

MINUTES
CITY OF WOOSTER PLANNING COMMISSION
May 2, 2024

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chuck Armbruster, Chairman, called the meeting to order. Commission members Phil Apel, Sheree Brownson, Chuck Armbruster, Jacob Sheets, Shawn Starlin, and Mark Weaver were present. Commission member Grant Mason was absent. Vincent Marion, Planning and Zoning Manager, represented the City of Wooster.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Shawn Starlin made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2024, meeting of the Planning Commission. Phil Apel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

III. APPLICATIONS

PC-24-5.

Patrick Lankey, on behalf of Wayne County, requested Final Development approval for an addition and site alterations to the Wayne County Justice Center at 201 West North Street (parcel numbers 64-02427.000 and 64-02181.000) in a C-4 (Central Business) zoning district.

Patrick Lankey, 1275 Mary Drive, Lordstown, stated that the proposal for the final plan approval for a three-story addition to the existing Wayne County Jail, approximately 50,000 square feet. Mr. Lankey explained that the building, which works from the street with landscaping, meets all of the requirements for the zoning code. Mr. Lankey continued that we have tried to maximize the parking between this site and the adjacent parking lot. Mr. Lankey stated that the lighting is all pole lighting and meets the minimum requirement. Mr. Lankey explained that we are trying to blend in the building with the neighboring adjacent buildings.

Mr. Marion stated that the Design and Review Board met this evening to review the material and appearance of the proposed addition in the C-4 Central Business Zoning District and approved as submitted.

Phil Apel made a motion to approve application PC-24-5 as presented with the condition that light fixture heads be entirely cut off. Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

PC-24-6.

John Long requested Final Plat approval of Crooked Creek Allotment 2 for the subdivision of land into 32 single-family residential lots on the west side of Settlers Trace in an R-1 (Suburban Single Family Residential) zoning district.

John Long, Shaffer, Johnston, Lichtenwalter Associates, 3477 Commerce Parkway, stated that the plans were developed in 2017, and construction began when the Engineering Department approved the infrastructure and plans. Mr. Long explained that the infrastructure was put in except for the final grading and the streets in the final subdivision of the land. Since that time has passed and the approvals have expired, we are back before the commission for the final plat approval. Mr. Long continued that we have yet to supply the landscape plan but will fully comply with the landscape requirements outlined in the staff review. Mr. Long stated that Heritage Lane will extend to the west and then another cul-de-sac that will run north and south with access to Schellin Road. The utilities have extended sanitary sewers to connect to that, and due to the topography, all of that next phase will have to drain through the sanitary sewer installed to the west from this current phase.

Mark Weaver moved to approve PC-24-6 as presented, with the condition that the street trees and residential landscaping be installed per sections 1123.04 and 1123.05. Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

PC-24-11.

John Long requested approval for a Conditional Use Permit for outdoor storage on the south side of Canal Road, east of State Route 3, with permanent parcel number 72-00010.000 in an I-2 (General Industrial) zoning district.

John Long, Shaffer, Johnston, Lichtenwalter Associates, 3477 Commerce Parkway, stated that this property was once the majority of the flood plain. Mr. Long explained that over the course of many decades, this property has been filled. Mr. Long continued that it was used as stockpile storage for staging areas for many projects, from the roadway to sewers. Mr. Long stated that Kister Land Company has acquired the property and is looking to use it as a road and material storage facility. Mr. Long noted that asphalt grindings from the Oak Hill/Milltown project are stored there as they currently utilize the property. Mr. Long explained that we have expanded the gravel area and proposed a fence for screening around the property and the required landscaping per the code. Mr. Long continued that this is an appropriate location for a facility such as this, and few homes are nearby for good use in an industrial-type area.

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

Shawn Starlin made a motion to approve application PC-24-11 as presented, with the condition that a zoning certificate application is required to meet the development standards of section 1109.03(e)(2). Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

PC-24-7.

Wooster City Council requested a recommendation from the Planning Commission for Text Amendments to Chapters 1109 (Use Table) and 1135.02 (General Definitions) of the Planning and Zoning Code to include dispensing and cultivating recreational marijuana.

