

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF WOOSTER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**November 2, 2023**

**I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chuck Armbruster, Chairman, called the meeting to order. Commission members Kyle Adams, Phil Apel, Sheree Brownson, Chuck Armbruster, Grant Mason, Shawn Starlin, and Mark Weaver were present at the meeting. 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 October 5, 2023, meeting of the Planning Commission. Phil Apel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

**III. APPLICATIONS**

***PC-23-27.***

John Long, on half of the Wayne Center for the Arts, requested approval for a final development plan for a Cultural Facility to include an amphitheater, performance pavilion, and play area at 246 South Grant and 237 South Walnut Street with permanent parcel numbers 64-02310.000 and 64-02310.001 in a C-4 (Central Business) zoning district.

John Long, Shaffer, Johnson, Lichtenwalter, 3477 Commerce Parkway, Wooster, stated that we are reducing the size of the basketball court from a full court to a half court. Mr. Long explained that by installing a walking path loop with a harmony garden and an eventual playground in the future. Mr. Long continued that a performing art pavilion and amphitheater would return before the board whenever there were more details.

Shawn Starlin made a motion to approve application PC-23-27 with the following conditions:

1. Review of elevations and site changes by the Design Review Board.
2. Application for an Engineering Development permit is made.
3. Site lighting requirements are met.

Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

***PC-23-29.***

Chad Knupp, on behalf of The Village Network, requested an approval recommendation from the Planning Commission to City Council for a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning of 10.25 acres at 2000 and 2020 Noble Drive with parcel number 67-02982.003 and 67-02982.004 on the northwest corner of the intersection of Benden Drive and Noble Drive from I-1 (Office/Limited Industrial) zoning district to C-3 (General Commercial) zoning district.

Chad Knupp, 5349 Secrest Road, Wooster, stated that The Village Network acquired the 2020 Noble Drive building north of our 2000 Noble Drive property. Mr. Knupp explained that the agency would like to partner with other entities with a daycare/preschool at that location. Mr. Knupp continued that the rezoning of the property would accomplish general office, outpatient, and day treatment programs at those locations in addition to the daycare/preschool. Mr. Knupp stated that C-3 zoning surrounds these properties and fits our business model. Mr. Knupp explained that there was plenty of parking and plans for future additional parking.

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, Wooster, stated that he supported the proposal of The Village Network. Mr. Myers explained that his wife was previously the Director of The College of Wooster Preschool for several years, and the college abruptly closed that school this year. Mr. Myers continued that there was a need in the community for preschool for children and a daycare need.

John Keating, 141 East Liberty Street, Wooster, stated that he represented Western Reserve Group, 2845 Benden Drive, Wooster, and submitted a letter. Mr. Keating explained that The Village Network is a great organization that does essential community work and has nothing against a daycare facility. Mr. Keating continued that the letter is about future C-3 zoning here and will follow the property into future owners, uses, and the most intensive commercial zoning districts in our code. Mr. Keating stated that we are worried that we could have a strip shopping center, retail uses, restaurants, bars, and hotels there someday. Mr. Keating explained that there is C-3 to the west, which adjoins the C-3 and fronts other streets like Eagle Pass or Akron Road. Mr. Keating continued that the area is called the Noble Drive Allotment. Mr. Keating stated that we are concerned about changing the neighborhood's character and the development's history. Mr. Keating noted that all the owners agreed this would be an office park, a private restriction agreement. Mr. Keating explained that the agreement's existence is evidence of the owners' intent, especially Western Reserve Group. In reliance on that, they built a beautiful campus-style national headquarters with greenspace walking trails for employees. Mr. Keating stated that the Village Network could use a less intensive zoning district and suggest C-1 zoning because that was the one most in keeping with the office park concept that has been in place for the last 18 years.

Mr. Armbruster closed the public hearing.

Grant Mason made a motion to approve application PC-23-29 recommendation to the City Council with the modification to C-1 zoning. Shawn Starlin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

***PC-23-30.***

John Long requested approval for a Final Development Plan to construct an additional structure consisting of 10,915 square feet at 1034 Nold Avenue with permanent parcel number 65-02096.000 in an I-3 (Urban Industrial) zoning district.

John Long, Shaffer, Johnson, Lichtenwalter, 3477 Commerce Parkway, Wooster, stated that we received our zoning variance approval for this project. Mr. Long explained that the final design plans of this building made it apparent that connecting the building was not the best scenario due to the site's topography. Mr. Long continued that the elevation of the existing building it was initially attached to is about 10 feet lower than the north part of the lot. Mr. Long stated that the site was redesigned, and for the final design, we had to separate the new building from the existing one. Mr. Long explained that it is now a detached building by 7 feet. All of the setbacks except the north setback are the same. Mr. Long noted that the north setback was still within the guidelines of the zoning codes.

Phil Apel made a motion to approve application PC-23-30 with the following conditions:

1. Submittal of wall lighting fixture specifications.
2. An engineering development permit is required to complete the project.

Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

***PC-23-31.***

Chris Betts, on behalf of Wooster Community Hospital, requested Preliminary Development plan approval for an addition and associated parking on property located at 1761 Beall Avenue and 624 Winter Street with parcel numbers 67-02562.000, 67-02551.000 and 67-0550.000 in the CF (Community Facilities) zoning district.

Chris Betts, Hasenstab Architects, 190 North Union Street, Akron, stated that the proposal is a 40,000-square-foot addition on the ground-level patient access and emergency center. Mr. Betts explained that this will accommodate the hospital's emergency department relocation, future imaging, and imaging supporting the emergency department. Mr. Betts continued that patient access, including registration, customer service, and hospital contact points. Mr. Betts stated that this would be the new entrance into the hospital and separated ambulatory entrance. Mr. Betts explained that the second floor will house mechanical space and a connector for patients with maximized parking. Mr. Betts continued that the timeline will break ground in the Spring to begin construction, with completion expected in November 2025.

Shawn Starlin made a motion to approve application PC-23-31 with the following conditions:

1. Landscape Plan.
2. Lighting Plan.
3. Traffic Study.

Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 6-0. Kyle Adams recused himself from the application.

IV. **MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2024**

The setting of meeting dates per the proposed schedule for 2024.

Grant Mason made a motion to approve the meeting schedule 2024 as submitted. Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

Shawn Starlin made a motion to adjourn. Sheree Brownson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

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Chuck Armbruster, Chairman

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Carla Jessie, Administrative Assistant