



MEETING MINUTES

Planning & Zoning Commission

Thursday, February 1, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Call, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the February 1, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. She stated that the meeting also could be accessed at the City's website. Public comments on the cases were welcome from meeting attendees and from those viewing at the City's website.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Call led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Commission members present: Jamey Chinnock, Kim Way, Mark Supelak, Warren Fishman, Kathy Harter, Rebecca Call

Commission members absent: Lance Schneier

Staff members present: Jennifer Rauch, Thaddeus Boggs, Bassem Bitar, Taylor Mullinax, Zachary Hounshell

ACCEPTANCE OF DOCUMENTS/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Supelak moved, Mr. Chinnock seconded acceptance of the documents into the record and approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) Regular Meeting Minutes of 01-18-24.

Vote: Ms. Harter, yes; Mr. Fishman, yes; Mr. Supelak, yes; Mr. Chinnock, yes; Mr. Way, yes; Ms. Call, yes.

[Motion carried 6-0]

Ms. Call stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission is an advisory board to City Council when rezoning and platting of property are under consideration. In such cases, City Council will receive recommendations from the Commission. In other cases, the Commission has the final decision-making responsibility. Anyone who intends to address the Commission on administrative cases must be sworn in. Ms. Call swore in individuals who intended to give public testimony.

- **Case #23-138INF – Informal Review, Midwestern Auto Group – Volvo & VW**

A Request for Informal Review and feedback on a proposed rezoning to construct two automobile dealerships on a vacant lot. The 6.78-acre site is zoned Planned Commerce District (PCD) – Perimeter Center and is located northwest of the intersection of Perimeter Drive and Wall Street.

Applicant Presentation

Brad Parish, Chief Exec. Officer, Archall Architects, 49 E. 3rd Avenue, Columbus stated that he is representing Midwest Auto Group (MAG) for their proposed business expansion. MAG proposes to move two of their brands, Volkswagen and Volvo, which are currently located on the main MAG campus, to a new 6.7-acre site. The site is located next to Wall Street in the Planned Commercial District (PCD), Perimeter Center Subarea C. The primary use for this subarea is Office, Medical Use and Limited, Light Assembly. All the surrounding properties in Subarea C and D are zoned Office. The use to the west of their site is Office with a Conditional Use of Personal Services, the Schoedinger Funeral Home. The original MAG site was located in the Community Plan's Future Land Use (FLU) map as General Commercial, but their expansions throughout the years have bled into the Standard Office and Institutional designations in the FLU. This is the same land use as the Subarea C site on which they propose to expand. He displayed the overall site plan. The brands would be combined into one building with the Volvo brand located to the east and the Volkswagen brand located to the west. There would be a service drive in the middle and a 26-bay service area. The primary reason for relocating these brands is to enable MAG to expand their service business, which has become limited on the main campus. The site was purchased by MAG in 2015, and they have held it to see how this corridor would be developed. This would seem to be the right time to submit their proposal. All of the vehicle display area would be at the front of the site. The site has been developed consistent with the Planned Unit Development (PUD) text for the main campus. With the proposed rezoning, that PUD text would be adopted for this site, as well. With the proposed floorplan, the sales area would be located in front, service drives in the middle, a screened-in loading dock to the east and an auto detail area at the rear of the building. The elevations would follow suit with the brand standards for the showroom. Since the PCD zoning on the land was approved in 1988, this land has remained vacant. The MAG business has been located in Dublin since 1997. In 2023, they employed 230-240 employees generating approximately \$22.5 million in wages. In moving the two brands to the new site, they estimate creating 35-40 sales and tech jobs, generating another \$3.0-3.5 million in wages. This move will also give MAG the opportunity to locate two new luxury brands on the main campus. Some of the surrounding office space has experienced a turnover in tenants. It would appear that the uses of office, medical or light manufacturing have shifted to other Dublin corridors and are no longer pertinent for this corridor. He pointed out that a precedent exists for an auto dealership to be located in the standard Office and Institutional areas of the Community Plan's FLU plan. MAG is excited about this opportunity to expand their business.

