

Planning Commission Minutes – December 2, 2015

The Planning Commission met on the above date at 7:00 p.m. in the Administrative Services Building, 304 N. Church Street, Bowling Green, Ohio.

Members Present: Jeff Betts, Julie Burton, Gary Hess, Mark Hollenbaugh, Brady Gaskins, Richard Michel, and Erica Sleek.

Members Absent: Ryan Holley and Kris Phillips.

MINUTES Minutes of the November 4, 2015 Planning Commission meeting were approved as amended.

PUBLIC HEARING

S-District Site Plan for Columbia Gas Improvements at 250 South Mercer Road.

Heather Saylor, Planning Director, reported that the S-District Site Plan for the Columbia Gas improvements had been reviewed and signed by all of the required staff, thus the plan meets all city regulations. Tim Bock from Poggemeyer Design Group (the engineering firm representing Columbia Gas) described the upgrade to the existing point of delivery system on Mercer road is for a more efficient and modern facility, which will include a concrete driveway and perimeter fencing. Jeff Betts, chairperson, asked if was part of the major gas project to upgrade gas lines within the city that has been going on for several months. Mr. Bock said it is not necessarily part of the current project in the city, but it is part of the “big picture” of upgrading facilities. Mr. Betts asked if there was any public present that has any questions or wished to speak to the project. There were no comments from the public. Mr. Hollenbaugh stated the project makes sense with the needed upgrades.

Mr. Gaskins moved, Mr. Betts seconded, that the S-District Site Plan for the Columbia Gas improvements at 250 South Mercer Road be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION

Review of the concept plan for the property located at 215 West Wooster Street from the Green Space Task Force.

Mr. Betts stated that Planning Commission asked that the Green Space Task Force present to the Planning Commission the concept plan for the parcel located at 215 West Wooster Street. Mr. Betts said there will be a public hearing, with City Council, at a date to be determined in January.

Mr. Larry Nader, 307 West Wooster Street, stated that in May the Mayor formed the Green Space Task Force, which was charged to accomplish the following:

1. To develop and recommend a conceptual plan and a timeline for implementation to the City Council’s Public Lands and Building Committee, chaired by Theresa Charters Gavarone.
2. To review the history of the site at the corner of West Wooster and South Church and to review the “pros and cons” of the site in terms of potential uses.
3. To ensure that any plan put forward for consideration by City Council includes design elements that require minimal operating and maintenance costs by the city, including representation of BG’s history, and that takes into consideration First Presbyterian Church and the surrounding neighborhood.
4. To recommend a plan that is dependent upon a community-wide fundraising campaign in keeping with previously successful private dollar appeals, for example, the Simpson Garden Park, Save the Woods, and Ridge Park fundraising efforts.

Mr. Nader stated the committee was made-up of a variety of representatives, such as the business community, those with some design-sense, interest in the area, neighbors, and members of the adjacent church. There were subcommittees formed around the tasks, with several meetings to discuss all of the issues.

Planning Commission Minutes – December 2, 2015 – Page 2

Ms. Diane Vogtsberger, 1515 Cedar Lane, spoke on behalf of the design subcommittee. She thanked the other members, John Calderonello, Lloyd Triggs, and Lori Young for their involvement in the concept design. She stated the committee reviewed input, the history of the site, lighting, general parameters, zoning, feasibility, and the Land Use Plan. The group wanted to keep it compatible with the surrounding areas, yet incorporate minimal infrastructure, aesthetics, history of Boom Town, while taking into consideration funding. The group wanted to focus on three phases for development, with one being installation of the basic infrastructure (electric, trees, benches, and pathways), second would be the completion of the performance space, and third would be the sculpture.

John Calderonello, 307 Haskins Road, discussed the various designs the committee considered. He said they kept the focus on the Mayor's request (low maintenance, low cost, and to keep in the architectural character with the surrounding area), which has caused the design to be tweaked multiple times. For example, he said the estimated concrete cost came back very high, so they are option for a different type of foundation for the gazebo they would like to build, so it can still be large enough to accommodate the community band, a theatre group, or a similar organization. He stated the gazebo would be approximately 40' wide by 20' deep and cost approximately \$40,000 to \$60,000, depending on the type of roof and foundation.

