

MINUTES
CITY OF WOOSTER PLANNING COMMISSION

January 7, 2021

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chuck Armbruster, Commission Chairman, called the meeting to order. Commission members Kyle Adams, Chuck Armbruster, Sheree Brownson, Grant Mason, Mike Steiner, and Mark Weaver were present at the meeting. Andrew Dutton, Planning and Zoning Manager, was present representing the City of Wooster.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mike Steiner made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2020 meeting of the Planning Commission. Kyle Adams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

III. APPLICATIONS

PC-21-01.

Matthew Long requested Conditional Use approval for a self-storage facility at 1788 Eagle Pass in an I-1 (Office/Limited Industrial) zoning district.

Matthew Long, 225 North Market Street, stated that the proposal was the conversion of an existing construction yard and vehicle storage area into a self-storage facility. Mr. Long explained that the existing buildings would be fully enclosing all sides. Mr. Long continued that the site would adhere to the conditional use standards of the Planning and Zoning Code. Mr. Long stated that the future owner, John Corbin, was present and was available for questions.

Mr. Armbruster opened the public hearing and asked if anyone from the public would like to address the Commission regarding the application. No one was present to comment to the Commission and Mr. Armbruster closed the public hearing.

Grant Mason made a motion to recommend approval of application PC-21-01 as submitted. Mike Steiner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

PC-21-02.

Matthew Long requested an approval recommendation from the Planning Commission to City Council for a Zoning Map Amendment to assign zoning of R-2 (Single-Family Residential) to 903 West Highland Avenue upon annexation into the City of Wooster.

Matthew Long, 225 North Market Street, stated that the Planning and Zoning Code allowed the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to City Council to assigning a zoning to a property upon annexation. Mr. Long explained that if no recommendation was made, the property would default to a zoning of R-1 (Suburban Single-Family Residential). He noted that properties adjacent to 903 West Highland Avenue were zoned R-2 and properties across the street were zoned R-1. Mr. Long continued that the property contained an existing single-family residence and the applicant was annexing into the City of Wooster to take advantage of city utilities.

Mr. Armbruster opened the public hearing and asked if anyone from the public would like to address the Commission regarding the application. No one was present to comment to the Commission and Mr. Armbruster closed the public hearing.

Mike Steiner made a motion to recommend to the City Council the approval of application PC-21-02 as submitted. Kyle Adams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

PC-21-03.

Thomas Winkhart requested an approval recommendation from the Planning Commission to City Council for a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning of 4677 Melrose Drive with parcel numbers 71-00250.000 and 71-00251.000 from R-1 (Suburban Single-Family Residential) to R-3 (Attached Residential).

Tony Perez, Lemmon & Lemmon Inc., 8230 Pittsburg Ave NW, North Canton, explained that the request was to rezone 21.87 acres from R-1 to R-3. Mr. Perez continued that the development would be similar to the single-story apartments to the south on Melrose Drive, which were zoned R-4 and surrounded by R-1. Mr. Perez stated that area properties were zoned R-1 and R-5 (Manufactured Home Park).

Mr. Perez explained the concept plan showed a 152 unit development with 4 and 8 unit single-story structures, including attached and detached garages. Mr. Perez continued that the perimeter of the property would retain the existing mature trees. He stated that trees in the interior courtyard would remain and the site would incorporate a dog park, gazebo, and walking path. Mr. Perez outlined the development's proposed one and two-bedroom units.

Mr. Perez explained that the community was in need of new housing. He continued that the maintenance-free units would attract seniors and independent people and stated that the apartments would rent for 1,000 to 1,900 dollars a month.

Mr. Perez stated that the development would not reduce property values in the area. Mr. Perez continued that the apartments would have a 40 foot setback from adjacent properties and units would be about 300 feet from adjacent homes. Mr. Perez stated that stormwater would be retained on the property and follow the City's stormwater requirements. Mr. Perez continued that all roads would be private and an emergency access drive would be to the east to Mel Lane.

Mr. Armbruster asked about the status of the gas well on the property. Mr. Perez stated that they had not discussed the gas well, but it will probably be capped and removed.

Mr. Armbruster opened the public hearing and asked if anyone from the public would like to address the Commission regarding the application.

Karl Emler, 2685 East Smithville Western Road, asked who would be paying for the streets, sewers and other infrastructure. Mr. Perez stated that the streets would be all private and would be covered by the Lemmon Development. Mr. Emler asked if Lemmon and Lemmon would be the property owner and manage the complex. Mr. Perez responded that a large management company with the same ownership as Lemmon and Lemmon would manage the development.