Staff Presentation

Ms. Mullinax stated this is a request for an Informal Review, which is an optional step in the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process to provide applicants with nonbinding feedback from the Commission prior to submitting formal development applications. The vacant 6.78-acre site is zoned Planned Commerce District (PCD) - Perimeter Center and is located northwest of the intersection of Perimeter Drive and Wall Street, with frontage along both streets. The Future Land Use (FLU) recommendation for the site is Standard Office and Institutional. As Envision Dublin, the City's Community Plan update, is developed, City Council has adopted Interim Land Use Principles to guide development during this transition. The proposed rezoning and development do not align with Principles #1 and #3 of the Interim Land Use Principles. The proposed use disrupts the recommended FLU pattern, which may not be compatible with existing adjacent uses. An automobile dealership more closely aligns with the General Commercial FLU, which allows for auto-oriented uses concentrated along certain corridors in the City. The Community Plan states that this

type of commercial development is not recommended for additional areas beyond existing sites. If rezoned, the site would be an outparcel of the existing MAG PUD and would lack connectivity to the rest of the MAG campus across Perimeter Drive. Under the existing PCD-Perimeter Center zoning, automobile dealerships are not a permitted use in Subarea C; therefore, the applicant proposes to rezone this site to PUD - MAG to establish a new subarea. The applicant is proposing to construct the two automobile dealerships in two phases.

Staff has provided the following discussion questions for the Commission:

- 2) If the Commission supports the proposed rezoning and uses, does the Commission support the site layout and arrangement of parking?
- 3) If the Commission supports the proposed rezoning and uses, does the Commission support the conceptual architecture?
- 4) Any additional considerations by the Commission.

Commission Questions

Mr. Chinnock inquired the applicant's response to the concerns expressed by staff regarding connectivity to the main MAG campus, the integration with the neighborhood, and the mixed-uses, which this proposal lacks.

Mr. Parish responded that for years, MAG had the site on Post Road, where the Toy Barn is now located. The two sites worked well operationally. In regard to connectivity, the funeral home on the adjacent site really does not add to the connectivity in a neighborhood that is primarily office. Although the intent for this corridor was to be a vibrant office community, it has not developed in that manner since 1988. In regard to connectivity to the main MAG campus, this is an infill destination site, and the associated sales and service is a good use for this site.

Mr. Chinnock inquired if the City were to require mounding and landscaping to minimize the views of the space, that would be an issue for the applicant.

Mr. Parish responded that the original PUD text provides for a 25% display window for the main campus. That text would be adopted for this site, as well; they are not intending to re-write the development text.

Jack Reynolds, Attorney, Smith and Hale, 37 W Broad St # 460, Columbus, stated that contextually, this site would fit well with the surrounding sites, all of which have a building in the middle of a large parking lot. While its use may be different, its appearance will be contextually consistent with the surrounding area.

Mr. Way stated that the proposed display area appears to be double-stacked. He inquires because of the character that would be established along the road. The density of the automobiles displayed will have an impact on that character.

Mr. Parish responded that is the 25% display window. The display will be double-parked. It is a similar type of automobile display as exists on the main MAG campus. There will be mounding at the entrance, similar to the main campus, as well.

Ms. Harter inquired how customers would become aware of this site. Will they be directed there from the main campus, or will there be signage that will direct them there?

Mr. Parish responded that automobile sales are not a drive-by habit. Potential customers conduct extensive research online, find the desired dealer, and go to that specific site.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Commission Discussion

Ms. Call directed Commissioners' attention to the first discussion question:

- 1) Does the Commission support a proposed rezoning for this site to accommodate automobile dealerships and associated uses?

