

CITY OF CHARDON PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

June 25, 2024

Members Present:

Andrew Blackley, Chairman
Robert Emmons
Lene Hill
Dean Peska

Mary Jo Stark, Vice-Chairman
Colin Wantz

Members Absent

Dan Meleski

Also Present:

Laurie Adams
Karen Blankenship
Ben Chojnacki, Law Director
Doug Courtney, City Engineer
Dr. Michael Hanlon, Chardon Schools
Superintendent
Jeff Henderson, TDA Architecture
Steve Kofol, Chardon Schools
Nathan Long
Kyle Martin, Councilman
Josh Nau

Barb Petersen
Rebecca Repasky, Secretary
Diane Robinson
James Sabatine Jr.
Rick Sommers
Kevin Westbrooks, GPD Group
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.

Mrs. Hill made a motion to approve the June 11, 2024, meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Emmons. Roll was called. Mr. Peska abstained. The vote carried 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

PC Case #24/114/115/116: Mr. Yaney explained the applicant, James Sabatine Jr. of Cardinal Realty, is requesting Concept Plan and Architectural Review to remodel the former Burger King building and convert it to a Chipotle. Mr. Yaney said it will be a complete renovation of the building. A few parking spaces will be removed for a patio. There will be a drive thru pick up only window for call ahead/mobile orders. The exterior will have a little bit of a material change and will be an off white/gray color. The current landscaping will be cleaned up, and more added. Mr. Yaney said all conditions are met and City Staff recommends approval.

Mr. Blackley added that the trash enclosure is being moved and there will be a concrete pad for the patio. Mr. Blackley asked if the bump out for the bike path already has an easement. Mr. Courtney said yes. Mr. Blackley asked if there is any foreseen storm water runoff. Mr. Courtney said no. Mr. Emmons asked if the parking spaces now meet requirements. Mr. Courtney said the parking space deficiencies were corrected.

Mrs. Stark had no comment on the landscaping. Mr. Yaney added there are not many street trees because of utilities. Mrs. Hill clarified the landscaping around the bike path bump out will be replaced. Mr. Yaney said it is existing and will be cleaned up. Mrs. Hill asked if there should be landscaping on the east side island. Mr. Yaney said the applicant met the requirements and the code does not prohibit grassy areas.

Mr. Blackley asked if the building color is a corporate color scheme. Mr. Yaney said yes. Mr. Wantz made a motion to approve the Concept Plan and Architectural Review. It was seconded by Mr. Peska. Roll was called. The vote carried 6-0.

PC Case #24-128: Mr. Yaney explained the applicant, Rick Sommers, is requesting Record Document approval for Thistlecreek Development Phase 2. Mr. Yaney said this includes the last three (3) lots of the subdivision. The final utility installation is still needed. The Geauga County Tax Map Department, County Auditor and City Engineer have given approval. Mr. Yaney said a couple items on the punch list remain: 1) the \$22,000 deposit for the waiving of the walking trail and 2) the planting of the trees – but that will need to be done based on weather.

Mr. Peska made a motion to approve the Record Document with the conditional use of the \$22,468.75 deposit check for the capital open space fund; and finish the punch list items as weather allows. It was seconded by Mrs. Stark. Roll was called. The vote carried 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS

PC Case #24-054/055/056/057: Mr. Yaney reviewed the remaining outstanding items for approval were the landscape plan and traffic study. The updated landscape plans include where the utilities are located on the south side of the site.

Mr. Blackley and Mrs. Stark said the new landscaping plan is acceptable.

Regarding the traffic study:

Mr. Courtney said the full traffic impact study was received. The conclusion is that a traffic signal is warranted on Fifth Avenue / North Street. The increase of bus traffic will make this needed. Mr. Courtney said it can be made a conditional use for the approval.

Mr. Kevin Westbrooks, Traffic Engineer, GPD Group was sworn in.

Mr. Westbrooks added he had minor comments on the full report. He agreed with the calculations submitted. Mr. Westbrooks said adding turn lanes will not solve traffic issues on Fifth Avenue. He would recommend installing a traffic signal.

Mr. Blackley clarified the data collection time. Mr. Westbrooks said it was the peak time for school drop off.

Mr. Peska clarified no turn lanes will be added. Mr. Westbrooks said correct.

Mrs. Stark said she uses that intersection, and for a couple hours a day, 180 days out of the year, it is busy; and she cannot justify installing a traffic light. Mr. Westbrooks said the traffic light can be programmed so the light adjusts to traffic. He explained there are various types of activations for a signal to be responsive to traffic. Mrs. Stark said the traffic from Chardon Avenue was not considered. Mr. Westbrooks acknowledged that yes, traffic could back up on Chardon Avenue, but he does not see the light making it worse. Mrs. Stark said she is hesitant about the light and cannot justify the cost. Mr. Blackley said there will be a gap in the north bound traffic. Mr. Westbrooks said there should be gaps now heading northbound. Mrs. Stark said going southbound is the backup from the Middle School.

