



Oberlin Planning Commission
Wednesday, December 4, 2013, 4:30 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room #2
85 South Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio

Members

Present: Tony Scott; David Gibson and Peter Crowley.

Members

Absent: Marilyn Fedelchak-Harley and Matt Adelman.

Others

Present: Gary Boyle; Wendie Fleming, Secretary to the Oberlin Planning Commission; Sharon Soucy, Council Liaison; Larry Funk; Rick Flood; Scott Broadwell; Elizabeth Rumics; Christopher Noble; Jim Curtin; Tita Reed; Brian Lorenz; Ken Silva; Aliza Weidenbaum; Steve Varelmann; David Sonner and Mark Chesler.

Chair Gibson called the meeting to order at 5:22 p.m.

1. Approval of the November 6, 2013 Meeting Minutes.

Scott made a motion to approve the November 6, 2013 meeting minutes as submitted. Crowley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Application for Lot Combination, Marci Rapp, 371 Elm Street.

Boyle advised that this application seeks approval to combine two (2) lots for future single-family residential use. In this regard, he noted that such use is permitted in the "R-1B"/Single-Family Dwelling District under Section 1333.02(a)(1) of the Zoning Code.

Boyle indicated that the proposed combined or new lot would be fairly regularly-shaped, and would have frontage on a developed public street. The proposed lot would also benefit from sidewalks on both sides of the street as well as from existing utilities. Such infill residential development is considered to be desirable and consistent with the policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Boyle stated that this application has been forwarded to City departments and officials for review and comments and no objections or concerns have been received to date on this request. However, a building permit for any new dwelling will be required. Planning staff also anticipates that the Public Works Department will require the issuance of an Excavation Permit

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for utility/driveway connections. Any new driveway to Elm Street will also require a permit from the Building Division.

Gibson stated that it appears that this request for a lot combination would be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Commission concurred.

Scott made a motion to approve the lot combination as submitted. Crowley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Application for Site Plan/Design Review Approval, Proposed Signage/Interior and Exterior Improvements, Wal-Mart Store, 46440 United States Route 20.

Boyle indicated that the applicant proposes to install sign panels in an existing freestanding sign, to repaint the sign cabinet and base, and to install new wall-mounted signage to replace existing signage. The applicant also proposes various interior building improvements, and the painting some exterior building components.

Boyle stated that all of the signage will remain the same size and will remain in the same location with the exception of the "Always" signs which will be removed thus reducing the overall sign surface area for the building.

Boyle noted that the Design Review Subcommittee considered this application at its meeting on December 4, 2013 and unanimously moved to recommend it to the Commission for approval as submitted.

Boyle also advised that the wall-mounted signage must be back-lit, and not internally-illuminated which is a requirement of the Code. He stated that sign permits must also be obtained prior to any signage being installed or work being done to the interior or exterior of the building.

Brian Lorenz of WD Partners was present to represent this application. He indicated that they will comply with the Code's requirements concerning wall sign illumination.

Crowley made a motion to accept the Design Review Subcommittee's recommendation and to approve this application as submitted. Scott seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Hearing – Application for Conditional Use Permit and Application for Site Plan/Design Review Approval, Proposed Self-Storage Building, Route 58 Storage, Brownhardt, LLC, 550 South Main Street.

Boyle advised that this application seeks approval to construct a one-story (12.25 ft.) high self-storage building that would be located along a portion of the applicant's east property line. He indicated that the building would be about 55 ft. in width and 110 ft. in length, and would have a floor area of about 6,050 sq. ft. ±. Boyle stated that the proposed building would feature a

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standing seam metal roof, metal siding and various door openings for man doors. Boyle indicated that there are a number of self-storage buildings located on this property and that in 2004 approval was granted for construction of several of those buildings. He further advised that the Commission will need to grant approval for a Conditional Use Permit as self-storage buildings are a conditionally permitted use in the "M-1"/Light Industrial Zoning District.

Boyle stated that the Design Review Subcommittee considered this matter at its meeting on December 4, 2013 and unanimously moved to recommend its approval to the Planning Commission.

Boyle indicated that the Code requires that notice for a public hearing for consideration of this Conditional Use Permit was published in the newspaper and notice was provided to property owners within 200 feet.

Larry Funk, the owner of the property, was present to represent this application.

Chair Gibson opened the public hearing at 5:27 p.m.