Mr. Fishman responded that he would not be supportive of rezoning the site for use by an automobile dealership. He recalls that the original zoning for office was very specific in that they must be brick and attractive. The funeral home had to abide by those requirements. The proposed zoning would completely change the character of this area. He does not believe the owner of one of the office buildings would be supportive of a car dealership on the adjacent site. He does not believe the proposed use is appropriate for this area.

Mr. Supelak stated that he also is averse to rezoning this site to accommodate an auto dealership. We have been fortunate that the auto dealerships within Dublin have clustered in appropriate places that were destined to be commercial uses. The existing MAG campus adjacent to the expressway makes sense, even though it has started to bleed down into the Standard Office area. He is not supportive of locating the auto dealership use further back into this subarea.

Mr. Way stated that Perimeter Drive does not "feel" like a retail street. A car dealership has a very retail feel. In addition, the service/repair component of the business would generate a lot of coming/going traffic to the site. This street was not intended for this type of use. This site is located near residential. The character and function is not appropriate for this particular site.

Ms. Harter expressed agreement with her fellow commissioners. While she is confident that MAG would make the site look nice, the dealership would change the area.

Mr. Chinnock expressed agreement with fellow commissioners, as well. The proposed use is too much for this site. This is not a retail street. The MAG campus has been a wonderful addition in the area, and the Commission wants to support MAG as a company. However, this is not the right site for their expansion.

Ms. Call expressed agreement. Because the Community Plan's FLU plan designates this area as Office and Institutional, and the proposed use is not consistent with the Interim Land Use Principles, too much is being asked of the site. In addition, the intent to apply the development text of a non-contiguous parcel is too much of a stretch. However, the Commission and the City appreciate MAG. We love having MAG here and appreciate that the business has grown as the city has grown. That has been mutually beneficial to the MAG dealership and to the City. The Commission looks forward to seeing a future application for a parcel that is more fitting for a commercial, auto-oriented business.

No action was taken on the Informal Review case.

- **Case #24-001ADMC - Administrative Approval – Code Amendment**

A request for review and recommendation of approval to City Council for proposed amendments to the administrative approval criteria in the Zoning Code under the provisions of Zoning Code Section 153.232 and 153.234.

Staff Presentation

Mr. Hounshell stated that several months ago, the Commission requested an amendment to the Zoning Code addressing the scope of the Administrative Approval criteria and identifying opportunities to expand additional staff approvals. The goal is to reduce the number of minor applications appearing before PZC that require minimal discussion. In August 2023, the PZC was provided with all existing Administrative Approval criteria and a summary of consent agenda items over the past 6 years. Staff identified that Conditional Use applications for minor intensity use changes, signs, and minor building material changes typically were approved via consent agenda. The Commission recommended that staff also include menu board signs for administrative approval, distinguishing between conditional use changes and like-for-like applications. There are 5 areas of focus in the proposed amendment:

1. Existing Signs. Modifications have been made to several sections of the Zoning Code to modify language referring to minor modifications to existing signs in Planned Districts [153.053(G)], the Bridge Street District [153.066(M)], the West Innovation District [153.042(E)], and the Dublin Corporate Area [153.048(K)]. Existing language generally states that the Planning Director may approve minor modifications to an existing sign face, landscaping, and lighting. The proposed language would allow staff to approve additional minor modifications to signs, including the location and design of an approved sign. This change does not permit staff to approve new signs for a property, or significantly altered existing signs; such signs would continue to be reviewed and approved by the Commission.
2. Building Materials. The language in Zoning Code Section 153.066(M)(1)(i) has been revised to include the partial or full painting of buildings as accepted modifications for administrative approval. In cases where the modifications do not significantly alter the character of a building, staff would have the purview to approve the change. The criteria for Minor Projects in the BSD has been modified to remove the stipulation that exterior modifications to principal structures involving not more than 25 percent of any individual façade elevation of a structure be approved by a Minor Project. Modifications that create significant character change would still require Planning Commission or Administrative Review Team (ART) review.
3. Administrative Departures. The language in Zoning Code Section 153.066(J) has been changed to modify the definition of an Administrative Departure (AD). Currently, an AD is a review process that allows the ART to approve minor deviations to numerical zoning standards of no greater than 10 percent. This requirement is currently written as 10 percent of a requirement, not 10 percentage points. The AD language has been updated from 10 percent to 10 percentage points to provide more clarity of the requirement and greater latitude for the ART to approve minor modifications to development projects and tenant improvements.
4. Menu Board Signs. The language in Zoning Code Section 153.159(I) Signs with Special Conditions has been updated to include additional parameters for menu board signs that are consistent with previously approved signs in the City. The language establishes requirements for