Mr. Armbruster stated that you received the resolution from the City Council asking the commission to review the comments. Mr. Armbruster explained that we are to review those recommendations, and they will return before the Wooster City Council.

Mr. Marion stated that Wooster City Council requested a proposal to address the November 2023 election results regarding recreational marijuana. The text you have before you is an amendment to what is already permitted for medical dispensing, testing, and processing. It was forwarded to the City Council, and they passed a resolution forwarding it to the Commission for review as presented.

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

Mark Weaver made a motion to recommend application PC-24-7 as presented to the Wooster City Council. Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

PC-24-8.

Justin Starlin requested an approval recommendation from the Planning Commission to the City Council for a Zoning Map Amendment to change approximately 44.08 acres on the northwest corner of Mechanicsburg Road and Silver Road from an I-2 (General Industrial) zoning district to an R-2 (Single-Family Residential) zoning district (parcel numbers 68-02634.000 and 68-02635.000 and a portion of parcel 68-02637.000).

Shawn Starlin recused himself from the application.

Justin Starlin, 1825 Enterprise Parkway, stated that we request a rezoning of 44.08 acres. Mr. Starlin explained that he is the managing partner of Wooster Development, took over the project Spring Run Development, and wanted to continue the efforts. Mr. Starlin continued that continuing our Spring Run momentum was essential when we looked at the next development phase. Mr. Starlin stated that there are limited sites for development. We looked at this property, and it makes sense to develop because it is close to residential and ready for utilities. Mr. Starlin explained that the property could be more attractive from the industrial end. We have spoken to the city administration, and they support this. Mr. Starlin continued that this would have single-family homes. Mr. Starlin stated that the Spring Run development could be completed in the first quarter of 2025 and that it is essential that we get this site in shape and the proper channels for rezoning, preliminary design, and final design.

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

Phil Apel made a motion to approve application PC-24-8 as presented. Mark Weaver seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

PC-24-9.

Thomas Winkhart requested Conditional Use for a skilled nursing/personal care facility and Preliminary Development Plan approval for the construction of a mixed-use residential development consisting of single-family homes and two, four, and eight-unit multi-family buildings with a community center and a skilled nursing/personal care facility with parcel number 71-00250.000 (4677 Melrose Drive) in a PD (Planned Development) zoning district.

Patrick Mackey, Lemmon Development, 811 South Main Street, North Canton, stated that we originally came in 2021 and again in April 2021 for rezoning, and we received Final Plan Approval in August of 2022. Mr. Mackey explained that this application was a revision to the approved plan in August 2022. Mr. Mackey continued that the revised plan aligns with the goals of the updated Comprehensive Plan, and we are requesting approval for conditional use and a preliminary development plan to incorporate a skilled nursing/personal care facility. Mr. Mackey stated that the significant change here is that the plan now incorporates a 78,000-square-foot 81-unit residential care facility that will include units for independent living, assisted living, and memory care residences. Mr. Mackey explained that they removed seven of the 8 unit apartment buildings and increased the size of the stormwater management basins and additional open space. Mr. Mackey continued that there are more units but fewer buildings on the site, and most changes occur in the southern portion. Mr. Mackey stated that the previously approved plan has largely remained intact.

Mr. Marion stated that the application modifies a previously approved final development plan. A public hearing is required for the conditional use permit for a personal care/skilled nursing facility in an R-3 zoning district. Mr. Marion explained that when the property was zoned PD (Planned Development) by the City Council, the default zoning for items not specifically addressed in the PD language was R-3. Mr. Marion noted that for any item the PD language did not address, the default zoning is R-3 for development standards. Mr. Marion stated that the skilled nursing/personal care facility is a conditionally permitted use within an R-3 zoning district.

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

Terry Chapman, 2555 East Smithville Western Road, stated that his backyard abuts the proposed site. Mr. Chapman asked why we needed another nursing facility. He said they

tore down Wayne Elementary School to build a nursing facility there, and less than a mile away, they are proposing another nursing facility.

