

MINUTES
CITY OF WOOSTER PLANNING COMMISSION
September 5, 2024

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Sheree Brownson made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2024, meeting of the Planning Commission. Phil Apel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

III. APPLICATIONS

PC-24-22.

John Long, with SJL Inc., on behalf of Biggby Coffee, requested Final Development plan approval for an approximately 350-square-foot facility with a drive-through located within the existing parking area on the east side of 2003-2033 Portage Road, parcel number 67-02314.001, in a C-2 (Community Commercial) zoning district.

Scott Sims, 1609 Wedgewood Way, briefly described living in Wooster. Mr. Sims explained that they were heavily invested in Wooster and are setting up the next generation of Wooster investments with their son. Mr. Sims continued that the east side of Wooster needs more services from all of the offices and industries. Mr. Sims stated that he bought the franchise two and a half years ago and thrived on community involvement and building relationships. Mr. Sims explained that they addressed concerns with Mission Thrift and Larch's, and our third revision reflects a better situation for everyone. Mr. Sims continued by saying that they are happy to move forward.

John Long, Shaffer, Johnson, and Lichenwalter, 3477 Commerce Parkway, stated that the main issue with the Fire Department was for the patrons of the donut stand about the drive-through lanes. Mr. Long explained the current situation, namely, if there is a drive lane two-way traffic adjacent to the donut stand as it exists. Mr. Long continued that with the development of the plan, we increased the safety of the pedestrians and the patrons for Larch's and provided a hatched-off area and some steel and concrete bollards to protect the patrons from the traffic traveling through the area. Mr. Long stated that the plan complies with all the review criteria and the zoning setbacks, with one exception. Mr. Long noted that the exception for a waiver from section 1109.05 (C)(4)(E)(2) regarding the transparency on the building's façade. Mr. Long explained that the building that is being proposed is a modular type unit that is constructed in a factory under the Ohio Industrial Code for review and inspection. Everything from the foundation up is under those codes,

and the foundation down is under the local Ohio Building Codes. Modifying the structure to provide more windows on the exterior, as required by the code, would require a lot of expenses and time. Mr. Long continued that the building was constructed of steel and stone and looked similar to the gas station across the street. Mr. Long stated that the application was complied with and would comply with all the remaining conditions. Mr. Long explained that the fire department had seen the most recent plans before you and had not made further comments. Mr. Long continued that we had submitted the development plans to the city engineers' office, and they complied with the site development and stormwater standards.

Mr. Marion stated that the addition of Biggby Coffee is eliminating parking spaces currently available at Portage Plaza. A request was made for an analysis of the existing retail spaces compared to what the remainder will be and if there will be sufficient parking to meet the current code for retail space.

Mr. Long stated that the brick veneer option with the stone was the one submitted to the commission on the conditions they requested.

Grant Mason made a motion to approve application PC-24-22 by granting the following waiver:

As proposed, the façade does not meet two of the Architectural Standards for Nonresidential Buildings within the C-2 zoning district: a façade width of 50% of the frontage abutting a public street and a front façade that is not 25% transparent.

Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Grant Mason made a motion to approve application PC-24-22 with the following conditions;

1. Submittal of dumpster enclosure specifications.
2. The stone and concrete veneer options and the color selection complement the nearby architecture.
3. The donut trailer is located so that it will not present a hazard to customers or cause conflicts with vehicle movement, and it meets the Ohio Fire Code.
4. A sign application is required for signs and logos.
5. Site development must comply with all provisions of the City's Site Development and Improvement Manual for Storm Water Management, current edition.
6. Developer must use the current City of Wooster Engineering Standards.
7. Developer to obtain all necessary Engineering Permits and stormwater guarantees.

Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

PC-24-23.

Justin Starlin requested Final Subdivision approval for a 108-lot subdivision on the northwest corner of Mechanicsburg Road and Silver Road with current parcel numbers of 68-02634.000 and a portion of parcel 68-02637.000 in an R-2 (Single Family Residential) zoning district.