maximum size, maximum height, location, screening, sound and operations and allows the Planning Director or designee to review and approve the sign plan prior to submittal of a sign permit. In cases where a menu board sign does not meet these requirements, the sign plan would need to be reviewed by the required reviewing body.

5. Minor Conditional Use Changes. Per the Commission's request, Planning and Legal staff have reviewed the opportunity to eliminate the need for Commission approval of minor use changes, and have provided language in Zoning Code Section 153.236(H) that specifies staff can approve Conditional Use changes that are within the same use category as the approved Conditional Use. This change would not allow administrative approval of new Conditional Use applications, but allow changes to maintain existing, approved uses in existing buildings/tenant spaces.

Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the proposed Code amendment. If the Commission should accept the proposed changes, they would make a recommendation of approval of the Code amendment to City Council.

Commission Questions

Mr. Chinnock referred to the language regarding sign plans and requested clarification of the intent concerning "similar design elements" for signage.

Mr. Hounshell responded that signs that meet the requirements would be administratively approved; signs that meet the requirements but are more creative, taller or have greater impact would be forwarded to the Commission for review and approval. Regular updates would be provided to the Commission of administratively approved cases.

Mr. Chinnock inquired if items such as logo and color would continue to come before the Commission.

Mr. Hounshell responded that they could; it would depend upon the degree of impact of what is proposed.

Mr. Boggs clarified that color would be determined by the particular development text. Logos relate to content, and unless the logo would change the size of the sign, we would want to avoid putting the Commission in the position of regulating content on a sign.

Ms. Call stated that staff has made recommendations regarding the Code amendment, but if the Commission is not comfortable with any of the proposed changes, those items can be removed for later consideration and the remaining amendments would be recommended to City Council for approval.

Mr. Way referred to sign design and location. Would that include any potential impact to the existing landscaping on the surrounding site?

Mr. Hounshell responded that it would include modifications to the sign face, landscaping and lighting. Those are items that staff would continue to review against the standard Sign Code.

Ms. Harter referred to the drive-thru signs, which must be only one sign. Does that mean they could be eliminating two signs?

Mr. Hounshell responded that when the Commission reviewed menu board signs in the past, it has always been one sign. Historically, pre-menu boards have not been approved, and it has been just one sign, either digital or standardized. Most businesses are moving to digital, which is accommodated.

Ms. Call stated that this does not prevent an applicant from requesting multiple signs. Should they do so, however, such requests would not fall within the purview of administrative approval.

Mr. Hounshell responded that if it were a PUD, and the applicant requested more signs than permitted by the development text, they would need to come before the Commission to request a text modification.

Ms. Call stated that if a parcel were not entitled to a menu board sign, the applicant would need to have it included with the PUD development text, or an Amended Final Development Plan.

Ms. Rauch stated that there is the opportunity with the current Code that says if there is an application that staff believes needs to be advanced to the Commission for review, staff has the authority to do so.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Mr. Supelak moved, Mr. Way seconded a recommendation for City Council approval of the Code amendment regarding Administrative Approval criteria.

Vote: Ms. Harter, yes; Mr. Supelak, yes; Mr. Chinnock, yes; Ms. Call, yes; Mr. Way, yes; Mr. Fishman, yes.

