

CITY OF CHARDON PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2024

Members Present:

Andrew Blackley, Chairman
Robert Emmons
Lene Hill
Dan Meleski

Mary Jo Stark, Vice-Chairman
Colin Wantz

Members Absent

Dean Peska

Also Present:

Ben Chojnacki, Law Director
Doug Courtney, City Engineer
Dr. Michael Hanlon, Chardon Schools
Superintendent
Jeff Henderson, TDA Architecture
Steve Kofol, Chardon Schools
Glenn Pisching

Rebecca Repasky, Secretary
Gwen Sheehan
Allison Wilson, Geauga Maple Leaf
Steve Yaney, Community Development
Administrator

Mr. Blackley called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Attendance roll was called. Mr. Blackley reminded all that were present to sign in and swore in City Staff.

Planning Commission requested 'sanitation volume' on page 3 of the minutes, be replaced with 'treatment'. Mrs. Stark made a motion to approve the May 28, 2024, meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mrs. Hill. Roll was called. The vote carried 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS

PC Case #24-054/055/056/057: Mr. Yaney reviewed that seven (7) out of the eight (8) variances have been approved. The variance requesting less than 5% landscaping was denied. Mr. Yaney said the photometric plan was submitted and appears to be in order – everything will be verified at construction document time.

Mr. Yaney explained Planning Commission requested more detail on the landscaping. Planning Commission did approve waiving the end islands and try to beef up the edges around the outside parking lot. Proposed at this meeting, is an additional fourteen (14) trees on the islands of the north side of the lot (the training area); and along the south row of the drive isle, south of the parking field. Mr. Yaney said the south side will be challenging because of snow storage. Mr. Yaney said he will let Planning Commission decide if this is what was intended. There is a row of evergreen trees to the east of Building B. (This is the gap in the tree line between this property and the condominiums.) Mr. Yaney said this plan shows the fence being cut through the woods. Mr. Yaney suggested getting the fence out of the trees and bushes and run it along the tree line.

Mr. Yaney explained the full version traffic impact study still needs to be submitted. A deadline of: Monday, June 17th was given so that Staff and Kevin Westbrooks had enough time to review it in order to proceed at the June 25th meeting. Mr. Courtney explained there is not enough data or calculations from the executive summary to verify the conclusions.

Mr. Blackley said Planning Commission did not waive the 5% landscaping. He said his interpretation of the regulation was that the impervious area of the parking lot would be reduced by 5% and replaced with landscaping. Mr. Blackley said he does not see that has been done. Mr. Yaney said that had not been done because the discussion at the last meeting, some of the members indicated that instead of islands, that additional landscaping would be around the edges, which is typically not how that is handled. Mr. Blackley said members were not willing to require landscaping in the islands nor were they prohibiting landscaping in the islands. Mr. Blackley said the requirement was for the 5% landscaping in the parking area. Mr. Blackley continued, doing landscaping outside the parking area without reducing the impervious pavement is not compliant with the 5% landscaping in the parking lot. Mr. Wantz agreed. Mr. Yaney said he wanted to make sure because it was not clear at last month's meeting. Mr. Wantz said his statement was having islands. He said there was conversation on having them around the fueling station. Mr. Wantz said he thought for sure keeping the islands on the south side of the parking lot. Mrs. Stark said she was okay with not having landscaping in the islands because the branches would hit the buses and the trees won't grow. She said that is why she did not vote for the 5%; but she said if the requirement is waived, the applicant should be accommodating and provide that 5% or more elsewhere. Mr. Blackley asked if that is interpreted as a reduction in the impervious area. Mrs. Stark said that could be a reduction in the impervious area because Planning Commission is trying to mitigate heat islands. Mr. Blackley said correct.

