



RECORD OF DISCUSSION

Planning & Zoning Commission

Thursday, May 20, 2021 | 6:30 pm

The Planning and Zoning Commission took the following action at this meeting:

2. Flex/Industrial Building at 6777 Crosby Court 21-061INF

Informal Review

Proposal: Construction of an approximately 140,000-square-foot flex/industrial building located within the West Innovation District on a 9.3-acre site.

Location: Southwest of the intersection of Crosby Court with Dublin Plain City Road zoned ID-3 Research Assembly District.

Request: Informal review and non-binding feedback for a future development application under the provisions of Zoning Code Section 153.050.

Applicant: Dana L. McDaniel, City Manager, City of Dublin

Planning Contact: Zach Hounshell, Planner I

Contact Information: 614.410.4652, zhounshell@dublin.oh.us

Case Information: www.dublinohiousa.gov/pzc/21-061

RESULT: The Commission conducted an informal review and provided non-binding feedback on the construction of an approximately 140,000-square-foot flex/industrial building located in the West Innovation District. The applicant requested specific feedback on the increased number of parking spaces and parking location forward of the building. The Commission expressed their appreciation for this type of project filling a need within the community for flex/industrial space. The Commission was generally supportive of the proposed increase in parking spaces, as long as the use of the building warrants the increased parking counts. The Commission expressed concern that the decrease in pavement setbacks would eliminate the potential for landscaping and screening along the Houchard Road and Dublin-Plain City Road frontages and emphasized the need for additional landscaping given the proposed use and parking location. The Commission recommended that the stormwater basin, south of the building, be reduced or eliminated in favor of underground detention to accommodate a larger landscape buffer and maintain the streetscape desired along Dublin-Plain City Road.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jane Fox	Yes
Warren Fishman	Yes
Mark Supelak	Yes
Rebecca Call	Yes
Leo Grimes	Yes
Lance Schneier	Yes
Kim Way	Yes

STAFF CERTIFICATION

DocuSigned by:

Zach Hounshell

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Zach Hounshell, Planner I



~~retain the right-of-way for utilities. There is also a waterline on the north side of that roadway. It would not be possible to locate a retention basin over a waterline.~~

~~Mr. Ruma thanked Commissioners for their time and very helpful feedback~~

Public Comment

~~No public comments were received on the case.~~

2. Flex/Industrial Building at 6777 Crosby Court, 21-061INF, Informal Review

A request for the construction of an approximately 140,000-square-foot flex/industrial building located within the West Innovation District. The 9.3-acre site is zoned ID-3 Research Assembly District and is southwest of the intersection of Crosby Court with Dublin Plain City Road.

Staff Presentation

Ms. Rauch stated that this is a request for an Informal Review of an application for construction of an approximately 140,000-square-foot flex/industrial building located on a 9.34-acre site within the West Innovation District. 6777 Crosby Court is located on the western boundary of the City of Dublin within the West Innovation District (WID). The site is north of VA Data, which is developed with four data center buildings, and west of Command Alkon an office/warehouse building. The West Innovation District (WID) is similar to the Bridge Street District in that it was implemented to allow for flexibility in design and to expedite review procedures within a specific area of the City. Applications within the WID that meet the requirements listed in Zoning Code Sections 153.036 – 153.042 are eligible for review and approval by the Administrative Review Team (ART). The ART has the ability to approve Administrative Departures, which are procedures that allow the flexibility necessary to permit minor deviation from the Zoning Code to address unusual conditions, both known and unforeseen, under circumstances that do not alter the permitted uses. In the event that an application varies from the requirements of the Code or is denied approval of an Administrative Departure, applications would be reviewed and determined by the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). The site is owned by the City of Dublin and is currently vacant. This is a joint application between the City of Dublin and VanTrust Real Estate, who would develop the site in partnership with the City.

