-term capital improvement plan (CIP). City facilities have long been identified as being inadequate to meet the operational needs in terms of delivery of services. As far back as 2006, when a facility's assessment was done it identified that the city was more than 100,000 sq. ft. shy of the space needed to meet operational needs. A second assessment was started in 2017 and concluded in 2021. In October of 2021, a presentation on the assessment was given to council. That assessment reaffirmed the operational space deficiencies that we had. It also rated the city facilities based on 27 different criteria and rated all the city facilities, including police headquarters and city hall, as fair to poor. There was a series of public workshops with city council that went into detail on what those assessments showed and what the conditions of the facilities were. It was intended to start a discussion on where we go from here. When Issue 12 was being discussed and before it was voted upon the city discussed at length the years of deferred maintenance that we had to deal with. There is a long list of projects and issues in the city that had not been dealt with. Facilities was specifically discussed as one of those things. With Issue 12 passing, how do we roll all the needs in the community into this long-term CIP? That was the goal of the conversation. Administration was tasked by council to find some options. Where could we build a new police headquarters? How do we

deal with an operation complex? What are the options for city hall? A golden opportunity presented itself with 825 Tech Center Drive. It is a 100,000 sq. ft. Class A office space that is vacant due to COVID. It is an incredible opportunity for the city. The city evaluated it to see if it could house police headquarters, city hall, and the senior center for the next 30 - 50 years. The city would purchase the building, renovate it, and build an auxiliary building to house some of the things police currently doesn't have. A shooting range, locker rooms, sally port, those things that need to be outside of a building. There was a Town Hall discussion with the public on July 20, 2022, which is on the city YouTube channel.

IT Manager Kevin Schultz shared a short video that speaks to the conditions of the city's existing police facility and city hall. Schultz shared that it has been an extensive process. The economic development team came up with over a list of 20 different sites where the city could potentially locate one of the facilities. Staff looked at several other buildings in the city before taking a tour of this building. It was apparent that the way in which even the lobby is set up it is very conducive to a renovation type project. It can house the police department, city hall and the senior center. A space planning report was completed for the three facilities. Each department was inventoried and assessed on how much space is needed. The space needed is within this building, plus a couple additional square feet that would need to be built on the exterior of the building. The building was purchased in 2018 by the existing landowner for 11 million dollars. The city has a non-binding letter of agreement where it would purchase the building for 8.75 million dollars. The square footage needed for the three facilities is just shy of the square footage of the building. The plan would be to build approximately a 31,000 sq. ft. building in the parking lot to accommodate some of the niche public safety needs, such as holding cells, firing range, evidence storage, and things that are not compatible inside the office space building. The back parking lot can easily be secured. One of the biggest constraints the city has is the police cruisers are currently wide open. The site is just shy of 600 parking spaces, and any expansion to the site, building wise will not consume a substantial number of parking spaces. There are three acres of vacant land to the south that the city could have a conversation with the owner to potentially acquire that property if expansion was necessary. Schultz showed where the city's fiber network exists. The building is on two major trunk lines of that network. It is on a COTA bus line.

Schultz showed the front entryway which has been fully renovated and modernized. There are a variety of different types of training and conference room spaces-spaces that the city currently does not have. The building is largely an open floor plan. Any interior walls are partition walls and not structural in any way. The interior spaces are designed

where the natural light is allowed to progress through the space into the interior offices, using tempered glass to allow natural light into the formal offices. The cubicles are on the outside walls throughout each floor.