He asked if there were any questions or comments from the applicant or public regarding this matter. There were none.

Chair Gibson then closed the public hearing at 5:28 p.m.

Gibson asked if the Conditional Use Permit and site plan should be considered together? Boyle suggested that it would be best to consider both matters separately. He noted that a draft Conditional Use Permit was provided to the Commission which is based on the previous approval for new self-storage buildings on this property in 2004 and has similar conditions. Boyle stated that these conditions reflect standards in the Code that are required to be complied with.

Gibson read through the draft conditions and asked the applicant if he had received a copy. Funk advised he received a copy and advised that he finds the conditions to be acceptable.

Crowley made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit with the provisions outlined in the draft conditions provided to the Commission. Scott seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Boyle stated that with respect to the location of the proposed new building, it will be built in an area that is presently part of the parking lot. He noted that the setback on the east lot line complies with the Code but the setback on the north lot line does not comply, so the applicant has filed a request for a variance with the Zoning Board of Appeals. Boyle advised that building plans have not yet been submitted for review and approval.

Boyle also advised that in addition to the building plans, the Fire Department will need to complete its review of this application. The City Engineer has indicated that the storm water

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management plan is acceptable subject to final approval of design details. Boyle added that other site planning matters such as landscaping will need to be submitted for the Subcommittee's and Commission's review and approval as will the exterior lighting.

Gibson asked if the building may need to be repositioned as noted by the Fire Chief in his report? Boyle indicated that the building may need to be repositioned to ensure adequate fire separation per the Ohio Building Code. He stated that this would depend on a number of variables related to building construction, openings, materials to be stored, etc. Boyle advised that this matter could be considered again when the fencing and landscaping are reviewed by the Commission.

Scott asked if there were special requirements that staff had indicated would be needed for this project. Boyle stated that the Building Division and Fire Department still have to review the building plans and those departments will consult with Planning staff on this application. He also noted that the property to the north of this site is zoned residential and that landscaping should be considered to help screen the proposed building. Boyle advised that the landscaping does not need to be extensive.

Funk stated that he still needs to get approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance to the Code's setback requirements from the north side lot line. He advised that with respect to landscaping on the north side, he will be installing decorative fencing that will match the existing decorative fencing on this property.

Crowley asked if the lease office for a self-storage facilities is required. Boyle advised that it is required by Code and there is currently a leasing office on the site. Crowley asked if there would still be sufficient parking for this business since the proposed building is to be located in a portion of the parking lot? Boyle stated that there would still be sufficient parking. Gibson asked if the building location were adjusted, would there still be adequate parking? Boyle advised that there likely would be but staff would need to review any such change to confirm that.

Crowley asked about the storm water management requirements. Boyle indicated that the City Engineer would work with the applicant to address any outstanding items. He further noted that where the building is to be located is currently paved so there will not likely be much change in the amount of impervious surface on the site.

Scott made a motion to grant partial site plan approval subject to compliance with conditions which include: (1) that the applicant submit a final site plan drawing illustrating landscaped areas, and the landscape material to be installed for the Commission's approval; (2) that the applicant submit building elevation drawings indicating materials, colors, etc. for the Commission's approval; (3) that the applicant submit plans illustrating all proposed exterior building and site lighting, and that all lighting have full cut-off fixtures to avoid glare on adjacent properties and street; (4) that the applicant comply with the requirements of the Public Works Department related to grading and storm water management as well as any utility installation to the proposed building; (5) that all plans reflect "City of Oberlin Public Works Department

Standards;" (6) that the site plan illustrate the location of the proposed electrical service connection to the proposed storage building; and (7) that the applicant obtain all required permits from the Building Division prior to the commencement of construction. Crowley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Application Site Plan Approval, Proposed Gateway Hotel Complex, Oberlin College, 7 North Main Street.

Boyle stated that at the Commission's meeting on October 23, 2013, partial site plan approval was granted for this application. He indicated that a revised site plan is still needed for the site showing the location of the bank and drive through as well as the design and elevations of the bank building. Boyle advised that the details regarding utilities, landscaping and lighting will also need to be submitted for review at a future meeting.

Boyle indicated that the Design Review Subcommittee considered a "revised" building design for this project at its meeting on December 4, 2013 and unanimously moved to recommend approval to the Planning Commission as submitted.

Boyle also stated that other requirements from the Commission previous partial approval will still be applicable.