Jonathan Millea, Economic Development, 538 North Market Street, stated that the City of Wooster and the county have reached the highest population and peaking. Mr. Millea explained that the population assisted living care support is expected to approximately double within the next five to ten years. Mr. Millea continued that the project contains a skilled nursing facility with 80 beds as opposed to an apartment that may have a family with several people. Mr. Millea stated that we see a demand for this in our matrix, which is our community's most in-demand housing category. Mr. Millea explained that our existing housing stock for assisted living meets the current population of approximately 4000 or 5000 as we grow over the next five to ten years. Mr. Millea continued that as this project was proposed, traffic engineers initially classified this as 23 single-family homes, the remainder being apartments, and those would be unrestricted for the market. Mr. Millea stated that what we see in the market with assisted care facilities like this is generally the units within the rest of the development seen as 55 and up because that is their future client. Mr. Millea explained that your typical market single-family home would generate approximately ten trips per day, according to the Institute of Traffic Engineers, which are measures that go into most of our traffic studies. Mr. Millea continued that when you enter a retirement community, that goes down to 3.7 trips and 2.7 trips, which drops about a 40 percent decrease. Mr. Millea stated that the development could go either way, but we anticipate seeing that essentially go toward retirement. Mr. Millea explained that when we talk about the community as a whole, we want all of our residents to have an opportunity to remain within the community if they can. Mr. Millea continued that this project has no start date, but work typically commences within a year. Mr. Millea stated that there would be 23 single-family housing units, an 81-bed skilled nursing facility, and 70 multi-family homes, with less impact than previously proposed and approved, with a significant decrease in trip traffic.

Steve Griffin, 4539 Mel Lane, stated that Mel Lane has been to the commission before, and this proposal makes much sense and is a good move. Mr. Griffin explained that the residents of Mel Lane welcomed this as a new idea and would like the road extension to be closed with an emergency gate, which is essential to the Mel Lane folks. Mr. Griffin asked if there would only be one lane to Melrose.

Mr. Millea stated that we have similar-sized developments with the same configuration. The egress to the Mel Lane extension is for emergency purposes, which are requirements with this plan. Mr. Millea explained that this would be sufficient since traffic would be reduced with the new plan.

Dennis Hammond, 4590 Mel Lane, stated that there is a well on the site and wanted to know what would happen to it. Mr. Hammond noted that the residents of Mel Lane use well water and don't want to see the well contaminated.

Val Williams, 4561 Mel Lane, was glad to hear that the exit on Mel Lane would only be used for emergency access. He asked if the single-family homes would be rental or sellable.

Mr. Millea stated that these developments sometimes lend themselves to a timeshare model, with the exterior being all community property and a financial guarantee for maintaining the interior and exterior.

Mr. Mackey stated that there would be market-rate units, the nature of the units, single-story units, and the fact that the residential care facility is on the campus, which will lend itself to an older demographic of residents. Mr. Mackey explained how the community is designed and that it will be maintenance-free living. Mr. Mackey continued that they have more phases and approvals to go through with this, and the best-case scenario is that they would like to begin in the fall of this year with a lot of site work. Mr. Mackey confirmed that they have no intention of using Mel Lane for emergency use, and the single road is sufficient with less traffic. Mr. Mackey stated that they will not be building over the well, and the well has had no reported production since 2012 and has been declared abandoned. Mr. Mackey explained that the single-family homes would be rentals managed by Brookwood Management and responsible for residential agreements, property maintenance, lease maintenance, and enforcing those agreements. Mr. Mackey continued that Lemmon Development has an extensive history since 1976, with care facilities, and since 1997, we have built 23 senior living communities throughout the state of Ohio. Mr. Mackey stated that the 24th senior community units are being built in Lancaster, so we have built 2300 senior living units and Danbury Senior Living in 2014 in Wooster.

Mr. Armbruster closed the public hearing.