Mrs. Hill asked if there are alternative routes for the buses.

Mr. Josh Nau, Director of Transportation for Chardon Schools, was sworn in.

Mr. Nau said in the mornings, not all the buses will utilize that intersection. He said eleven (11) buses return before the elementary school routes. He said other vehicles, like vans, leave at 7:15a.m. He said

those routes can be scattered. Mr. Emmons asked who will make the decision to take an alternate route, if Fifth Avenue is backed up. Mr. Nau said the driver could make the decision to change the route. Mr. Nau said the intent is also not to impact the Square, Center Street, etc.

Laurie Adams, DGL Consulting Engineer for Chardon Schools, was sworn in.

Mrs. Adams said installing a light will help. She said it will only be a couple hours out of the day that it is bad. She said it is worth installing the light for the safety of pedestrians. Mr. Blackley agreed.

Mrs. Stark asked what the crash rate is at Fifth Avenue and North Street. Mr. Courtney said Police Chief Niehus would need to be asked. Mrs. Adams said she does not recall it being a significant number. She said the traffic signal is warranted because of traffic volume.

Barb Petersen of 143 Fifth Avenue was sworn in.

Mrs. Petersen asked when the survey was done. Mr. Emmons said Thursday, May 2nd, 2024.

Mrs. Petersen asked if this will weaken the structure of Fifth Avenue. Mr. Courtney said repairs on Fifth Avenue were done in 2017, so no need to worry about the integrity of the street.

Mrs. Petersen asked about school events outside of school hours. Mr. Courtney said the traffic signal will be in constant operation.

Mrs. Petersen suggested looking into a light for Chardon Avenue in the future. Mr. Wantz suggested possibly adding a turn lane. Mr. Courtney said no, that road was rebuilt two (2) years ago. Mr. Blackley added that light would be much too close to the light at Fifth and North. Mr. Blackley said this will not be a cheap improvement, but a needed safety improvement.

Diane Robinson of 139 Fifth Avenue, was sworn in.

Mrs. Robinson agreed the signal is needed for safer crossing for pedestrians. She suggested the light go at Chardon Avenue and North Street instead. She suggested either a signal, or a three-way stop at Fifth Avenue and Washington because traffic goes very fast there. Mrs. Robinson requested additional arborvitae along the fence line at the north end of the property. She said she does not want to see a pink building and pink fence. Mr. Yaney said the change in color to the building would need Planning Commission approval. Mr. Blackley said the fence is going to be an opaque color. Mr. Blackley said they will look into adding additional stop signs for Fifth Avenue and Washington.

Mr. Blackley said the revision to the Announcement of Decision will include three (3) conditions:

1. The renovation of two (2) buildings and accessory parking areas for employees and vehicles.
2. Traffic control devices as recommended by the City Engineer; to be installed by August 31, 2027.
3. The applicant shall prepare for recording a plat of consolidation for the properties.

Mr. Emmons made a motion to approve the Concept Plan and Architectural Review, with the listed three (3) conditions. It was seconded by Mr. Peska. Roll was called. The vote carried 6-0.

Mr. Blackley added that the turnout onto Fifth Avenue, from Washington, is capable of handling right turns from buses.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – none.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Nathan Long, of Geauga Faith Rescue Mission, said they would like to propose a second location – which is next door to their current location. He said the current location has been operational for two (2) years now. There is no facility in Geauga County only for women. This proposed location could house up to four (4) women. At the moment, they will lease the house from Paul Schnieder, with the intent of owning the house. The services they provide are: emergency shelter, case management, food, helping the person to

get back on their feet, relationship building, bible studies, job placement. He said currently, the men are able to walk to work.

Mr. Blackley asked if there is a good success rate with the current facility. Mr. Long said yes. Mr. Blackley asked the City Manager if he has heard of any issues with the current facility. Mr. Sharpe said no. Mr. Blackley said he supports this and commended Mr. Long.

Mr. Wantz asked if there is a facility for families. Mr. Long said there is only one (1), and it is in Middlefield. Mr. Wantz said he fully supports this. Mr. Blackley added this is a great location. Mr. Long agreed and said it will make it easier for the volunteer staff to go between the two (2) houses.

Mr. Yaney said the variance requirement for this is a 1,000-foot separation between buildings. He said this is unique because it is the same group for the same two (2) houses. The variance would need approval to waive that 1,000-foot separation. Mr. Blackley asked if it could be considered as one (1) facility. Mr. Yaney said yes.

Mr. Blackley asked if a formal application will be submitted after this meeting. Mr. Long said yes.

Mrs. Stark said she has no issues with this.

Mr. Long said they are happy to meet the sidewalk installation requirement, but there is a tree in the way. Mr. Blackley said yes, the tree will need to be preserved, so they will need to decide where that sidewalk will pass by.

ADJOURN

Mr. Peska made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Mrs. Hill. The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

ANDREW BLACKLEY, CHAIRMAN

Rebecca Repasky, Secretary