

MINUTES OF A REGULAR VOTING MEETING OF THE
FAIRFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION

JUNE 22, 2016

Scott Lepsky called the Regular Meeting of the Fairfield Planning Commission to order.

Members present: Scott Lepsky, Don Hassler, Bill Woeste, Dale Paullus, Brian Begley, Tom Hasselbeck, and Ron D'Epifanio.

Scott Lepsky welcomed Mr. Paullus, the new Parks Board Representative, to the Planning Commission.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held June 8, 2016, were approved as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS

Landscape, Site, and Elevation Plans - Starbucks at Stockton Station PUD

Slides were shown of the revised site plan, landscape plan, and elevation facing Route 4. These are the items that had to come back before the Planning Commission for approval, as well as value added changes relating to the site plan. A black awning was added above the glazing on the elevation facing Route 4 and the elevation is more dressed up than the previous submission. The site plan was revised; the curb cut on Stockton Station Dr. was removed and parking was added facing Stockton Station Dr. More screening adjacent to Stockton Station Dr. will be necessary where the curb cut was located in the previous site plan submission, as well as around the dumpster. Mr. Lepsky said he thinks Staff covered the areas of concern that he had; he likes one curb cut because of the volume of traffic and the hours of operation. Mr. Woeste agrees that the changes are upgrades. Tim Bachman, Development Services Director, recommended that Staff approve the modifications to the landscape plan, because they are so minor.

Scott Lepsky, seconded by Don Hassler motioned to approve the submitted revisions, with the condition that Staff will coordinate landscape issues. Motion carried 7-0.

The applicants plan to start construction around August 1; and hope to be open before the end of the year. Mr. Bachman advised the applicants that they need to send the legal binding document back to the Development Services Department.

NEW BUSINESS

Design Review Items

-New Sign – Rodriguez & Porter Law – 5103 Pleasant Ave.

Slides were shown of the proposed sign. The sign will be installed on the front of the building and will consist of dark purple lettering with a purple and yellow logo.

Scott Lepsky, seconded by Don Hassler, motioned to approve the application per the Design Review Committee recommendation. Motion carried 7-0.

-Face Change – Fairfield Coffee - 311 Nilles Rd.

Slides were shown of the proposed signage and site. The signage is already installed, and is located over the drive thru and on the ground sign. The signage consists of a mostly white background with a burgundy trim around the outside edge. The lettering is black and burgundy with a yellow arrow logo.

Scott Lepsky, seconded by Don Hassler, motioned to approve the application per the Design Review Committee recommendation. Motion carried 7-0.

REPORTS/STUDIES/GENERAL DISCUSSION

Tim Bachman, Development Services Director, showed slides and discussed proposed changes to the Fairfield Planning and Zoning Code. He clarified that once the Commission gives their feedback on the changes, there are still a lot of reviews that will happen, including 3 readings at City Council and public hearings, before final approval.

There was discussion regarding the proposed change to the Design Review Committee. The Design Review Committee was created 22 years ago, when the Downtown Regulations were created. The area was changed from C-2 zoning to D-1. At that time, people were unsure of the changes and the whole idea of Downtown was “sold” by having representatives from the 4 quadrants to make decisions in the new Downtown area. These representatives must be business members and residents of Fairfield. They also cannot do any business with the City. Over the years, people have lost interest and the City is struggling to fill the positions. City Council has appointed members who don’t fully meet the requirements. The City will continue to try and recruit people, but the current parameters prevent people from participating in the Committee. The City would like to change the requirements to 2 business owners in the Downtown and 3 at large residents or business members. Mr. Woeste suggested having Kert Radel talk to business owners in the quadrant first. Mr. Bachman stated that this committee was very instrumental with recent projects, such as the Kroger Gas Station and Patterson Senior Housing project and will come into play more and more as redevelopment occurs in the downtown district.

There are currently no regulations regarding ground cover in the City. Mr. Lepsky suggested limiting the percentage of rocks as ground cover, rather than wiping it out in its entirety. Erin Donovan, Planning Manager, said that the City would prefer to limit the use to an “Accessory” or “Accent” over a percentage, which would be easier to manage.