Ms. Vogtsberger added that the plan has been changed to lessen the amount of concrete, however, additional elements can be added later. She also pointed out that a water feature, such as a fountain, was discussed as a focal point, but discouraged by Public Works. She said handling stormwater drainage was important, thus reducing concrete would help the watershed. She said the committee hoped that this design be reviewed as a general template, yet not conclusive as to what changes could happen down the road.

Mr. Lloyd Triggs, 672 Meadow View, said the design committee shared ideas for the space, wanted to be open and function as a gathering space to relax, eat lunch, watch a special event, people watch, etc. He said the lighting should match the Heritage 2000 lighting of downtown and the group wanted it to function as a "town square", with a simple design, and grass at the same level. He said this is a starting point and the group wanted to see how the use of the space evolved over time and be complementary to the downtown.

Mr. Betts asked if going to a less expensive foundation for the gazebo could be changed over time? Mr. Calderonello did not believe so. Mr. Betts was worried about the length of time a cheaper material may last versus concrete. Ms. Vogtsberger said keeping the budget down was important, but that a change to concrete may be better in the long run.

Erica Sleek asked how fundraising was going, since that could take care of the concerns of the higher cost items. Mr. Nader said until project is permitted to move forward there is no funding to raise yet. He said once people were mobilized for Simpson Garden Park it was paid for in a few years. It will take awhile to get up and running.

Richard Michel asked if there was consideration given to extra parking, such as a bumped out area or an area near the church. Mr. Triggs said since the design does not use the entire area that is a possibility in the future. Mr. Betts pointed out adding more paving would not help with the watershed.

Mr. Betts asked if the lines protruding are gravel pathways, which would help with storm water drainage. Ms. Vogtsberger said that some of the pathways were narrowed and changed to pea gravel to reduce the concrete footprint.

Planning Commission Minutes – December 2, 2015 – Page 3

Mark Hollanbaugh asked if in the initial phase that the “pan handle” area near the church, that is not part of the concept plan, would be grass, which was confirmed that it would stay grass.

Gary Hess said he is confused on how to get the concept plan to the concrete plan. Ms. Vogtsberger stated the concept plan should be looked at as a template that could be adjusted. However, the linear design makes it easier to maintain and fits in with the “town square” idea. Ms. Sleek, however, wanted to confirm that this is ultimately what is being proposed. Ms. Vogtsberger said yes. The group has already reviewed many designs that have been changed and are trying to do what they can to make it work. For example, the original design had elements of the city seal stamped in concrete original symbols in each corner of the space, but it was too expensive.

Mr. Betts thanked the task force for their hard work, with the understanding that it is natural and easy to critique a plan when not involved. He stated his hope that members of the task force will be present at the public hearing to help answer questions. Mr. Michel added that he has been to musical events at the gazebo near downtown Perrysburg that seem to attract a lot of people and thinks it would be nice here. Ms. Vogtsberger also stated the committee felt this meets at least one of the 7 Bowling Green Principles from the Land Use Plan, which would benefit the surrounding businesses with retail patronage, purchase of boxed lunches, and give the economy a boost.

ANNEXATION

Of approximately 30 acres on Newton Road from Plain Township. HCF Realty of BG, Inc., petitioner.

This item was set for public hearing at the meeting on January 6, 2016.

LOBBY VISITATION

Lynn Ackerson, 8 Arlington Court, said the Land Use Plan recommends reviewing annexations with more scrutiny, but it seems as though there has been no progress on this recommendation. Mark Hollenbaugh also agreed with Ms. Ackerson’s concerns and would like the city to change the review process, as he has stated in the past. Ms. Saylor said annexation is required per city ordinances when city-owned utilities are requested to serve a property.

Ms. Saylor described the progress that has happened with the East Wooster Corridor Concept Plan. The university and city hired a consultant to mesh the university’s master plan with the city’s new plan along East Wooster Street. This was one of the priorities City Council identified from the Land Use Plan. The open house, similar to the open house for the Land Use Plan, will be Thursday, December 10, 2015 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Stroh Center.

REPORTS

Representative to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Saylor said there was not a meeting in November due to the lack of agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Chairperson

Secretary