

MINUTES
CITY OF WOOSTER PLANNING COMMISSION

November 5, 2020

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Kyle Adams, Commission Chairman, called the meeting to order. Commission members Kyle Adams, Chuck Armbruster, Sheree Bronson, 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

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

III. APPLICATIONS

PC-20-22.

Rachel Lanzafame requested Conditional Use approval for a parking lot as a principal use on a property located at the southeast corner of University Street and Spink Street with Parcel Number 65-00024.000 in a CF (Community Facilities) zoning district.

John Long, 3477 Commerce Parkway, stated that the temporary parking lot on the southeast corner of University and Spink Street was constructed about 3 or 4 years ago as part of the Ruth Williams Hall Science Center project. Mr. Long continued that the student center expansion project would result in the loss of several parking spaces. Mr. Long stated that the request was to convert the temporary parking lot into a permanent parking lot.

Mr. Long explained that the staff recommendations included additional hedgerows, trees, and a plan to improve the sidewalks along University and Spink Streets. Mr. Long continued that there were existing stormwater management and water quality controls in place that would remain. He added that most of the properties surrounding the site were owned by the College of Wooster. Mr. Long stated that landscaping would be compliant with the code and the sidewalks would be improved.

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

Evan Bahler, 951 Spink Street, Wooster Ohio 44691 stated: Will this parking lot be monitored by campus security? We have had multiple cars parked in our yard when the lot gets full because they think our house is owned by the college.

Sarah Bolton, 433 East University Street, responded that the property would be monitored by the campus security and protective services.

Mr. Bahler stated: Campus security said "tough, call the police". Are those trees on the SW corner? Our house is completely exposed to the parking lot.

Mr. Long responded that trees and a hedgerow would be planted along the southwest corner of the parking lot and evergreen trees would be extended along the south property line.

Mr. Bahler stated: The head of security said they were not going to do anything about it.

Ms. Bolton stated that once the permanent parking lot was more formally defined, it might help mitigate some of the noted issues. Mr. Long stated that once the parking lot was striped, the capacity would increase.

Mr. Bahler stated: Will the bagpipe team be permitted to practice in the lot on the closest corner of the lot? Who will be allowed to park in the lot?

Ms. Bolton stated that she was unsure where the bagpipe team would be practicing. Ms. Bolton explained that she believed the parking lot would be for staff, but was unsure.

Madonna Hettinger submitted the following comments: As a homeowner in the 900 block of Spink Street, I am very concerned about the College of Wooster's application to the Planning and Zoning Commission to turn the lot on the southeast corner of University and Spink into a permanent parking lot. This parking lot will add to blight in our residential neighborhood.

At one point in time, we were assured that the College wanted to use that lot as a green space. That would have been a nice addition to the neighborhood, but now it will be an unsightly parking lot, with the light pollution, noise, litter, and drainage issues that accompany most parking lots.

A parking lot just across the street from the football stadium will no doubt be used to accommodate patrons of football games, and thus is likely to increase noise and garbage as it becomes a site for tailgating. If the parking lot is intended to accommodate the expansion of Lowry Center, then it will still increase the light pollution, noise, and garbage. Additionally, one can anticipate that there will be significant use of salt in a parking lot in the winter - salt that will run-off into adjacent lots and yards, including that of Jaycee Park, ruining the grass where a lot of children come to play.

The impermeable surface of a parking lot will increase the run-off that goes down the north-south alley immediately to the east of Spink Street, after every rainfall. This will increase the erosion of the backyards down the block. The gravel lot they put there a few years ago has already created a problem and eroded several feet from the yards along the back lane further down the street to Stibbs Street, in spite of the drainage basin they installed. In fact, the height of parking lot is higher than the lane and the run-off drains down the lane and misses both the large and small catch-basins installed there. I raised this issue with the College's planners a year ago and of course they assured me that they look at drainage issues and provide the appropriate drainage basins. But the fact is that those measures just have not worked in the past, even with a gravel lot. A paved parking lot will only make the run-off worse.

Lastly, the presence of a parking lot there devalues our homes and the quality of life in our neighborhood.

I am not able come to the virtual meeting tonight so I was hoping you could take these concerns into consideration.

Thank you.

