

**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION**

May 27, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Weaver, Fred Seling, Ron Rehm, Gil Ning, Jackie Middleton, Grant Mason, Sheree Brownson, Kyle Adams and Jean Roberts

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Dutton, Chief Matt Fisher, Acting Chief Nathan Murphy and Richard Benson

I. MINUTES

Jackie Middleton moved, Ron Rehm seconded, to approve the Minutes of March 25, 2015 as received. Motion carried.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Application #CU-382. Matthew Long of Critchfield, Critchfield & Johnston, Ltd., representing The College of Wooster, requesting conditional use approval for a college classroom building use at 931 College Avenue in a CF (Community Facilities) District.

Jean Roberts indicated that she was a “very, very part-time employee of the College” but did not have any decision-making authority in this particular case and, therefore, would not recuse herself relating to the request.

Jackie Middleton indicated she would recuse herself as an employee of the College.

Mark Weaver indicated he would recuse himself as an employee of the College.

Fred Seling indicated his wife worked at the College of Wooster. Mr. Seling stated he reviewed the criteria for a conflict of interest with Mr. Benson and, as a matter of law, he did not have a conflict of interest and would not recuse himself on the matter.

Kyle Adams stated he was a volunteer football coach for the College but indicated he would not recuse himself.

Grant Mason indicated he was a 1987 graduate of the College of Wooster.

Matt Long, Critchfield Law Firm, representing the College of Wooster, stated an integrated science facility was proposed. Mr. Long stated Mateer Hall would be removed and, in its place and connected to Severence Hall, would be the construction of the proposed facility. Mr. Long stated the documents before the Commission were very preliminary and were provided to show the anticipated footprint of the building; the final architectural design would be more detailed. Suzanne Kline of EYP Architecture/Engineering, project architect; John Long, of Shaffer, Johnston, Civil Engineer; Jackie Middleton, Vice President of Facilities for the College; Doug Laditka, College of Wooster, Director of Facilities; Professor Fraga, part of the College implementation team, were present.

Mr. Long stated while the property abutted a residential district, much of the adjacent property was owned by the College. Mr. Long stated much care was given to making sure the facility was compatible with adjacent properties and uses.

Mr. Long stated while final development plan approval was requested, the Commission would likely be seeing the plan again because it was still very early in the planning process for the building. Mr. Long stated he felt it was important that the plan be brought to the Commission “sooner, rather than later” because it was important that the architect was able to rely upon the site plan footprint to continue with their work in planning going forward. Mr. Long stated final development plan approval would be contingent upon Board of Zoning Appeals approval as well as the Design & Review Board for the demolition of Mateer.

Suzanne Kline, EYP Architecture/Engineering, stated the building was approximately 70,000-sq. ft. in size (or 41,000-sq. ft. of usable area.). Ms. Kline stated the building was a 3-story building and would be adjacent to Severance Hall. Ms. Kline stated with the demolition of Mateer, it would allow for a more flexible, long term solution. Ms. Kline stated a “central spine” would be created from Severance Hall all the way through to the new building to make it an integrated science facility. Ms. Kline stated the building would be comprised of stone and brick to interact visually with the campus. Ms. Kline stated the building would be more of a traditional design along the west side of the quad, and then transitioning around to the south and adding more glass on the east side of the building overlooking the parking area.

Mr. Ning questioned if any type of solar would be used with all of the windows. Ms. Kline stated they had not yet gone into a lot of detail with that. Ms. Kline stated there was a lot of shade on the site because of the trees, so it may not be feasible. Ms. Kline stated she would look to see if that was a possibility.

Mr. Ning questioned the timetable for the project. Ms. Kline stated they were scheduling for demolition to start in May, 2016 and then construction would begin. The College was hoping for completion in the fall, 2018.

Ms. Roberts opened the public hearing up for comment.

Ms. Roberts closed the public hearing.