Proposal

This is a request for non-binding feedback on the site layout, particularly the number of parking spaces and the parking locations. The proposal is for a 140,000-square-foot multi-tenant flex/industrial building. The building will be comprised of warehouse and office uses, with the significant majority of it being warehouse use. The proposed building is centrally located on the site, with two vehicular access points located along Crosby Court. Vehicular access to the site is only permitted along Crosby Court, as access is prohibited along Houchard Road and Dublin Plain City Road/SR 161 by the recorded plat. The site plan depicts parking along the north, west, and east sides of the building, with several loading docks to the south of the building. The WID Code requires all parking, except for visitor parking, to be located along the side or rear of the structure. The site has three street frontages. The multiple street frontages create a challenge in locating parking on the site that meets zoning requirements. Based on the uses and the WID parking requirements, 56 parking spaces would be required; the proposal is for 163 parking spaces. The intent of that number is to provide maximum flexibility and marketability for a future tenant. At this point, the tenant is unknown. This proposal meets the pavement setbacks, acreage and lot coverage requirements, with the exception of the parking setbacks. Based on Code, the parking requirement must be 30 feet; the proposal encroaches within 15 feet of pavement. One linear retention basin is provided along the southern property line of the site. The orientation of the pond is conceptual and will need to be modified to meet the needs of the site and the requirements of the City Stormwater regulations.

Staff has offered the following discussion questions for the Commission's review:

- 1) Is the Commission supportive of the proposed site layout including parking locations forward of the building and stormwater management basin configuration?
- 2) Does the Commission support a Parking Adjustment to allow for 163 parking spaces where 56 are required?
- 3) Is the Commission supportive of a 15-foot front pavement setback along Houchard Road and Dublin Plain City Road?
- 4) Any other considerations by the Commission.

Applicant Presentation

Phil Rasey, VP of Development, VanTrust Real Estate, 775 Yard St #300, Columbus, OH 43212, stated that they have been working with the City's Economic Development team on this site and look forward to the Commission's feedback.

Ms. Gilger, Ec. Development Director, stated that this a challenging site with three different road frontages. The intent is that this building will accommodate up to four tenants with individual entrances. The site plan provides forward parking in order to best serve the four front entrances, in addition to separating the parking for visitors and employees from the loading dock area. The intent is to emphasize the jobs and production versus warehousing. That is the purpose of the request for additional parking. The stormwater pond has been included in the plan as a placeholder, but it has not been designed or engineered at this point. Because the site drains to the south, the pond will be configured on the south side of the site.

Commission Questions

Mr. Fishman stated that he realizes this is an industrial site; however, no landscape buffer appears to be provided along SR161 or the other roadways. That is unusual for a City-owned site. Are there any plans for buffering from SR161 and Houchard Road?

Ms. Gilger responded that the nearby VA Data building has a significant buffer with the setback, bikepath and landscaping. They would anticipate something similar for this site on all road frontages.

Mr. Fishman inquired if there would be buffering specifically on SR161.

Ms. Gilger responded affirmatively.

Mr. Fishman inquired if there would be a retention or a detention pond on the site.

Ms. Gilger responded that has not yet been designed. The Commission's feedback is needed on the parking count and location before they could address how the stormwater would function.

Mr. Fishman stated that he would prefer the pond be a retention pond, which holds water, and that it be visible from the roadway, providing an amenity on the industrial site with a metal building.

Mr. Rasey clarified that the proposed building would be constructed of precast concrete not metal. Although there will be frontage on three roads, the intent is that the SR161 frontage be the primary frontage and be heavily landscaped. The building façade on that side would have architecturally interesting features, including glass on the corners and in the center. The intent is that the building would appear to be an office building, similar to their Blazer Parkway project. Although the site drains to the south, they could consider the possibility of locating the pond in a manner to emphasize the aesthetics of the site.

Mr. Way inquired if it would be possible to connect to Houchard Road.

Ms. Gilger responded that there would be no ability to do so, due to how the site is platted. Access to Houchard Road is not permitted. The only access permitted is from Crosby Court.

Ms. Fox inquired if this would be a 2-story building.

Mr. Rasey responded that it would be a 1-story building approximately 32 feet in height. That height could accommodate 2-story office within, but initially, it will not be 2 stories.

Ms. Fox stated that it would seem a compromise could occur if the pond were removed. That would permit more opportunity for parking spaces and provide more frontage on SR161. More landscaping features would be possible, which would create a more attractive look than would exist with two rows of parking. Could Engineering staff confirm the possibilities of moving the retention basin?