Christopher Noble of Smart Hotels and Jim Curtin of Soloman Caldwell Buenz were present to represent this application. Tita Reed of the College was also present.

Noble outlined the changes to the building design and materials which include modification of the building's entry oriented toward the intersection of College and Main Streets. He advised that they are now proposing a small plaza at this entrance that would be large enough for some potential event space. Noble advised that the column that was located in front of the entrance has been removed. He noted that the input that they had received was that the entrance was not very discernable or very welcoming. By removing the column, the entrance is opened up. Noble stated that the white columns that are visible through the glass panels on the building add a touch of whimsy and playfulness which also makes the building more welcoming in appearance. He advised that they have added more windows on the west and south elevations on the second floor level.

Noble stated that there have been some changes to the materials for the building. They still plan to use the okaskin which is a recycled cement board. He advised that this material is not painted so the color is all the way through the material which will make it look good for a longer period of time. Noble indicated that the okaskin would have a slight variation in color. He stated that the aluminum panels will now be a softer matte gray color similar to the zinc panels on the Science Center building. Noble indicated that these aluminum panels will fulfill the request of the Trustees to use aluminum on the building but will not have the bright, shiny appearance that would make the building look cold.

Noble advised that the restaurant will still be located on the first floor and there will be sandstone along the Main Street first floor façade where the restaurant will be located. Sandstone will be locally sourced from Cleveland Quarries in Amherst. He noted that the atrium and retail space will still feature a lot of glass. Noble stated that many have commented on the harsh appearance of the Kohl Jazz Studies Building because of the use of the shiny aluminum panels. He advised that the zinc colored aluminum panels that they propose to use will actually have some striation in the finish and will not appear so harsh.

Noble advised that the plaza in front of the entrance to the hotel at Main and College Street will have room for some small tents and can be used during the City's various festivals. Crowley asked about the possible use of that space. Noble stated that with respect to any formal programming, that has not been established yet.

Noble explained the layout of the lobby of the hotel. There will be a casual seating area next to a "Welcome Center" on the side opposite the restaurant. The check-in desk will be at the rear of the lobby next to the courtyard and rear portico. Noble stated that the openness of the lobby will provide a connection from the front of the building to the rear, and people will be able to see all the way through it.

Gibson asked about the area of the building where the sandstone is now being proposed. Noble stated that it will be on the west façade's first floor where the restaurant will be and the sandstone will run the entire length of the restaurant. Gibson asked what the applicant had originally proposed for this area as far as materials? Noble indicated that they originally showed this area with the okaskin material. He further advised that they may add some sandstone closer to the front entrance of the building as well. Noble stated that the recycled wood for the balcony area will actually be much darker in color (Pantone 102), more of a burgundy, than the red that is shown on the elevation drawings and it will have some variation in the color.

Crowley asked whether the area of the building where the sandstone is proposed is actually protected by the overhang of the second floor. Noble advised that it is. He then stated that they did not want to use a lot of sandstone on the facades of the building because it does not hold up well if it is exposed to a lot of salt. He noted that because this area is protected by the second floor overhang, it will not receive a lot of weathering like the main entrance.

Crowley stated that the site plan indicates that the sidewalk that will run north/south along the Main Street façade disappears and he wondered how the outdoor dining pods were accessed. Curtin advised that the sidewalk continues north along the full front of the building and is protected by the second floor overhang. This seating area location provides a direct connection to the kitchen.

Gibson asked if the applicant had considered incorporating more sandstone around the main entrance at College and Main Streets? Noble advised that they have considered it but have not definitely decided as to whether they will add more sandstone at the main entrance. He stated

that the sandstone area runs along the restaurant so patrons will not feel like they are in a fish bowl as they would if this wall were all glass.

Gibson advised that parking for this project had previously been approved but noted that he would like the College to submit information regarding the assignment of parking. Noble stated that the northern most parking lot behind Hall Auditorium will be used for College employee parking and they will make sure that this is done.

Boyle stated that the Design Review Subcommittee unanimously supported the revised design, however, there are still some outstanding issues and requirements that need to be addressed and those items are still applicable. He reiterated that the landscape plan still needs to be submitted for review and approval as will the site plan showing the revised bank location and along with information regarding the design and materials for the bank building. Gibson stated that Lorain National Bank is an important asset for the community and hopes that they will continue to be a part of downtown.