Schultz said Mission Critical Partners verified the space plan that Pizzuti had done for the city. The space plan Pizzuti completed checked out very well. They updated the budget numbers due to the new time with supply chain issues and inflation. The city asked them to prove our budget. They proved it in two different ways. They proved the budget from the standpoint of what would it take to build and reconstruct this type of building somewhere else throughout the City of Gahanna, including purchasing eight acres of land. New construction cost for a Police Department would cost about 70 million dollars. A new City Hall and Senior Center would be 29.2 million dollars. Total cost for new build is estimated at 99.4 million dollars. This does not include the land acquisition cost of around 2.5 million dollars for an eight-acre parcel. This is a very conservative number. This would escalate the project to above 100 million dollars if we were to build a new construction type project in the city. They proved the budget for 825 Tech Center Dr. is 60.9 million dollars which includes design contingencies, construction contingencies, soft cost, overhead and profit. Also taken into consideration is insurance, hardened construction versus typical construction. One of the issues and challenges when you are dealing with a police facility is it needs to be a hardened building. And that is the budget we are currently working with. It would cost about nine million dollars more to construct just a new police department instead of renovating 825 Tech Center Dr. with an extra 31,000 sq. ft. in the parking lot. These types of projects have been seen throughout the region. In the City of Gahanna, Mifflin Township purchased 400 West Johnstown Rd. and turned it into their administration building for fire services and a joint communication center. Our police investigative unit works out of their building.

Westerville and Dublin have done these types of projects. This is the norm and not the exception. City Hall is third on the list of priorities when you take the PD and the service complex into consideration. But when you have an opportunity like this, we feel we need to send all efforts in that direction as opposed to being pulled in a variety of different directions. All this information, all the presentations before council, the four workshops and the town hall can be found on the city website located at Gahanna.gov/facilities. The purchase and sale agreement were presented to council on Monday, August 8, 2022. The bond legislation was presented because this is a commercial real estate transaction. Government sometimes works at a lot slower pace than the private sector. It might seem like we are progressing at a rather rapid pace for a

building that we walked into in April. We need to close on the property by the middle of December at the latest. That is a long time in the private sector. The landowner has been very accommodating with the city and has gone above and beyond to work with the city. As a result, the city can do its due diligence with these public type participations and get the feedback needed for council and the community to become comfortable with a project of this scale and magnitude. Schultz is available for questions and comments.

Hicks said it is an exciting opportunity. Hicks asked what the estimated timeline was, and the potential uses of this [existing city hall] facility in the future. Schultz said there will be about an eight-to-nine-month design process and then about another 12-month potentially longer renovation due to supply chain issues. This could mean moving in the fourth quarter of 2024 or early 2025 into a renovated and fully constructed facility. Schultz deferred to Mayor Jadwin regarding this facility. Mayor Jadwin shared the potential use of this existing facility and land is still being discussed. An appraisal was done in June 2022. This property is about five acres with the three buildings and has an appraised value of 4.8 million dollars. The appraiser also noted that if we had these five acres without the buildings, it would be more than double that amount. That is a discussion with council as to what we would do with this property. Those are some significant dollars that could offset the project. The city doesn't want to get into any further analysis of that until we know whether this project is moving forward. This is an aggressive timeline that is being dictated because this is a commercial real estate transaction. Bond legislation and purchase agreement were presented to council on Monday, August 8, 2022. A projected vote would be September 6, 2022, to meet that timeline. If this ends up being approved on September 6, 2022, that would be one of the next things that the city would be addressing, what do we do with this land. Mayor Jadwin wanted to emphasize that we have bond legislation that can be confusing for some. It does not mean that there is a levy coming. This will not involve any new taxes. The mayor cannot say that enough or more strenuously, "no new taxes" for this. That was the purpose of Issue 12. The bond legislation is required anytime there is an issuance of general obligation debt, which is what this would be. No new taxes would be associated with this project. Hicks shared he had an opportunity to do a ride along with an officer. As the officer spoke about in the video he experienced the roll call room, the storage, and the sally port. He got to see firsthand the issues discussed. Hicks feels this is a great use of our tax dollars. He is 100 percent in support and gives kudos to the administration and council for supporting it. Speaking for himself on planning commission, he appreciates the heads up for what might be coming before the commission.

Mako wanted to verify some numbers: 11 million dollars was the sale price in 2018 and then 8.75 million dollars is the purchase price. Schultz confirmed the numbers. Mako thinks this is a great opportunity and is all for saving the taxpayers dollars. It is a good use of resources.

