

MINUTES

CITY OF WOOSTER BOARD OF BUILDING & ZONING APPEALS

December 3, 2020

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Stewart Fitz Gibbon, Chairman of the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals, called the meeting to order. Board members Stewart Fitz Gibbon, Brad Gowins, Ben Gunn, Doug MacMillan, Gregg McIlvaine, Mark Reynolds, and Ken Suchan were present. Andrew Dutton, Planning and Zoning Manager, was present representing the City of Wooster.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brad Gowins made a motion to approve the November 5, 2020, regular meeting minutes. Gregg McIlvaine seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Application #BZA-20-29.

Doug Drushal requested an Area Variance from Planning and Zoning Code Section 1125.03 (b)(5) to allow a parking lot within the required setbacks for a property located at the southeast corner of University Street and Spink Street with Parcel Number 65-000024.000 in a CF (Community Facilities) zoning district.

Doug Drushal, 225 North Market Street, stated that the parking lot was a conditional use in the zoning district, which was approved by the Planning Commission. Mr. Drushal explained that the parking lot had been used as temporary gravel parking.

Mr. Drushal stated that the parking lot would be paved and would incorporate appropriate stormwater retention. Mr. Drushal explained that the request would allow the College of Wooster to get the maximum number of parking spaces possible. He stated that the loss of parking spaces from future renovations of the Lowry Center would be incorporated in the subject lot. Mr. Drushal explained the unique circumstances that applied to the application and the property. Mr. Drushal stated that properties to the north, east and west were owned by the College of Wooster.

Bo Mastrine, 580 East Wayne Avenue, stated that the plan incorporated existing street trees and the full landscape plan would meet the city's landscaping requirements. Mr. Mastrine noted that lighting plan would also meet city requirements.

Mr. Fitz Gibbon asked if anyone from the public would like to address the Board regarding the application. No one from the public was present to comment on the application and Mr. Fitz Gibbon closed the public hearing.

Brad Gowins made a motion to approve application BZA-20-29, as presented. Mark Reynolds seconded the motion.

Brad Gowins voted yes and stated that the application was the minimum necessary and denial of the application would result in a significant loss of parking spaces.

Mark Reynolds voted yes and stated that the parking area was an improvement from what was there and the continued improvements were welcome.

Gregg McIlvaine voted yes and stated that the parking lot was an improvement on the property and the College was in need of additional parking.

Ken Suchan voted yes for reasons cited by the Board and stated that there was open space in the storm detention area and the landscaping would be sufficient.

Doug MacMillan voted yes for reasons cited by the Board.

Ben Gunn voted yes and stated that the area was already a parking lot and the improvements to the lot would be safer for the students and the surrounding community.

Stewart Fitz Gibbon voted yes for reasons cited by the Board and stated that the concerns had been addressed with the addition of screening, the improved detention, and water control. He also stated that the College was making an effort to be a good neighbor and additional parking was needed due to the Lowry Center project.

The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Application #BZA-20-30.

Jason Crawford requested a Use Variance from Planning and Zoning Code Section 1109.02 to allow an indoor manufacturing and production use at 116 East South Street in the C-4 (Central Business) zoning district.

Jason Crawford, 726 Niles Street, Massillon, stated that he owned Liberty Screen Printing. Mr. Crawford explained that the business has grown and was proposed to be relocated to the old theater. Mr. Crawford continued that a showroom area would display locally themed t-shirts and other embroidery products. Mr. Crawford explained that the business would also sell and service embroidery machines, which would be located in the old lobby area. Mr. Crawford stated that screen printing would be located in the old theater number one, which was soundproof. Mr. Crawford explained that the retail space for police and fire would be separate as the merchandise would not be available to the general public.

Mr. Crawford stated that the business would be open during regular business hours Monday through Friday, with weekend hours once the business was up and running. Mr. Crawford stated that the business would employ five people. He explained that there would be four embroidery machines, screen printing presses and a print dryer, which would be vented. Mr. Crawford continued that the printing and embroidery machines were pretty quiet while running. Mr. Crawford stated that the entrance would be on the corner of South Street and Market Street.

Mr. Fitz Gibbon asked if anyone from the public would like to address the Board regarding the application. Mr. Dutton stated that any emails or letters received regarding the application had been forwarded to the Board for their consideration. No one from the public was present to comment on the application and Mr. Fitz Gibbon closed the public hearing.

Mark Reynolds made a motion to approve application BZA-20-30, as presented. Gregg McIlvaine seconded the motion.

Gregg McIlvaine voted yes and stated that it was great to see the building being put to use and noted that the manufacturing portion was a small aspect of the operation. He stated that he didn't feel that the use would create a negative trend downtown. Mr. McIlvaine continued that he appreciated the letters from the people who opposed the application. He further noted that it would be great to use the location as a community theater, but the building had sat vacant for many years.

Ken Suchan voted yes and stated that the use was predominantly retail with a small area of manufacturing.

Ben Gunn voted yes and stated that he liked the idea of the retail shop in the front of the building where it would be accessible. He continued that he thought that the business would blend into the downtown. Mr. Gunn stated that he had knowledge of screen printing and embroidery noted that the machines were not that loud and would not be heard within the building.

Mark Reynolds voted yes for reasons cited by the Board and stated that the Board previously approved variances similar to this.

Brad Gowins voted no and stated that the applicant did not show that the building could not be used for any permitted use, though it had set empty for a while. Mr. Gowins stated that allowing the use was not in the spirit and intent of the code.

Doug MacMillan voted yes and stated that the building was on the edge of the downtown area and access and noise would be minimal.

Stewart Fitz Gibbon voted yes and stated that a downtown entertainment district had been a discussion item some time. Mr. Fitz Gibbon continued that he appreciated the effort that Main Street Wooster put into developing a coherent downtown. He noted that the submitted letters objected to allowing the subject screen printing business. Mr. Fitz Gibbon explained that the empty building would be put back to productive use and have minimal negative impacts.

The motion passed, 6-1 with Brad Gowins voting against approval.

IV. Meeting Schedule and Chair/Vice Chair Selection for 2021

Doug MacMillan made a motion to accept the 2021 meeting schedule calendar as proposed. Mark Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Doug MacMillan nominated Stewart Fitz Gibbon to be the Chairman and made a motion. Ken Suchan nominated Mark Reynolds to be the Vice-Chairman. Brad Gowins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Gregg McIlvaine made a motion to adjourn. Doug MacMillan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Stewart Fitz Gibbon, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals Chairman

Carla Jessie, Administrative Assistant