Weidenbaum indicated that it looks like this building will be the tallest building in the City. Boyle stated that the Firelands Building is actually the tallest building in the City. Gibson advised that it would be similar in height to the East College Street project. Curtin agreed. Weidenbaum suggested a better location for this new hotel would be between Carnegie and Stevenson as it would be much closer to College functions and it would not crowd the downtown area. Boyle stated that that area is not zoned for a hotel use. Gibson advised that if there was an Institutional Zoning district, such a district would be beneficial to the College. He noted that in the past the Planning Commission has tried to convince the College that an Institutional Zoning district would be in their best interests.

Tony Mealy stated that he likes the entrance on the revised building design much better as well as the Main Street façade. He then asked why the seating in the proposed outdoor dining area is so spread out. Mealy also noted that the current Oberlin Inn outdoor seating area is covered. Curtin stated that the location of the proposed outdoor seating area is directly adjacent to the restaurant and the seating pods will give the feel of being enveloped by plantings such as herbs and perennials. There will also be some chairs under the canopy.

Soucy advised that she is thrilled that the applicant is now proposing to use sandstone on this building. She asked why sandstone is not being considered for the rear of the building. Noble stated that the rear of the building will weather differently as there will be a lot of salt with the parking lot and portico at the rear of the building.

Scott stated that he would like to know if the blue spruce tree near the intersection of Main and College Streets will be kept? Noble advised that he does not think that it will be able to be saved as there are a lot of utilities that need to be run for this project. He indicated that may be some new evergreens can be added for the next generation. Noble stated that he understands the significance of the tree to City residents.

Gibson indicated that the College did not want trees taken down on the north side of West College Street so more greatly needed angled parking could be added downtown. Boyle advised that with the parking study for downtown that the College has offered to pay for, parking options beyond off-street need to be considered such as in that location. Scott asked whether the parking study would be for downtown or the whole community? Boyle stated that in was his understanding that the Commission was interested in downtown, and that it is his understanding that Graelic has been hired by the College to conduct the study. Noble advised that the College will fund a downtown parking study with direction given by City staff as to what the appropriate scope will be.

Weidenbaum indicated that in her opinion a new hotel is a luxury and not a necessity. She posed the question: what would the Pope say about this project? She stated that we can make do with the current hotel.

Crowley advised that he likes the proposed community space at the front of the hotel. Gibson also indicated that he likes the layout of the seating pods for the outdoor dining area. He further stated that the revisions made to the design of the building are a big improvement.

Crowley made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Design Review Subcommittee, and to approve the proposed building's architectural design, materials, colors and textures as submitted. That approval is contingent on compliance with a number of conditions including: (1) that all other conditions of partial site plan approval previously identified by the Commission on October 23, 2013 remain applicable; (2) that the applicant comply with all City department requirements including utilities, storm water management, parking (on-site and off-site), etc; (3) that the applicant submit an application to the Planning Commission and obtain a Permit for the proposed outdoor café area shown on the revised plan; (4) that the applicant submit a detailed landscape plan for this development for the review and approval of the Planning Commission ; (5) that the applicant submit a detailed exterior lighting plan for the building and site for the review and approval of the Planning Commission; (6) that all required building permits be obtained from the Chief Building Official prior to any demolition or construction occurring; and (7) that the applicant enter into a Development Agreement with the City for this project. In addition, building plans for the proposed bank building must be submitted for the review of the Design Review Subcommittee and a recommendation to the Planning Commission. The submission of a "revised" site plan for that proposed bank building is also required for the review and approval of the Planning Commission. The Commission must also review the site design for proposed bank drive through and grant a "Conditional Use Permit" for the same. Scott seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Appointment to Design Review Subcommittee.

Boyle advised the Commission that it should appoint its two (2) Design Review Subcommittee representatives prior to the Subcommittee's first meeting in 2014. Boyle stated that in 2013, Crowley and Gallagher represented the Planning Commission on the Subcommittee. He further

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indicated that both individuals have indicated that they would be willing to continue serving on the Subcommittee.