Application #ZC-262. Joel Montgomery et al., representing the City of Wooster, requesting an approval recommendation by the Planning Commission to City Council for a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning of 2.68 acres at 3319 and 3365 Burbank Road from an R-1 (Single Family Residential) District to CF (Community Facilities) District.

Sheree Brownson stated she was married to a Wooster firefighter but noted she had spoken with Dick Benson, and he did not feel there was a conflict of interest.

Andrew Dutton, Planning and Zoning Manager for the City of Wooster, stated the proposal was to rezone the property from an R-1 to CF. Mr. Dutton stated Staff felt the rezoning was consistent with the Planning and Zoning Code and the Comprehensive Plan and other plans for the area of the City. Mr. Dutton stated the land was comprised of two properties of 2.68 acres. Mr. Dutton stated the land would be used for the City’s safety center to include both a fire and police facility. Mr. Dutton stated the facility would be about 37,340-sq. ft. in size

and would include a basement; the amount above grade was 27,958-sq. ft. Mr. Dutton stated letters of support were included in the Commission's packets from Matt Fisher, Chief of Police, and Nathan Murphy, Acting Fire Chief, who were also present.

Mr. Dutton outlined the criteria in Zoning Code Section 1119.07 as follows: (a) Mr. Dutton stated specifically in the Comprehensive Plan, there was a future land use map which showed "public/quasi-public" in their proposed zoning use. Mr. Dutton stated the Comprehensive Plan also identified the need for expansion of emergency services. Mr. Dutton stated the fire station master plan study, which was completed in 2007, identified that the two existing fire stations were not adequate to serve the City and, in the past 8 years, it was only exasperated by the continued development and growth. (b) Mr. Dutton stated one of the purposes of the CF District was to provide for a location for governmental, civic, educational, recreational and other institutional uses throughout the City. (c) Mr. Dutton stated the current fire and police stations were both located downtown but over the years, the City had expanded mostly in a northerly direction. Mr. Dutton stated the last fire station was constructed in 1961 and, at that time, the City was 6.6 square miles; the City was now 17 square miles. In the past 54 years, the City had not added any fire stations yet grew by 10 square miles and added over 9,300 residents in addition to commercial, industrial and institutional uses. Mr. Dutton stated the safety center was necessary to provide fire and police services resulting in a change in conditions. (d) Mr. Dutton stated adjacent properties were zoned R-1 but uses in the area varied. Mr. Dutton stated there were offices, multi-family and single family residences in addition to schools, churches and parks, all within the area. Mr. Dutton stated many of those uses were permitted in the CF District. Mr. Dutton stated in the CF District, a buffer was to be provided from surrounding neighborhoods to ensure the CF facilities were compatible with surrounding single family neighborhoods. (e) Mr. Dutton stated CF served the vicinity and community with minimal impact on the surrounding area. Mr. Dutton stated the safety center would provide protection and necessary services to both businesses and residents. (f) Mr. Dutton stated there were adequate facilities for utilities in the area. (g) There was no other vacant CF land in the area that was available for development. Freedlander Park existed to the east but was not available for development and did not fit the use; there was also CF to the southwest of the site which abutted Oldman Road, but that was the location of the Wooster High School which was also not available for development. (h) Was not applicable.

Mr. Rehm questioned what would happen to Fire Station #2 on Highland if the proposed fire station was approved. Chief Murphy indicated that the fire station on Highland would be closed. Mr. Dutton noted that the new station would be the City's primary station, the one on Market Street would be a secondary station, and another station was likely on Akron Road.

Ms. Roberts questioned noise relating to the police aspects for the proposed building. Chief Fisher stated in rare cases, the officers would leave the station with their lights on; officers were normally out in their patrol zones and if an emergency came in, they were already out on patrol. Chief Murphy indicated at night, they used sirens sparingly.