Merlin Peterson, 4491 Mel Lane, stated that the community was concerned about traffic safety and the project's density. Mr. Peterson stated that each lot on Mel Lane was roughly 1 acre and the expectation was for the subject site to have single-family homes at a low density. She stated that she was concerned that the rezoning to R-3 would not be compatible with the area. Mr. Peterson explained that the community was not opposed to development, but was concerned about the proposal.

Anne Oplanick, 4700 Mel Lane, stated that the site was zoned R-1 for a purpose. Ms. Oplanick explained that the R-3 zoning would place apartments in an area that mostly consisted of homes zoned R-1. Ms. Oplanick continued that apartment complexes had a different atmosphere with people coming and going with no ownership. Ms. Oplanick stated that the use was not compatible with the neighborhood. Ms. Oplanick explained she had concerns about stormwater due to existing stormwater issues. Ms. Oplanick continued that the concept plan did not contain a retention pond on the site's east side. Ms. Oplanick stated that the water ran off a hill on the site onto Mel Lane properties. Ms. Oplanick stated that the rows of apartments would be viewable by residents of Mel Lane. Ms. Oplanick stated that three sites of the site were zoned R-1.

Val Williams, 4561 Mel Lane, stated that he supported all of the comments made by Anne Oplanick and the neighbors. Mr. Williams stated that the stormwater issues were getting better due to the City's help. Mr. Williams explained that the neighborhood was R-1 and the growth to the south would be R-1.

James Tew, 4654 Mel Lane, stated that he lived beside the through road used for emergency use, which was occasionally used by the City. Mr. Tew stated that he supported Ms. Oplanick and Mr. Williams and was assured by senior City Administrators that he was protected by R-1 zoning on the site.

Richard Spade, 4494 Mel Lane, stated that he wanted the property to stay R-1 with homes built like homes on Mel Lane. Mr. Spade explained that rental buildings were not taking care of as a homeowner would take care of a home.

Karl Emler, 2685 East Smithville Western Road, asked if the reason for the change of zoning was strictly monetary.

Anne Oplanick, 4700 Mel Lane, stated that if an R-3 development was built, R-1 properties would have to be buffered by building a fence, mounding, or trees. She continued that the development would not be compatible with the neighborhood and would change property values.

Merlin Peterson, 4491 Mel Lane, stated that the property values were incorrect on the sheet provided.

Steve Griffin, 4539 Mel Lane, stated that the proposal would affect property values. Mr. Griffin explained that the concept plan violated the historical plan layout established when it was annexed into the City. Mr. Griffin continued that the request seemed to constitute special treatment of one property owner in the face of multiple neighbors objecting.

Matt DelPropost, 4676 Mel Lane, asked how the access to the east would be secured for emergency use only. Mr. Perez responded that they would not build or extend a road out to Mel Lane.

Mr. Dutton read an email sent by Mr. DelPropost received prior to the meeting:

I recently purchased a home on Mel Lane on December 11, 2020, and I object and ask that the Commission does not rezone the property at 4677 Melrose Drive as it is in our new back yard. I bought this home to raise our children and let them play in the yard that way we don't have to worry or watch them like a hawk. I feel that having apartments behind us would decrease their safety not knowing who is coming or going and residing behind us. The increase in noise and traffic would also be a nuisance and safety concern rezoning this parcel is a bad idea and it doesn't meet the immediate surrounding area. The parcel in question is surrounded by peaceful, quiet, and safe R-1 single residence properties. Also rezoning it would decrease the values of all those surrounding R-1 properties as it would be placed in all their backyards. So to reiterate so please do not rezone this property and keep our neighborhood safe, peaceful, quiet, and quaint and protect our property values. Thank you for your time and community service.

Mr. Armbruster closed the public hearing.

Andrew Dutton provided a review of the review process for the project.

Mike Steiner noted the Wayne Economic Development Council and Wayne County Chamber of Commerce had been encouraging the construction of new residential units to meet needs of employers.

Mr. Armbruster read through each of the Zoning Map Amendment review criteria for consideration by the Planning Commission.

Mark Weaver made a motion to recommend approval of application PC-21-03 as submitted to City Council. Mike Steiner seconded the motion. The motion was denied 2-4 with Sheree Brownson and Mike Steiner voting yes and Kyle Adams, Grant Mason, Mark Weaver, Chuck Armbruster voting no.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mike Steiner moved to adjourn the meeting. Kyle Adams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Chuck Armbruster, Chairman

Carla Jessie, Administrative Assistant