Justin Starlin, 1825 Enterprise Parkway, stated that the proposal is a second phase of Ryan Homes, which is constructing the homes being presented. Mr. Starlin explained that the lots and homes presented to you come from our first project, Spring Run on Oak Hill Road, in which we have sold 78 homes in just under 16 months. Mr. Starlin continued that we know there is a critical need for additional housing, so we started this discussion, looked for a site, and met with the city in August 2023 to talk about sites, one of their top sites. Mr. Starlin stated that the site went through the rezoning process from I-2 to R-2, which was unanimously approved and had full support from Wooster City Council. Mr. Starlin explained that they worked with the city to develop the development plan and met all code aspects for design and the development layout, and they plan before you meet the code. Mr. Starlin continued that we have worked with Davey Resource Group, our civil engineer and local professional excavating company, to analyze the design and consider the availability of utilities, gravity utilities to all the lots, and availability of natural gas, water, and sewer. Mr. Starlin stated that they talked to the Army Corp of Engineers to ensure they did not have wetland issues, and there were none. Mr. Starlin explained that a traffic study was completed per the requirements and showed no immediate or significant impacts on the area. Mr. Starlin continued that they have been transparent with their aggressive timeline and hopes that lots will be for sale in spring 2025. Mr. Starlin stated that they intend to comply with the eight conditions for approval. Mr. Starlin explained that there have been significant conversations about alternative designs for this development, specifically the connection of street A to Venture. While we are open to alternative designs, which would have to come back to the Planning Commission for consideration, we currently want this layout to meet the code and be supported by the city departments.

Mr. Starlin stated they plan to begin site work as early as October with approval. Mr. Starlin explained that the lots are roughly 55 feet by 130 feet. Mr. Starlin continued that these will be entry-level homes, and the market for Spring Run, a second-tier product that Ryan Homes has, is robust, so there is a discussion with Ryan Homes. Mr. Starlin noted that Ryan Homes might be able to sell 108 mid-tier homes, and the entry-level may be later.

Steven Funk, 222 South Main Street, Akron, stated that Seaman Corporation, located at 1000 Venture Blvd, retained him. Mr. Funk explained that Seaman is a large property owner in Wooster with significant business, employs many people, and is close to the proposed development on Venture Blvd. Mr. Funk continued that the Seaman Corporation objects to Street A and the connection to Venture Blvd primarily because Venture Blvd is used daily for ample truck traffic on Venture Blvd, and they are very concerned with the adverse impact that the connection on Venture Blvd will have with public safety as well as their business. Mr. Funk stated that Seaman Corporation had been actively trying to work

with the city and the developer to develop alternative site layouts, which began in June of 2024. Mr. Funk explained that they would like to come up with a solution that allows the developer to develop with the desired number of lots while not having a connection on Venture Blvd. Mr. Funk continued that he wanted to ensure everyone had all the documents they had submitted. Mr. Funk stated that they would like to sit down and devise a solution.

Mr. Marion stated that the intent is for the sidewalks and bike paths to be installed by next summer.

Terry Lincoln, Seaman Corporation, 1000 Venture Blvd., stated that we have had discussions with the developers and have documentation. Mr. Lincoln explained that the three elements of the documents pertain to the park in the area, commercial parcels near the park, and the subdivision that would bring about a highly populated area. Mr. Lincoln continued that all three of those elements provide an elevated risk for the safety of the pedestrians. Mr. Lincoln stated that this takes an already elevated risk by creating direct, easy access from the development to Venture Blvd, further heightening that risk. Mr. Lincoln explained that the planning and zoning codes for the City of Wooster discuss public health and safety 1103 indicates that the commission requires the quote physical well-being of the people when making decisions regarding developments, 1101 marking the purposes of the code is to protect public health and ensure pedestrian safety, and 1105 one of the review criteria for subdivision plans is making sure and determining whether the developer has taken every effort to ensure the public health safety and welfare are perpetuated by the subdivision. Mr. Lincoln continued by stating that they questioned whether every effort had been made by the developers and the commission to investigate and consider pedestrian safety. Mr. Lincoln said they think alternative street layouts should be considered and explored.

Shawn Mendez, 899 Venture Blvd., stated that he leads the DuraServ business out of Texas and is the business right across from the park. Mr. Mendez explained that he supports Mr. Lincoln's argument that all pedestrian traffic will be in front of the DuraServ. Mr. Mendez continued that having an egress from Venture into the subdivision would also create much traffic, and a lot of truck traffic would be delivered and picked up. Mr. Mendez stated that with more pedestrians, there is a recipe for disaster right before his business, and looking into alternatives may offer some relief.

Sheree Brownson made a motion to approve application PC-24-23 with the following conditions:

1. Submittal of the required financial guarantees.
2. Street light plan approved by utility provider and City Engineer.
3. Review and acceptance of HOA documents.
4. The approved minor subdivision of lot splits and reconsolidation must be recorded before submitting the plat.
5. Correct the zoning on sheet four from I-2 to R-2.

6. Site development must comply with all provisions of the City's Site Development and Improvement Manual for Storm Water Management, current edition.
7. Developer must use the current City of Wooster Engineering Standards.
8. Developer to obtain all necessary Engineering Permits and storm water guarantees.

Grant Mason seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Sheree Brownson made a motion to adjourn. Jake Sheets seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Chuck Armbruster, Chairman

Carla Jessie, Administrative Assistant