Brad Fleming, representing his parents who were directly north of the property, questioned if the City owned the property north of Acres of Fun on Friendsville Road. Mr. Dutton stated the hospital owned the property. Mr. Fleming stated he was concerned with the traffic at Burbank/Friendsville Road and existing congestion. Chief Murphy stated there was a plan for interruption/pre-emption for the traffic signal for emergency vehicles. Mr. Fleming

expressed concern with the affect the station would have on property values for the residents in the area.

Nathaniel Myers, 3360 Burbank Road, stated he recently purchased his home on Burbank Road and was not told by his realtor about the proposal for the police/fire station. Mr. Myers questioned the necessity of going from a 3,500-sq. ft. fire station (on Highland) to a 37,000-sq. ft. fire station and asked to see information relating to the planning that went into that. Mr. Dutton stated a study had been done relating to the fire station which outlined a lot of the details and offered to e-mail the study to Mr. Myers. Mr. Seling stated on the City's website was a pdf version of a Powerpoint presentation about the need for the police portion of the project. Mr. Myers stated he felt there was a lot of empty land to the north that the City could take, make a CF District, and then build the fire station, and the land would be just as close to the population that it was trying to support as opposed to putting it within a residential area.

Ms. Roberts questioned why it was felt that the property in question was the best site for the proposed police/fire station. Mr. Dutton stated the fire station master plan evaluates response time, demographics and things like that and then determined 3-4 prime spaces to locate the fire station. Mr. Dutton stated that based on availability and access, this was the site which "stuck out" as best serving the community and adding the police station to it was an act of progression since the City was looking at moving from its existing location. Chief Murphy stated the study took into account road size and widths, primary arteries to the highway, and response times. Going "much more north" would not help as that would take the location too far away from the middle ground which was where Fire Station #2 was currently located. Chief Murphy stated it was better to spread out the resources to better serve the entire City.

Mr. Myers stated he felt the station would negatively affect his property values. Mr. Myers stated he also understood that the City was using eminent domain to take one of the properties.

Mr. Seling noted that the Commission would make its recommendation to City Council, and City Council had the final say on the matter. Mr. Dutton noted that City Council would also hold a public hearing on the matter as well.

Mr. Myers questioned the need for the size of facility proposed and felt a 37,000-sq. ft. building "seemed a bit excessive". Chief Fisher stated currently, the Wooster Police Department occupied less than 5,000-sq. ft. at the Wayne County Justice Center over three different floors and four different areas which was not safe as it should be housed under one, secure location. Chief Fisher stated a space study was done by a firm from Dayton, Ohio which found that, based on its current size and what was felt to be needed, it should have roughly 27,800-sq. ft. of area which was why the footprint of the proposed building was where it needed to be. Mr. Myers questioned if there was a plan available which outlined the usage of the space. Chief Fisher stated the City had a preliminary drawing of how the space should be broken up. Mr. Myers stated he and his neighbors questioned whether it was necessary to place the building in the area, whether it really need to be that large, and if there were other ways to accommodate the needs of the police force and fire department.

Mr. Myers questioned the cost of the facility. Chief Fisher stated that while he did not have a firm cost, a bond issue had its first reading of City Council which was for \$7 million. Mr. Myers questioned if there were any unused facilities the City could use.

Mr. Selig questioned whether eminent domain would be used to purchase property for the proposed facility. Mr. Dutton stated no and indicated that a purchase contract had been signed.

Miriam Sprunger, 3437 Burbank Road, questioned parking and whether all of the traffic had been accounted for that would be going in/out of the site. Ms. Sprunger questioned whether the City was looking enough into the future to have enough space to enlarge the building should additional growth continue. Chief Murphy stated if the City enlarged, it would need more stations but this station was specifically designed for that part of Wooster. Chief Murphy stated the City was in the process of purchasing another location on Akron Road as well. Ms. Sprunger questioned whether the police department would have enough space for “the next 15 years”. Chief Fisher stated yes, he believed so which was what the space study also indicated. Ms. Sprunger stated the City was limited with the site for expansion as the property was only 2 ½-3 acres in size and two different facilities were proposed for the site. Ms. Sprunger stated she was hopeful that the facility would not deteriorate the value of her property.