Mr. Hendershot responded that possibility could be explored. The tentative location of the pond is due to the site's drainage outlet to the southeast. Other stormwater control measures could be utilized, which can be defined as the design progresses.

Mr. Way stated that he is attempting to understand the nature of this product. There is no tenant; the proposal would maximize the site; parking space is being increased; and there is a massive loading dock area to the rear of the structure. This looks more like a distribution center than a flex building. What happens if the anticipated user does not come along, and all that paved area is not needed? He understands they are attempting to create an opportunity for an anticipated tenant, but should that not occur, this site will have a large amount of unused paved surface.

Ms. Gilger stated that this is a joint project, and both parties share the goal of securing certain tenants for this building. Within the West Innovation District (WID), there is a shortage of research, development and production space. This type of building is highly desired in the Dublin market. The City has been losing out to projects on Industrial Parkway that are seeking this type of development. The City does not want to see this turn into only a warehouse or distribution center. Having visitor and employee parking at the front of the building lends itself toward multi-tenant and production space, as it separates the employee spaces from the loading docks. Because this site is located in the WID and along the US33 Smart Corridor, this building will be marketed to a different commercial demographic. There is very low vacancy in this type of building within Dublin. Typical users for this type of space have a large office presence at the front. VanTrust Real Estate has recently built some of these buildings in Dublin, so Mr. Rasey can elaborate on the type of tenants seeking this form of space.

Mr. Rasey stated that they believe there is a shortage in the market for this type of higher-end, manufacturing/warehousing space. Due to the cost of rent with this building, the market itself will weed out the types of tenants not sought. This opportunity was recognized last year, when a potential user approached the City Economic Development Director. Unfortunately, the space available for that user had insufficient parking space. His company is willing to take a speculative risk to provide a facility for the City Economic Development team to market. Having a building that would be deliverable in months, rather than a year, would be an attractive opportunity for the City. Although 140,000 square feet is not one of the larger buildings they have constructed, it will be appropriate for four tenants. The cost of these types of buildings is increasing, and constructing a 140,000-square foot building would be cost prohibitive for many businesses. They are attempting to achieve as much flexibility as possible with the building to attract a different size of company. They are looking forward to working through this project with the City.

Mr. Way thanked him for the helpful explanation and his assurance regarding the market for this project.

Commission Discussion

Ms. Call asked Commission members to provide input on the following discussion questions:

- 1) Is the Commission supportive of the proposed site layout including parking locations forward of the building and stormwater management basin configuration?
- 2) Does the Commission support a Parking Adjustment to allow for 163 parking spaces where 56 are required?
- 3) Is the Commission supportive of a 15-foot front pavement setback along Houchard Road and Dublin Plain City Road?
- 4) Any other considerations by the Commission.

Ms. Call stated that in her line of work, she works on the software for distribution centers. The size of those distribution centers ranges from 400,000 to 1.4 million square feet. Apparel companies, aeronautic parts, and wine distribution are uses of these types of buildings. She points that out to provide scale perception of the proposed 140,000 square foot building.

Mr. Way stated that he understands their goal of providing a building that will serve the market. He understands that the organization of the site – service docks and stormwater management to the rear, and the fact that this may be a multi-tenant building - results in a need to distribute parking around the building. He would like some information on the architecture. While the applicants have indicated this will be a showcase building with glass and will front onto Dublin-Plain City Road, little architectural information has been provided. Without those details, he would want to see more berming and screening of the parking; with the 15-foot setback, that will be a challenge. Perhaps after seeing the architecture, his concerns with the setback will be alleviated. He has concerns regarding the amount of paving, but if the proposed number of parking spaces is necessary for this use, he would have no objections.

Mr. Schneier stated that he is in favor of the proposal. He defers to the expertise of the applicant and the City's Ec. Dev. Department.

Mr. Grimes stated that this is an efficient use of the parcel. Crosby Court currently appears capable of accommodating the proposal. At this point, it is difficult at this point to project future road widening needs due to increased traffic volume. It is also difficult to assess the available greenspace due to the manner in which the site is laid out. The stormwater management component needs to be addressed, and there is a large amount of pavement. Concerning the 15-foot pavement setback -- it will be essential to see that in context. He is supportive of the concept to fill a market need within the City.