Mr. Long stated that collecting and conveying water in gravel lots can be difficult as there may be erosion, sediment fill, and other issues. Mr. Long continued that the permanent lot would have curbs, gutters, and catch basins to collect and convey the stormwater from the parking lot into the stormwater detention basins. He continued that the City Engineer would also have review and approval of stormwater management for the site. Mr. Long stated that the proposed parking lot would have discharge at the same or less rate than when there were homes on the site.

Mr. Bahler stated: When the lot is full they park in the city-owned recreation park (Jayce Park), which is concerning for families who want their kids playing there. The bagpipe team practices in the lot 10 yards from our house. If the lot is only for staff then will it be roped off during sporting events? I fear the parking lot will hurt the resale value of my home. I would not have made this purchase if I knew it was going to be zoned as a parking lot.

Andrew Dutton stated that the property was zoned Community Facilities, which was the zoning for the College of Wooster, city schools, and city buildings. He stated the lots had been zoned CF for a significant amount of time.

Mr. Bahler stated: I fear the long-term effect my home will have with the drainage issue with the gravel lot that has been there for 2+ years. My house gets hit first with the runoff issue. Can you tell me more about the light plan? How will I sleep with all that light coming into my house?

Mr. Long responded that the lighting plan was compliant with code regulations. Mr. Long explained that the light fixtures were fully cut off, directing light towards the ground. Mr. Long stated that the trees would block some of the light in the future as they grow.

Mr. Bahler stated: There was tailgating during football games last year. If you don't know if there will be tailgating then how can you say there the lot is strictly for staff?

Ms. Bolton responded that she was not aware of a decision on whether the parking lot would be allowed for tailgating. Ms. Bolton said the large majority of tailgating was closer to the stadium, and she would be comfortable not allow tailgating that far away from the stadium.

Mr. Adams closed the public hearing.

Chuck Armbruster made a motion to approve application PC-20-22 as submitted with the following conditions:

1. Parking shall meet the required setbacks of Section 1125.03(b), or a variance shall be approved by the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals.
2. Landscaping shall meet the parking lot screening requirements of Section 1123.05(b), buffering requirements of Section 1123.06, and the size and species of landscaping shall be indicated.

Mike Steiner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

PC-20-21.

Rachel Lanzafame requested Final Development Plan approval for a building addition and site alterations at 1189 Beall Avenue (The Lowery Center) and a parking lot at the southeast corner of University Street and Spink Street with Parcel Number 65-00024.000 in a CF (Community Facilities) zoning district.

Matthew Hyatt, 51 Sleeper Street, Boston, MA, stated that the project was a complete transformation of the existing The Lowery Center. Mr. Hyatt explained that the project involved an expansion to the west to accommodate a new lobby and additional dining hall seating. He continued that the project also involved the removal of the existing asphalt driveway that ran in front of the building. Mr. Hyatt stated that the driveway would be replaced by a concrete pedestrian path, making the crossing of Beall Avenue much safer. Mr. Hyatt continued that two ADA parking spaces in front of the building would be relocated to the southwest of The Lowery Center and two ADA spaces would be added to the rear.

Mr. Hyatt stated that there would also be an expansion of the southeast side building incorporating a new loading dock to increase storage inside the building. Mr. Hyatt continued that the addition would make it safer for trucks and pedestrians to share the space behind the building.

Mr. Hyatt stated that the front addition would be a single story with a tall lobby. Mr. Hyatt stated that the plan was for a two-phased project, with the second phase being the renovation of the third floor.

Mr. Long stated that stormwater and site development standards would be met.

Mike Steiner made a motion to approve application PC-20-21 as submitted with the following conditions:

1. Landscaping on the Parking Lot Site shall meet the parking lot screening requirements of Section 1123.05(b), buffering requirements of Section 1123.06, and the size and species of landscaping shall be indicated.
2. Parking shall meet the required setbacks of Section 1125.03(b) at the Parking Lot Site or a variance shall be approved by the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals.
3. Sidewalks along East University Street and Spink Street adjacent to the Parking Lot Site shall be repaired or replaced to meet current City standards.

Chuck Armbruster seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Grant Mason moved to adjourn the meeting. Chuck Armbruster seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Kyle Adams, Chairman

Carla Jessie, Administrative Assistant