Mr. Rehm questioned if there would be any jail facilities at the site. Chief Fisher stated no—there would not even be holding cells. Chief Fisher stated he expected visitors to be very limited and would include people who would want to speak with an officer to file a complaint, file a public records request, and maybe to pay a parking ticket. Chief Murphy stated in terms of visitors, the fire department had very little visitors on a daily basis.

Sam Fleming, 3419 Burbank Road, stated no one had any ideas of cars and trucks (inaudible).

Ms. Roberts closed the public hearing.

III. **CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION**

Application #CU-382. Matthew Long of Critchfield, Critchfield & Johnston, Ltd., representing the College of Wooster, requesting conditional use approval for a college classroom building use at 931 College Avenue in a CF (Community Facilities) District.

Mr. Selig asked for someone to address the issue of a door on the Pine Street side of the building. Mr. Long stated a variance application had been filed to waive the entrance requirement along the public right-of-way on Pine Street. Mr. Long stated because of the configuration of the campus, the entrance was actually along Campus Mall that went north and south. Mr. Long stated there was an exit door along Pine Street. Mr. Long stated there were other buildings on the campus where the entrance was not along a public right-of-way. Mr. Dutton stated with respect to the door entrance, it was an aesthetic issue and was an issue the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals would need to address.

Gil Ning moved to grant Application #CU-382 of Matt Long from Critchfield, Critchfield & Johnston, Ltd., representing the College of Wooster, for conditional use approval for a college classroom building use at 931 College Avenue in a CF District.

Ron Rehm seconded the motion.

Kyle Adams voted yes. Mr. Adams stated he felt the application met all of the requirements for approval.

Sheree Brownson voted yes.

Grant Mason voted yes.

Gil Ning voted yes.

Ron Rehm voted yes.

Fred Selig voted yes.

Jean Roberts voted yes.

Motion carried by a 7-0-2 vote, Jackie Middleton and Mark Weaver abstaining.

IV. FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPLICATION

Application #SP-587. Matthew Long of Critchfield, Critchfield & Johnston, Ltd., representing the College of Wooster, requesting final development plan approval for a 70,000 sq. ft. classroom facility to replace the existing Mateer Hall at 931 College Avenue in a CF (Community Facilities) District.

Ron Rehm moved to grant Application #SP-587 of Matt Long of Critchfield, Critchfield & Johnston, representing the College of Wooster, requesting final development plan approval for a 70,000-sq. ft. classroom facility to replace the existing Mateer Hall in a CF District conditioned upon: (1) The applicant receiving a variance regarding the front building setback; (2) Building elevations being revised to include an entrance facing Pine Street or the applicant receiving a variance; (3) The applicant shall receive Design & Review Board approval for demolition of Mateer Hall and construction of the proposed building; and (4) A landscaping plan shall be submitted including the trees, shrubs, etc. required by Section 1165.04 and 1165.05 specifying the quantity, sizes, and species of all proposed landscaping.

Gil Ning seconded the motion.

Kyle Adams voted yes.

Sheree Brownson voted yes.

Grant Mason voted yes.

Gil Ning voted yes.

Ron Rehm voted yes.

Fred Selig voted yes.

Jean Roberts voted yes.

Motion carried by a 7-0-2 vote, Jackie Middleton and Mark Weaver abstaining.

V. ZONING AMENDMENT APPLICATION

Application #ZC-262. Joel Montgomery et al., representing the City of Wooster, requesting an approval recommendation by the Planning Commission to City Council for a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning of 2.68 acres at 3319 and 3365 Burbank Road from an R-1 (Single Family Residential) District to CF (Community Facilities) District.