Mr. Blackley said the one sheet shows the square footage of 4,943 as additional landscaping. Mrs. Stark said her interpretation is large deciduous trees and lawn. Mrs. Stark continued that the applicant identified that area previously as snow storage. Mrs. Stark said another issue is underground or above ground utilities are not shown. Mrs. Stark said she isn't sure if there are utilities there, but the trees could possibly be pushed back and a double row of large deciduous trees can be put in that area. Mr. Blackley said there is a storm sewer line in there. Mr. Courtney said and a sanitary line. Mr. Blackley said a swale is shown. Mrs. Stark said that all needs to be shown on the plan so landscaping can work around it. Mrs. Stark asked as another option, in addition, could islands be done in permeable pavers. Mr. Blackley said that would reduce the impervious area, but he does not think it accomplishes the intent of the landscape provision. He said it does not do anything to reduce the heat of the pavement.

Mr. Blackley asked Mr. Yaney what constitutes a parking lot. Mr. Yaney said it can be looked at as an outdoor vehicle storage area or a parking lot. He said there is a fine line for outdoor vehicle storage area and it does not have the landscape requirement interior to it if it is enclosed/screened on all four (4) sides. Mr. Yaney said this is an outdoor vehicle storage area but there is no solid fence along the street frontage, and it is also not a public parking lot; but it is in the front. Mr. Yaney said there is unique characteristics to this parking area that are not present anywhere else in this City. Mr. Yaney said there is no large parking area storing fleet vehicles in front of a building anywhere else in town.

Mrs. Hill commented as far as the heat islands, they are concrete, not asphalt, and are a lighter color. Therefore, would give off less heat.

Mr. Blackley asked if Mrs. Stark if she is satisfied with the proposal to add additional trees and landscaping on the south side of the parking area. Mrs. Stark said she would like to see more trees added. Mr. Courtney said there is storm sewer and sanitary sewer lines on that side of the lot. Mrs. Stark asked what the distance is of that to the fence. Mr. Courtney said the sanitary sewer is close to the property line just inside the fence (not dimensioned on the plan). Mr. Blackley asked if an easement will go along the public sanitary sewer. Mr. Courtney said yes. Mr. Blackley said the sanitary is outside of the fence line. Mr. Courtney said inside the property line. Mr. Blackley clarified the sanitary sewer is shown on the landscape plan. Mrs. Stark asked what is on C401, what is the dotted line, on the inside. Mrs. Hill said the proposed easement line. Mr. Blackley said they are implying that the easement line is not labeled as such – but will take it as a 25' easement. Mr. Blackley asked if Staff has seen a consolidation plat yet. Mr. Courtney said not yet. Mr. Blackley asked if the plat will come back to Planning Commission for review and approval. Mr. Courtney said yes. Mrs. Stark said currently, the trees are located outside the easement line. Mr. Courtney said the