Sheree Brownson made a motion to approve the conditional use approval for a skilled nursing/personal care facility application PC-24-9 as presented. Phil Apel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

John Walsh, GBC Design, 565 White Pond Drive, Akron, stated that the plan mirrors the previously approved plan with individual units removed and the care facility added. Mr. Walsh explained that they kept the loop road around the site for our residents' access and fire access with the fire connection to Mel Lane. Mr. Walsh continued that there was a little more open space, with a clubhouse, walking trails, and stormwater management basins. Mr. Walsh stated that the natural low area and drainage issue in the northeast corner has a storm sewer nearby, alleviating some of the standing water for the development and neighbors. Mr. Walsh explained that the site drains from the east to the west, so all of that will be intercepted with our storm systems taken to those two retention ponds and then piped and discharged out into a storm sewer on Melrose Drive. Mr. Walsh continued that the plan was to put storm sewers behind the units to drain the neighbors, and we would not dump any additional water onto our neighbors. Mr. Walsh stated they have a permit to impact that wetland with small spots around the perimeter that will stay.

Mr. Marion stated that they must comply with all established development standards. Engineering will review for stormwater compliance. Mr. Marion said the original plan met the standards, and the Final Development Plan must be submitted through the development process. Mr. Marion explained that the requirement is not to increase the discharge flow rate. Mr. Marion continued that after the project is completed, access to Mel Lane will be available only as emergency access.

Shawn Starlin made a motion to approve the Preliminary Development Plan application PC-24-9 as presented with the following conditions:

1. Landscaping plan meeting code requirements.
2. Site development must comply with all provisions of the City's Site Development, and improvement Manual for Storm Water management, current edition.
3. The developer must use the current City of Wooster Engineering Standards.
4. Developer to obtain all necessary Engineering Permits and stormwater guarantees.

Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

PC-24-10.

Greg Seifert requested Final Development approval for a vehicle washing establishment at the intersection of Smithville Western Road and Burbank (Portion of parcel number 67-02990.005) 4855 Burbank Road in a C-3 (General Commercial) zoning district.

Greg Seifert, 3673 Massillon Road, Uniontown, stated that the proposal was an out parcel in front of the Meijer facility at Burbank and Smithville Western Roads. Mr. Seifert explained that they received final approval in April 2023, and between that time and now, there were some minor adjustments to the site plan layout. Mr. Seifert continued that the most significant adjustment was a retaining wall along the side facing the roundabout due to engineering issues and the grade of the property. The retaining wall would present the project as much nicer, and it would be a decorative wall. Mr. Seifert stated that we are seeking final approval from the commission.

Mr. Marion stated that he examined the lighting and that it complies with the zoning code's maximum height requirements and does not anticipate an issue.

Mr. Marion stated that with the site modifications, there was some leeway in the code where, administratively, some changes could be made without bringing it back to the Planning Commission. The modifications, particularly those of the retaining wall and site access modifications, are significant enough to bring it back for review.

Jacob Sheets made a motion to approve application PC-24-10 as presented additional information or steps required for the Final Development Plan.

1. Permit application for all signs.
2. Sign locations and size must comply with code unless a variance is obtained.

3. Capacity analysis of the wastewater pump station is completed.
4. Site development must comply with all provisions of the City's Site Development and Improvement Manual for Storm Water Management, current edition.
5. Developer must use the current City of Wooster Engineering Standards.
6. Developer to obtain all necessary Engineering Permits and Stormwater guarantees.

Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

PC-24-12.

Charles Brain requested approval for a Conditional Use Permit for a Transitional Housing Facility at 981 Grosjean Road with permanent parcel number 65-00710.000 in a C-3 (General Commercial) zoning district.