Mr. Weaver stated he felt the City representatives had done a clear job of answering questions relating to traffic, location of the facility, the need for a fire and police station, the size of the proposal and steps that were taken to manage the production of buildings, but that nothing had been addressed relating to the concerns of property values and the affect the police/fire station would have on surrounding residential property values. Mr. Dutton stated he could not speak as to the affect the police/fire station would have on property values. Mr. Dutton stated fire stations were often located in residential areas and needed to be there to serve the area it serviced and was a common occurrence. Mr. Benson stated in relation to the 2009 proposal that was before the Commission, the testimony of Mr. Snyder of Architectural Resources Corporation was that there were no definitive studies showing that property values suffered a negative impact. Mr. Benson stated that, at that time, a local realtor had also surveyed properties and found there to be no impact on properties turning over on Highland in relation to the fire station there.

Mr. Mason asked about the design of the building. Mr. Adams stated he felt that would have a huge impact on property values. Mr. Dutton stated building elevation drawings were provided to the Commission but at this time, were preliminary in nature.

Mr. Benson stated the architect made a specific effort to come up with proposed designs that would blend, as much as possible, with the surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Roberts stated from the standpoint of changing the zoning, the Commission heard the concerns of the residents. Ms. Roberts stated property values was a hard thing to assess or study. Ms. Roberts stated that, oftentimes, the Commission was required to make decisions based on what was best for the greater good, understanding that it may have a negative impact on the residents that lived immediately surrounding those areas.

Mr. Rehm stated no matter where the station was placed, it would have some impact on property values somewhat but it was necessary from a public services standpoint.

Jackie Middleton moved to recommend to City Council approval of a zoning map amendment to change the zoning of 2.68 acres at 3319 and 3365 Burbank Road from an R-1 (Single Family Residential) District to a CF (Community Facilities) District (ZC-262).

Fred Seling seconded the motion.

Mark Weaver stated since he believed that the proposal met all of the criteria for approval, he would vote yes.

Fred Seling stated he also agreed that the recommendation met the criteria. Mr. Seling voted yes.

Ron Rehm voted yes.

Gil Ning voted yes.

Jackie Middleton voted yes.

Grant Mason voted yes.

Sheree Brownson voted yes.

Kyle Adams voted yes.

Jean Roberts voted yes.

Motion carried by a 9-0 vote.

VI. GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPLICATION

Application #SP-588. Joel Montgomery et al., representing the City of Wooster, requesting general development plan approval for a 37,340 sq. ft. public safety center at 3319 and 3365 Burbank Road in an R-1 (Single Family Residential) District.

Mr. Rehm stated the elevation drawings that were in the packets looked like an “armored personnel carrier”. Mr. Seling agreed. Mr. Seling stated he hoped that was not the final plan and felt there could be more done to blend it in with the surrounding, residential area. Ms. Roberts stated the building was “a little cold”. Ms. Middleton agreed. Ms. Roberts noted that general development plan approval was being requested and final approval would be needed. Mr. Dutton stated elevation drawings were not required at this stage. Ms. Roberts stated the Commission agreed that the architects were the experts on the floorplan and layout of how the space should function. Ms. Roberts stated the Commission wished to see the building look a little warmer, especially with residences and the park nearby.

Fred Seling moved to approve Application #SP-588 of the City of Wooster requesting general development plan approval for a 37,340-sq. ft. public safety center at 3319 and 3365 Burbank Road in an R-1 District.

Sheree Brownson seconded the motion.

Mark Weaver stated he believed the proposal met both what was required in the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code, and that it met the criteria. Mr. Weaver voted yes.

Fred Seling voted yes.

Ron Rehm voted yes.

Gil Ning voted yes.

Jackie Middleton voted yes.

Grant Mason voted yes.

Sheree Brownson voted yes.

Kyle Adams voted yes.

Jean Roberts voted yes, for the same reasons cited by Mr. Weaver.

Motion carried by a 9-0 vote.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Jean Roberts, Chairman

Laurie Hart, Administrative Assistant