[Motion carried 6-0]

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Rauch provided the following updates:

- Commission members were made aware of the following training/travel opportunities: 2024 APA (American Planning Association) Conference in Minneapolis, April 13-16 and ULI (Urban Land Institute) Spring Conference in New York City, April 8-11, 2024.
- A detailed Envision Dublin update will be provided at the Commission's February 15, 2024 meeting. Subsequent updates will be provided at future Commission meetings.

Mr. Way inquired when the final draft of the proposed Community Plan Update is anticipated for Commission review and recommendation to City Council.

Ms. Rauch responded that it is tentatively anticipated for the second May meeting date, which is currently a tour date. That tour date may need to be moved to an alternative date. Before that review occurs, there will be public meeting opportunities for the public to see the proposed plan.

Mr. Way inquired if one of the next steps is addressing the area plans, and if the Commission would have the opportunity to review the proposed area plans before the final review of the revised Community Plan.

Ms. Rauch responded that it would be one of the subsequent updates that will be provided to the Commission before the final draft plan is prepared. There may be an opportunity for a joint work session for discussion of the Envision Dublin Plan before it is scheduled for final review.

- An update was provided regarding the Metro Center Strategic Framework. A Council work session on the topic was held this past Monday, January 29, in which Mr. Way participated because he was part of the original visioning process. On Tuesday, January 30, there was

a public meeting, which involved a panel discussion followed by an open house. Staff plans to bring a more detailed update to a future Commission meeting.

Mr. Way stated that there are active cases that involve Metro Center and Blazer Parkway. Will the Metro Center Strategic Framework process/guidance align well with the decision-making?

Ms. Rauch responded that cases would be reviewed on their merits according to the current Community Plan and Code regulations. The Interim Land Use Principles will help guide applications in the interim. There will be a need for patience on the part of applicants as this is sorted out. Potentially, there may be significant changes with road networks, open space and greenways, which would affect proposed projects.

Mr. Fishman stated that he attended the Tuesday public meeting on the Metro Center Strategic Framework visioning. He learned that there are 24 current property owners in Metro Center. Will the City be investing in that area? Will there be public meetings that will include those 24 property owners?

Ms. Rauch responded that as part of the Metro Center Framework Visioning, the consultant team has already conducted some stakeholder interviews; there will be a future round of interviews, as well. The purpose of the plan is to advance the vision but also identify if there are certain projects and investments for which the City would be responsible. The effort may be similar to what occurred with Bridge Park, for which the City moved Riverside Drive and built street connections.

Mr. Fishman inquired what the owners' responses were during the stakeholder interviews. Are they willing to invest significantly in this renovation of Metro Center?

Ms. Rauch responded that some property owners have their property leased and are satisfied. The implementation of the plan will be driven by what the individual property owners want to do. The City's goal is to establish a vision for how this area should look, so that future projects will be set up for success.

Mr. Fishman inquired if the owners have committed to how much they are willing to participate in the financial investment.

Ms. Rauch responded that the visioning process has not advanced to that stage.

Mr. Boggs responded that the City is just at the beginning of this process. There will be many discussions at the City Manager and City Council level, which will define a robust development plan for this area. The Commission's role is not the financial piece but the land use and development component.

Mr. Way stated that there is currently a 25% vacancy in Metro Center, so that is an incentive for something better to occur.

Mr. Fishman inquired if the intent is that the City adopt a plan, and the property owners could choose whether to participate.

Mr. Boggs responded that is similar to any other visions the City has adopted for a large area. The City begins the visioning with the stakeholders in the area, which is the purpose of the interviews that are being conducted. The discussions will culminate in drafting a plan, which will come before the Commission for review and before Council for adoption. Then it is up to the property owners and development community to determine what projects they wish to pursue. The plan provides the map. If the property owner does not want to participate in the plan and prefers to leave their

property as is, that is their prerogative. At this point in the process, we do not yet know what the plan will be, but we know how we will get there.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

The next regular PZC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 15, 2024.



Chair, Planning and Zoning Commission



Assistant Clerk of Council