trees on the outside the fence are within the easement line. Mrs. Stark clarified inside the fence. Mr. Courtney said outside the fence within the easement. Mr. Blackley said looking at the landscape plan, they are tracing the line of the existing ditch and it comes to a headwall where the storm sewer starts. The trees are within feet of where the headwall is located. Mr. Blackley said potentially the trees can be moved over several feet. Mr. Courtney agreed. Mrs. Stark said four (4) trees could be added. Mrs. Hill said on the plan, it appears the trees are placed 40' feet apart. Mr. Blackley asked if a landscape architect reviews the plan. Mr. Yaney said the City Arborist, Dave Allen, will review the plan and species. Mr. Blackley asked if Mr. Yaney is content to wait till construction document time. Mr. Yaney said the Code does not require it one way or the other. Mr. Blackley asked about the large deciduous trees. Mr. Yaney said there is a minimum 2" caliber size. Mr. Yaney said the Arborist doesn't like to plant when they are too big because they have a smaller success rate. Mr. Blackley said nothing is being done to what he considers the parking lot, so this needs to be beefed up. Mrs. Stark said it depends what the species is going in. She said possibly making it a large diameter canopy tree. Mr. Yaney added on a staggered row. Mrs. Stark said it could be done every 30' then. Mr. Blackley said that would add four (4) more trees. Mr. Emmons asked about the north side of the lot. Mr. Blackley said he does not think any changes were made. Mr. Yaney said trees were added to those islands. Mrs. Stark said those are smaller trees. Mr. Wantz asked if the proposed evergreens, on the east side, are over the property line. Mr. Yaney said right at the property line. Mr. Blackley said that is technically not acceptable because it cannot disturb the adjacent property line; unless they have permission and Planning Commission cannot give that permission. Mrs. Stark asked if the fence could be moved in to accommodate that. Mr. Blackley said they want the trees to be there and suggested moving the fence in 4' - 5' and then the trees could move in 4' - 5'. Mr. Wantz said it would be tight because of the drainage there. Mr. Wantz asked if the neighboring property drains into this property. Mr. Courtney said yes. Mr. Wantz said that maybe the vegetation isn't shown at this location. Mr. Courtney said there is a storm sewer pipe that discharges onto this property. He said there might be some sheet flow. Mr. Wantz asked if there is a retaining wall at this location. Mr. Courtney said no, just a fence. Mr. Blackley said the retaining wall is for the north side. Mr. Blackley said the applicant is not proposing grading where the evergreen trees are to be planted. Mr. Blackley said there is a slope there that drops off 5' or 6'. Mr. Meleski asked Mr. Yaney what perspective the photos (in the Planning Commission packets) are taken from. Mr. Yaney said he is taking the photos from the north end of the condominiums. Mrs. Stark said with that grading, it makes it awkward to move in the fence.

Mr. Glenn Pisching, 130 Center Street / HOA President was sworn in.

Mr. Blackley explained there is a potential disturbance to their property with the evergreen trees and asked for any objections. Mr. Pisching asked if that meant infringement on the condominium property. Mr. Blackley said yes.

Mr. Jeff Henderson, TDA Architect, was sworn in.

Mr. Henderson said they could attempt to fill the gap with screening. Mr. Pisching asked what type of trees would go in. Mr. Henderson said evergreens. Mr. Pisching said he, the President of the HOA and representing the condominiums would agree to the evergreen trees going in on their property. Mr. Henderson added the fence is going to be 8' high, and trees would soften the appearance of the fence.

Mr. Blackley asked what color the fence will be. Mr. Henderson said gray or tan – not white. Mr. Blackley asked why not have the fence come out at a 45-degree angle. Mr. Henderson said because it will be difficult for the school to maintain it and may want to utilize that space later.

Regarding the density of the deciduous tree planting on the south side, it was suggested to reduce the spacing to 30' and stagger the trees to increase the number of trees to four (4) or five (5). Mr. Blackley asked if that is agreeable. Mr. Henderson said that is, but there are utilities that run through there. The storm line, which he will be meeting with Mr. Courtney to discuss, to figure out what needs to be done. It is a 15" that dumps out onto the property and is an eroded swale and it goes into a smaller storm line to the west. And the district would like to use some of the space and not have it as an open ditch. The intent is not to

keep it as an open ditch but that is an option. It will subject the property to further erosion and the district does not want to deal with that. Mr. Courtney added Staff is meeting with the applicant tomorrow to review the findings of the storm sewer. He said it ties into a catch basin on the Post Office property and it goes to Washington. Mr. Courtney said he is not sure where on Washington it ties into the storm sewer.