Suriano appreciates the presentation and thoroughness in looking at the sites and the facilities assessment. It is using our tax dollars effectively and intelligently. One of the best things we can do environmentally is reuse existing infrastructure and assets. In terms of attracting and retaining talent for the city, he wants the best and brightest working at Gahanna and he thinks the city has it. Part of retaining is having adequate facilities. It looks like the city has heavily vetted it. In looking at the interior photos this place is going to provide some of that. Great spaces provide some great work. We want our staff to be able to be their best. He is 100 percent in support.

Wester said Schultz mentioned a timeline of about two and a half years. Schultz said 18 months to 24 months. Wester would love to see the cash flow curve. He questioned how it is going to be paid for. Issue 12 produced x number of dollars. What gets traded in a capital plan to facilitate this. Schultz said that is a fair question and that is the next step. The bond legislation that was presented was for short term notes to purchase the building. The long-term notes for the actual budget and renovation project would be done at a more appropriate point in time once design is complete and we have greater construction estimates. We are being very strategic to make sure that the 60.9 million dollars does not come completely out of the debt service. Meaning you know what types of resources we can use today to lower that, not necessarily lower the budget but lower the debt service on the building. Making the bond payment more palatable for those Issue 12 dollars. One of the things we have already done and come up with is the architectural and engineering fees, for example, would come out of purchase orders that we are able to consolidate and use. That is about a three million dollar estimate currently. There is TIF district money that could be used towards the project. We are looking at the impact it would have on that limited resource of those Issue 12 dollars and what impact does it have on the rest of the projects and programs as we move forward. It will help having the CIP. The CIP will be presented to council soon. It will prioritize and give the city better ability to predict those expenditures into the future- not just for projects like this, but for other projects that Issue 12 dollars is meant to address. The Issue 12 dollars were to go towards all types of deferred maintenance, including city facilities. This is in line with that, but we need to be cognizant of the limited resource. Wester said we are looking at a project cost of 60 million dollars which is about 40 percent of the new high school. He doesn't remember what the bond, the taxes

were on it or the timeline. Sixty million dollars is a fair piece of change. He is wondering again what are the city's infrastructure needs? What is the city going to do relative to street improvements and traffic calming? He thinks that a comprehensive city capital plan is required, not just for five years but even looking 10 years out. What about our traffic lights, street lighting? It is hard to believe it cost about hundred thousand dollars to put in a traffic signal. How many do we have in the city that may need upgrading. The public service department has been talked about being improved. He does not think anything has been done back there. Mayor Jadwin said that when the city went through the facilities assessments and workshops it was a toss-up between police headquarters and the service complex. Which one is priority one? We recognized that the service complex was built in 1971. When we hired a female administrative assistant in 2020 to help support public service, she didn't have a restroom to use. She had to walk across the parking lot in the middle of winter to go over to the parks garage. A restroom had to be installed for her. The current service complex is on about eight acres. The need for what we should have in terms of the services we provide is about 12-acres. When we were tasked from council to explore options, we put out an RFP and said we were looking for 12-acres to build a service complex and what the facility needs to look like. We asked for an estimate on a land, design, build buy and a land, design, build lease. We received no responses. We already knew, and this told us we do not have 12-acres in Gahanna to put a service complex. It is more difficult for us to solve. It will take longer for us to figure out where it needs to go. It was mentioned at council that we are going to have to look outside of Gahanna to solve that problem. The long-term CIP will have public input and will be critical to setting the path for the future. We are not going to catch up on all the deferred maintenance that we have overnight. Streetlights, traffic signals, traffic lights, sidewalks, in terms of neighborhoods that don't even have sidewalks have all been identified in the CIP. Wester said a shooting range was mentioned. What is the operating cost of a shooting range? Is it possible to share that with some other community or use another community shooting range? I don't know how many we need in central Ohio. The same with the vehicle maintenance, he thinks the city needs to consolidate some of its operating and have some new facilities. But it also needs to look at how it can capitalize or cooperate with other communities related to the facilities. With sixty million dollars over a two-year time frame, that is going to be bonded, he wondered what we are going to give up relative to the operation of the city. What is the trade off or improvements to the city?