Ms. Fox stated that she is cognizant of the fact that the City wants this partnership, and she would like to see the project happen. However, a 2-story building would be permitted here, and reducing the building footprint would reduce the percent of pavement on the site.

Ms. Gilger responded that in the US33 Smart Corridor, a significant amount of mobility research is occurring, which requires high bay access to a drive-in dock at the rear. Those require special ventilation, so, typically, a very tall one-story building is preferred. A 2-story building would not lend itself to the type of research and development that is desired.

Ms. Fox expressed appreciation of the explanation regarding the proposed footprint. She has no objection to adding needed parking spaces, but she is concerned about adherence to the WID principles and intent regarding the open space and streetscape. In this case, we are discussing a 15-foot setback and the amount of pavement in front of the building. The important elements identified in the WID Master Plan are building setbacks, stormwater management, building heights, parking methods and roadway character, especially on main thoroughfares. The text states that, "the landscaping along the roadway edges should be lined with shade trees, flowering trees that provide an identifiable character to the road..." SR161 leads into Plain City. The Master Code was written to enable the Commission to address

that corridor in the best way. She would not object to one row of parking in front of the building, as there is opportunity for parking to be located to the rear of the building. She strongly believes a 30-foot setback is necessary along SR161, although perhaps 15 feet would be acceptable on Houchard Road. She agrees that using the retention basin as a water feature in front of the building would enhance that side of the site. She noted that a bikepath along SR161 would connect to the new Union County trailway on Industrial Parkway; therefore, that space should not be narrowed to the point that there is insufficient space to add a bikepath connection. She reiterated the need for a 30-foot setback along SR161 and for one row of parking in front of the building and additional parking at the rear.

Mr. Supelak stated that Ms. Fox's concern regarding the setback along Dublin-Plain City Road is also his primary concern. He could be flexible on the other issues. He is supportive of the proposed development, which maximizes the site. The only issue is the amount of "things" consuming the surface; those should be adjusted to achieve the 30-foot pavement setback along SR161. While it would be preferable to increase the setback along Houchard Road, he could concede on that point. He looks forward to seeing the landscape plan and architecture, as the project develops.

Mr. Fishman expressed agreement with Mr. Supelak's and Ms. Fox's comments.

Ms. Call stated that she also agrees with the previous comments, particularly the need to increase the setback along the Dublin-Plain City Road, which is a major arterial. She has less concern with the setbacks along the two minor roads. She is uncomfortable with 163 parking spaces. The Commission has reviewed previous proposals requesting additional or reduced parking for speculative reasons, but the Commission's decision has been to remain with the required number. She is confident the appropriate stormwater management solution will be identified by City Engineering. She agrees with the suggestion to make the retention pond a water feature on the site, if possible. She inquired if the applicant required any additional clarity.

Ms. Gilger responded that they would look at ways to increase the SR161 setback. However, two rows of employee and visitor parking are needed at the front of the building, rather than near a warehouse dock door. They would work with Engineering on the stormwater management plan and also will ensure the viewshed on SR161 meets the desired standards.

Public Comment

No public comments were received on the case.

Mr. Way noted that there appears to be an incomplete loop circulation around the project. A vehicle would need to exit to Crosby Ct. and re-enter the site. He would encourage that loop be completed onsite, without the need to re-enter the public right-of-way.

Mr. Supelak expressed agreement with the recommendation.

Ms. Fox inquired the possibility of moving the building further back on the site, which could provide sufficient room for two rows of parking at the front of the building. Other means of stormwater management could be used as an alternative to the retention pond. The streetscape view is an important factor. The Code was written to ensure that element occurred, and it is important that the City itself abide by Code. She would recommend moving the building back.

Mr. Rasey responded that they would look into the possibility of removing the retention pond to adjust the layout as suggested. They were attempting to align with the curbcuts on Crosby Ct., so must also consider that factor.

Ms. Call thanked the applicants for their presentation.