Mr. Blackley asked the Commission if anything else needed to be discussed regarding the landscape plan. Mrs. Stark asked if Mr. Blackley was satisfied with the pavement. Mr. Blackley said no, he is not satisfied. Mr. Henderson asked Mr. Blackley what he meant by reducing the pavement and what that does. Mr. Blackley says it reduces the impervious area and reduces a heat sink from solar radiation. Mr. Blackley said with trees, it is less of a heat island. Mr. Henderson said the buses are there most of the day and all summer and will shade where they are parking. Mr. Blackley said if the majority of the Commission is fine with what was suggested, he won't argue it. Mr. Meleski said from his standpoint it is a mixture of storage and a parking lot. Mr. Meleski said he hoped his vote on the islands was to let the applicant figure out where landscaping would go – such as shrubs or low profile vegetation. Mr. Meleski said every situation before Planning Commission is unique. Mr. Blackley said he is agreeable to more deciduous trees can be added in the south area. Mr. Meleski said direction is needed for that area because of the utilities. Mr. Meleski said if the storm sewer is an issue shift the curb line several feet to the north. Mr. Yaney said the area is massive and there is room to make things happen. Mr. Blackley said the guidance to the applicant is no planting over the storm sewer line. It was agreed to stagger and have the trees be 30' apart and away from the curb. Mr. Henderson said enforcement is not needed, it will be in good practice to adhere to this.

Regarding the traffic study, Mr. Blackley said the City's Traffic Engineer Kevin Westbrooks, cannot recommend approval. The study was dated June 3, 2024. Mr. Westbrooks' letter was dated June 6, 2024. Mr. Blackley reviewed the letter for the Commission. Mr. Blackley said Staff will need to meet with Mr. Westbrooks to review the full and detailed report. Mr. Courtney agreed.

Mr. Blackley said some turn lanes may be needed. There might be a light needed in the future at Fifth Avenue and North Street. Stop signs may need to be installed. Mr. Blackley said at the moment, calculations cannot be verified. He said adding buses might add degradation. He said Mr. Westbrooks did not get the bus transportation plan and queuing stack. Mr. Henderson said they will forward the bus data to Mr. Westbrooks. Mr. Courtney pointed out this report made it difficult to determine what is bus traffic, what is employee traffic – and what times they are coming and going.

Mr. Blackley said he is not ready to ask for a motion for approval until there is an acceptable traffic analysis. He said this case will go onto the regular agenda on June 25th. A deadline for the full and detailed traffic study is due to Mr. Westbrooks by Monday, June 17th.

Mrs. Hill asked regarding the buses going back to the garage, will some of the bus traffic be split by going up Fifth Avenue – was this included in the traffic study. Mr. Courtney said he does not know if it was included in the study which way buses are going. Mr. Henderson added routing hasn't been totally worked out and school staff is still working on that. Mr. Henderson added buses are not going all day every day and not all at the same time. Mr. Blackley said to establish at least a baseline to see if an intersection is improving or not.

Mrs. Stark said the Commission needs to think if this is worth it to adversely affect the residents on the corner of Fifth Avenue and North Street. She said buses may need to be relocated or dispersed. Mr. Henderson said that will be the strategy of the schools.

Mr. Meleski said this will increase the segregation of personal drop off. Mr. Henderson agreed and said yes the buses will be up front and parents will drive to the back loop for drop off.

Mr. Meleski made a motion to table the Concept Plan and Architectural Review until the June 25, 2024, meeting. It was seconded by Mrs. Stark. Roll was called. The vote carried 6-0.

NEW BUSINESS – none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – none.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Yaney said Chipotle has purchased the old Burger King building. He said there is a good chance that it will be at the June 25th meeting. Mr. Yaney said a walk-through took place at Thistle Creek, Phase II, and there are minor punch list items. Twelve (12) permits for houses in Maple Trace have come in.

Mr. Blackley asked if the Cooke site has been cleared. Mr. Chojnacki said the City's position has been provided to everyone that needs to hear it.

Mr. Yaney said 580 Water Street is coming in with plans for development.

Mr. Yaney said Park Avenue Mews have been sold and construction may start in the summer. Mr. Courtney said the original plans have not changed, just the name – it is going back to Cider Mill. The concept plan was renewed approximately one (1) year ago.

Mr. Emmons asked if there have been complaints about traffic with the new Chase Bank. Mr. Yaney said no.

Mr. Meleski asked about the status of Meijer. Mr. Yaney said they are pushing forward.

ADJOURN

Mr. Meleski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Mrs. Stark. The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

ANDREW BLACKLEY, CHAIRMAN

Rebecca Repasky, Secretary