Scott made a motion to appoint Crowley and Gallagher as the Planning Commission representatives on the Design Review Subcommittee. Crowley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Gibson indicated that during the Design Review Subcommittee meetings, the Planning Commission representatives on the Subcommittee need to be remind the rest of the Subcommittee that they are to consider design aspects only. He stated that there have been times in the past when the Subcommittee's discussion has drifted out of its purview and into that of the Planning Commission. Gibson advised that many communities have done away with their Design Review boards and just have their Planning Commissions review the applications. Weidenbaum suggested that the Planning Commission should review an application first and then the Design Review Subcommittee so that the site plan would be considered before the aesthetics. Gibson indicated that this approach would not be very efficient and would be contrary to the present requirements of the Code and would slow down the review and approval process for applications.

Gibson then noted that a few years ago City Council reduced the number of members on the Design Review Subcommittee from seven (7) to five (5). Gibson indicated that it may be a good idea for the Planning Commission to consider recommending to City Council that the Design Review Subcommittee be further reduced to three (3) members.

7. Other Business.

a. Sign Permit Application, Proposed Wall-Mounted Sign and Proposed Change of Use, Hanson Records, Cochrane, Inc., 25 ½ West College Street.

Boyle stated that this application seeks approval to install a one-sided, non-illuminated wall-mounted sign. The proposed sign is to be installed on the building's north or West College Street elevation in space previously occupied by part of a sign used by "Smith Home Furnishings and Floor Coverings." Boyle indicated that the proposed sign would be approximately 95.5 inches \pm (7.96 ft. \pm) in length and 36 inches \pm (3.0 ft. \pm) in height, and would have a sign surface area of about 23.875 sq. ft. \pm . The applicant's submittal indicates that the proposed sign would have a white background with black letters and a black border.

Boyle advised that this sign is for a new business that is to occupy the second floor space in this building and noted that it would take up about one-third (1/3) of the space that was previously occupied by the Smith's Home Furnishing sign. He noted that staff's suggestion, after reviewing this application, is that the sign would complement the building and existing sign colors better if it had the same green background as the Smith's Home Furnishings sign, instead of a white background. Boyle stated that the black letters and the font indicated are acceptable as submitted. He indicated that the Design Review Subcommittee considered this application at its

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December 4, 2013 meeting and moved to recommend to the Commission that it be approved with the condition that the sign background be painted to match that of the existing Smith's Home Furnishing sign instead of being painted white.

Gibson asked if the size of the sign complies with the Code regulations? Boyle advised that the proposed sign would be the same size as the existing sign on this building. Crowley asked if the font for the sign should be the same as that on the Smith's Home Furnishings sign? Boyle indicated that he feels that as long as the background color is the same, the font for the sign can be a little different.

Scott asked where the exact location of the sign would be. Boyle stated that it would be over the entry door to the second floor, or approximately the west one-third (1/3) of the existing sign.

Scott made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Design Review Subcommittee and to approve the sign with the condition that the sign background be a similar color to the Smith's Home Furnishing sign. Crowley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Next Scheduled Meeting.

Boyle advised that the Commission's next regularly scheduled meeting is January 8, 2014.

c. Membership Changes.

Soucy noted the Planning Commission is losing two members because of term limits – Gibson and Fedelchak-Harley. She noted that she wanted to thank Gibson for his many years of service on the Planning Commission and for the community. She indicated that he has been an excellent Chair, has patience in dealing with the public and his knowledge will be sorely missed. Gibson thanked Soucy and advised that he tried to be as fair as possible as well as consistent in the handling of applications and the decisions made. Gibson then indicated that he wanted to thank Fedelchak-Harley for her years of service to the Commission even though she could not be at this meeting. He stated that she did a great job as both former Chair and as a member.

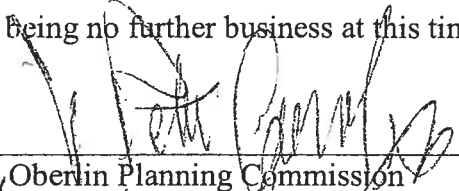
Boyle echoed Soucy's comments, and thanked both Gibson and Fedelchak-Harley for their dedication to planning and the community. Their institutional knowledge and backgrounds will be difficult to replace.

Broadwell advised that he is not a supporter of term limits and indicated that he wished that this could be changed in the near future.

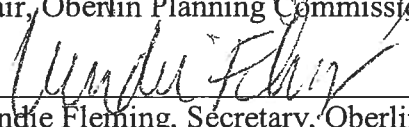
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8. Adjournment.

There being no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.



Chair, Oberlin Planning Commission



Wendie Fleming, Secretary, Oberlin Planning Commission