Charles Brain, 751 Beechwood Avenue, stated that he was President of Homeward Bound Wooster/Wayne County Board of Directors and owner of Brain Power Properties LLC, which owns the property and will contract with Weaver Contractor to remodel the facility. Mr. Brain explained that two programs will be housed in the facility: a severe weather shelter and a day program. Mr. Brain continued that the severe weather shelter continued the program housed at The Salvation Army for several years. Mr. Brain stated that the Homeward Bound operated the severe weather shelter this past winter and will continue the program at the Grosjean facility. Mr. Brain explained that the facility will operate as a transitional housing facility and that the staff will provide case management services for any guest who desires that service. Mr. Brain continued that the severe weather shelter will primarily be open every night from November 15 through April 15. Mr. Brain stated that guests would be checked in from 6 pm to 9:30 pm with a hot meal provided. The staff will be on-site from 5:30 pm to 10:00 pm to check in guests and provide security. Mr. Brain explained that an overnight staff person will be on duty from 10 pm till 8 am, when all guests must leave. Mr. Brain continued that basic needs being met include a warm shelter, food, showers, restrooms, and a good night's rest. Mr. Brain stated that the guest would be referred to social services agencies to help them find a job, housing, medical help, counseling, rehab facilities, and other basic needs. Mr. Brain explained that day programs would be open seven days per week year-round from 10 am to 3 pm, and staff would be present at all times. Guests would have the opportunity to take showers, use the laundry facility, and have a mid-day meal. Mr. Brain continued that guests can charge phones, use computers, and otherwise take advantage of when the facilities are open. Mr. Brain stated that we attract people to the facility by providing basic needs that cannot be easily obtained on the street. Once we have their attention, we can steer them towards the help they need to get on the path of independent living. Mr. Brain explained that the plan shows 16 single beds with bunk beds up to 32 for men and ten beds for women, subject to review. Mr. Brain continued that he and his wife have always had a heart for the more needy in the community, and he has been involved with People to People for 40 years. He wanted to do some meaningful things in the community. Mr. Brain stated that shelter and case management were apparent needs in the community. Mr. Brain explained that they wanted the shelter to look and feel like a home inside and outside.

James Fox, Community Action, 1476 Gasche Street, stated that he represented the Wayne County Housing Coalition. Mr. Fox explained that we keep a very close eye and conduct a point and time count annually that looks at homelessness in the area, and this year's count on January 23 demonstrated 110 individuals. Mr. Fox continued that we saw that number slightly increase and were in fear that many more are teetering on having that eliminate the need for shelter. Mr. Fox stated that shelter is an essential element, and more critical is the established programming. Mr. Fox explained that this project meets one of our strategic plan elements not addressed in the last ten years: a housing continuum from an emergency and helping individuals through permanent supportive housing and ultimately independent living. It is a critical element to achieving that goal. Mr. Fox continued that the collaboration between the social service agencies is an overwhelming supportive project.

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

Scott Myers, 421 Holmes Blvd., stated that he supported the project and participated in the housing coalition meetings, and there is a need for the shelter. Mr. Myers explained that there are many individuals that we cannot count and will be a good start. Mr. Myers continued by commenting on Mr. Brain about what he is doing privately, and the city council agreed there was a need within the community. Mr. Myers stated that he knew several volunteers for the severe weather shelter at The Salvation Army. The folks who need shelter don't have access to the weather channel and are questionable about where they are going, a question they have every, but in the winter, it becomes even more critical. Mr. Myers explained that consistently being there every night from November to April will be a valuable part of this program. Mr. Myers continued that the social service agencies all expressed a need for these services and a way to reach people who need the help, and this will help.

Mr. Armbruster closed the public hearing.

Shawn Starlin made a motion to approve application PC-24-12 as presented with the following conditions:

1. The MOU with Community Action and services provided by One Eighty and Viola Startzman Clinic are continued. Termination of services or modifications will require review by the Planning Commission.
2. All services and housing will occur indoors at the facility located at 981 Grosjean Road. Camping, tents, and other housing or outside services are prohibited.
3. The Department of Planning and Zoning will annually provide the Planning Commission with data on the number and nature of complaints and emergency calls. Per the development standard of 1109.03(c)(8)(B), adequate qualified supervision will be on site during occupied hours or on a 24-hour per day basis. All activities, programs and other events shall be adequately and appropriately supervised to prevent any hazard and to assure against any disturbance or nuisance to surrounding properties, residents, or the general community.

Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Sheree Brownson made a motion to adjourn. Phil Apel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Chuck Armbruster, Chairman

Carla Jessie, Administrative Assistant