The definition for a clinic is pretty open. The Whitestone facility on Sandy Lane was told they would be able to locate there if they met that definition; it is a principally permitted use in the D-1 zoning district. Their staff to patient ratio is good and they seem to be a good addition to the community. Ms. Donovan recently researched adjacent jurisdictions, but did not find very much information on this issue. The City of Hamilton recently made changes to their code relating to substance abuse facilities, allowing them as Conditional Uses only in industrial zoning districts. West Chester currently has an 8 month moratorium on them so they can study them and decide how they want to handle them. Whitestone had originally wanted to locate to Hamilton, but they were in the middle of changing the zoning at that time. An addiction facility was proposed in West Chester next to a daycare and ball fields; the residents did not want this type of facility near where children would be. Currently in Fairfield, clinics are a Permitted Use in the D-1, B-1, and C-4 zoning district

and are Conditional Uses in other commercial zoning districts. All types of clinics, dentists, doctors, etc., have been locating to the commercial zoning districts, under “office” uses as Permitted Uses. Mr. Hassler wants to protect the residential areas from substance abuse clinics. Mr. Bachman said that currently, clinics would be a Conditional Use in a residential area, so we are already covered. Mr. Woeste said the addicts are already being taken to the hospitals near residential areas. As long as they are outpatient facilities, they do not present any threats to the community. There was discussion and agreement to require all medical offices and clinics to obtain a Conditional Use in every zoning district, except for the B-1 zoning district. They would remain a Permitted Use in the B-1 zoning district. Mr. Bachman stated that Staff needs to be more diligent in their review of the medical offices. By requiring all medical offices to obtain Conditional Uses, it is a more even handed approach to regulating them.

Window signage in the D-1 zoning district was discussed. Currently, interior window signage is permitted per code, but it is hard to tell what signs are on the inside and which are on the outside of the window. The City has particularly struggled with the full window signage, like the Verizon and Petco signage. The City has been allowing all of them and a lot of businesses Downtown utilize them. Because permits are not required for window signage, they are very hard to police. Mr. Hasselbeck stated that he was surprised to discover that window signage was permitted and not counted as part of the total signage allowance when he started on the Design Review Committee. There was discussion on how the amount of signage is determined. A business person could install an all glass storefront and have as much signage as they wanted. From a safety standpoint, Ms. Donovan said she talked to the Police Department and they expressed concern about not being able to see inside the storefronts; if they were to receive a call about a robbery, they are going in blind. The way that they are constructed, you can see outside, but cannot see inside. There was discussion on the history of the Fairfield Pharmacy window signage. John Clemmons, Law Director, pointed out that the only reason this is a safety issue is because the police can’t see through the glass. If the storefronts were constructed out of masonry or brick, you would still have a sight issue. Another item to consider is the sun comes in through the Verizon store windows in the late afternoon and if they did not have the signage covering the windows; it would be very hot inside the store. The full window signage coverage helps keep it cooler inside, almost like having window shades. The City will not pursue a change in window signage requirements at this time.

LED String lights were discussed. Technology has allowed businesses to draw attention their businesses very cheaply with these types of lights. Mr. Woeste said they are starting to show up all over the city; every week it seems there is another one that shows up. Planning Commission will recommend they not be permitted citywide.

There was discussion regarding security bars on windows. Ms. Donovan stated that other jurisdictions prohibit them outright. Others allow them only on the inside of the windows and they must not be visible or must be recessed when the business is open. The “pull down” types of bars are generally prohibited. Mr. Hassler said the bars give the city a bad reputation. He wants them to require a Conditional Use and to be prohibited unless the Police Department approves them. He thinks they downgrade the community. There was discussion on the existing security bars. The tattoo parlor located in the Downtown has them, but the building was a former pharmacy and they are the ones who installed the bars to keep people from stealing the drugs. Mr. Clemmons suggested clarifying the code with specific requirements for the security bars. He can understand someplace like a pharmacy needing to protect their inventory. He thinks the businesses should be able to protect their properties if necessary. Mr. Hasselbeck and Mr. Lepsky said they would have less of a problem if the security bars were completely out of sight while the businesses were open. Ms. Donovan noted that the problem with requiring a Conditional Use is that there is no mechanism to catch them before they are installed. There was discussion on whether to regulate the security bars in just the D-1 zoning district, or

citywide. Mr. D'Epifanio said there are only a few of them right now and it is a good time to nip them in the bud. Staff will look into the issue further. Mr. Bachman said it would be easier to install the security bars and keep them out of sight when constructing a new building than trying to retrofit an existing building.

Mr. Paullus reported that the Parks Board met a week ago at Harbin Park. They are working on a redesign of the park.

Mr. Begley reported that the school board has picked a new superintendent. They are now working on filling his previous position.

Mr. Woeste reminded everyone about the Farmer's market and concerts in the park. The fireworks are also coming up.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Scott Lepsky, Chairman

Lynda McGuire, Secretary