Greenberg said this is an exciting and great project for the city.

Greenberg said at another meeting it was mentioned that there is going to be a ramp for police to get onto I-270. Schultz shared that there would need to be a conversation with ODOT and the public safety organizations to potentially create a public safety entrance headed north. Without having those conversations yet we don't want to publicize something that might not happen. We have eliminated it from the talking points.

Greenberg asked about the neighboring property to the east and if there were anymore thought to it. Schultz believes that the property to the east has a development proposal on it currently. That piece and the piece that abuts the 825 are both owned by VRG. He believes in conversations with VRG and the city economic development director that they would like to maintain the north-south facing piece to Tech Center Drive for access purposes. But they would be open to having the conversation to about the wood lot to the south.

Tamarkin said it is an exciting project and sounded like it is needed. It is nice to have a building available in the community that meets our needs. Hopefully it works in the budget and does not take away from other needs of the community that have all been addressed.

Presentation with video attached.

[2022-0256](#)

Facilities for the Future presentation

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS

Assistant City Attorney - none

Director of Planning

Blackford shared that due to the shortage of staff they will not be able to move forward as quickly as they would like with the zoning code rewrite. The department just doesn't have the staffing levels, but he is working on revising a few sections of the code. He mentioned the parking challenges at Highbank Distillery. He has been working with the operators, the business owners and Casto who manages the property to work on some possible solutions. He will keep the commission updated.

Council Liaison - none

Chair

Tamarkin said that City Council approved unanimously the Memorandum of

Agreement (MOA) with the schools. At that meeting he met the new school superintendent Dr. Deagle who said they are willing to come in to do another workshop with the commission. His feeling is let's see what we hear from the schools and where the commission's place fits and if they are needed. But it is on the table the school board is willing to come in and have a redo of the workshop. They want to work with the commission and council and have a nice cohesive relationship, which he thinks will happen. They promised him that they will be a good corporate citizen as far as working with the neighbors on the football field. The building will be a professionally done building. They expressed a little disappointment that they were not invited to come to the meeting with the city attorney when he presented to the commission the *Brownfield* decision. Tamarkin expressed to them that it happened very quickly, and it was not a hearing. It was more of a presentation on where the commission stands and where it fits in on the process. It was not meant to be a hearing.

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS

Tamarkin said the letter received from Mr. Renner has been entered into the record as correspondence.

[2022-0244](#)

Correspondence - S. Renner

J. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Hicks said regarding the attendance at the meeting for something that is not on the agenda, the commission previously had in the Rules of Procedure a section for any comments from the public on matters that are not on the agenda. He thinks the commission might want to consider that so if anybody from the public or from the school board or the school administration wants to visit and speak on the record, they are very welcome to do so anytime. We don't have that on the agenda anymore. It would give someone from the public or from another body in town to come and speak and have it on the record. Notwithstanding any formalities nobody must wait on an invitation. Anybody would be welcome to attend and their input he is sure would be well received. There is still confusion around what happened a couple weeks ago. What does the MOA do, what does it mean? There is still a lot of confusion, especially in some of the language and the emails released. For example, the night they were at the council meeting where council deliberated on the MOA and passed it, as a parent of a student, he received an email from the school district that was about a minute after the vote was taken. It was an update on building projects. There was a recap of the collaboration between the city and the school district and under the section of collaboration with the city it says because the city and the school district are governmental entities the MOA allows for an expedited permitting process and positions the district to quickly begin construction. Hicks said that all sounds great, but the next phrase "while meeting all requirements of the project" that is not completely accurate. He thinks there is confusion about what this means, what it does.

Nobody on planning commission opposes the construction of the new high school. Nobody opposes the process that is in place. The MOA agrees that it's needed and necessary. There is still confusion in the public about what this means and what the next steps are.

K. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.