

BLUE ASH PLANNING COMMISSION

March 1, 2007

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ITEM 1. - MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Schafer called the regular meeting of the Blue Ash Planning Commission to order at 7:07 p.m. on Thursday, March 1, 2007.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Raymond Schafer, John Moores, and James Sumner

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: William Sikute and Beverley Gill

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Waltz, Assistant Community Development Director Dan Johnson, Administrative Clerk Traci Smith, Council Member Lee Czerwonka and interested citizens

ITEM 2. - OPENING CEREMONY

Pledge of Allegiance

ITEM 3. - APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commission Members waived the reading of the minutes.

DECISION: Jim Sumner moved, John Moores seconded, to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 1, 2007 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ITEM 4 – 10925 REED HARTMAN HIGHWAY – James Cohen, CMC Office Center

Seeking approval to install an electronic message sign on the south face of an existing two-sided monument sign

PRESENT: Jim Cohen, applicant

Jim Cohen of CMC Office Center explained that two years ago an electronic message board was approved for the north face of the sign going into the office park on Reed Hartman Highway. He said that now, with the completion of the intersection and the northbound traffic turning left into the office park, there are sometimes delays and they would like to put additional message center on the south face to provide more exposure for their tenants. He stated the message center tastefully markets their tenants and provides no dangerous visibility issues. Messages will change no more than once per hour.

David Waltz agreed with Mr. Cohen that the sign is tasteful and he sees no reason not to support it. Ray Schafer asked if the restrictions were verified that were placed on the north face. Dan Johnson explained that the approval he found on record was that the sign not change more than one time per hour and that this is now a requirement of the Code which states: “No portion of the electronic message, including the color or other background elements, shall be permitted to change more than once per hour.” This includes no rotating or flashing.

DECISION: Jim Sumner moved, John Moores seconded, to approve the change in the existing monument sign at 10925 Reed Hartman Highway to allow for

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an electronic message sign on both sides consistent with Code. A roll call vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ITEM 5 – 9415 PLAINFIELD ROAD – RJ Gilhooley, Inc.

Special Use application for a medical (hospital) use facility in an R-2 district, at the intersection of Plainfield Road and Reed Hartman Highway (tabled 2/1/07)

DECISION: Jim Sumner moved, John Moores seconded to remove this item from the table. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

PRESENT: Clete Benken, consultant

Clete Benken of Kinzelman Kline Gossman apologized for their absence at the meeting last month and thanked everyone for their understanding. He explained that the proposed project is a 9,000 square foot medical office use located at the intersection of Plainfield Road and Reed Hartman Highway. Because of the adjacent residential uses and the desire of the City to maintain that residential character the owner will maintain a landscape buffer along Plainfield Road and Reed Hartman Highway. The medical use will be low intensity with no Urgent Care use; so there will be no ambulance traffic. The lighting will all be low mast, pedestrian-scale. The office hours would be limited to 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., and the lights will be timed to go out shortly after the close of business. Mr. Benken said he met several times with Dan Johnson regarding the proposed elevations. They have attempted to utilize the design elements from nearby homes and businesses. Dark materials, asphalt shingles, and wood siding would help give the building a complimentary residential appearance. A two-sided sign would be located along Reed Hartman Highway and a single-sided sign at Old Plainfield Road. The owners have not marketed the project since they wanted to get approval first. Since they do not have a tenant yet, the renderings represent the design elements for what that tenant will be eligible to do with the building.

Ray Schafer asked about sign height and lighting. Mr. Johnson suggested that the sign be required to meet the Code for the M & C Districts. Mr. Johnson said the Code limits the number of ground signs to one sign. He suggested they may want to consider signage at the Old Plainfield entrance, in this case, to ensure that southbound Plainfield traffic does not miss the entrance.

Clete Benken said it would be a one-story building with a two-story elevation at the front, to accommodate the slope of the property. The mechanical equipment will be concealed on the roof or in a masonry enclosure to the side of the building. A roll-out trash container is normally sufficient for an office building; however, if a dumpster is required, they will place it in a screened enclosure on the north side of the building.

Mr. Benken said they will replace the landscaping. Jim Sumner asked what the view would be from the Peppermill subdivision and Mr. Benken replied that it would mostly be landscaping. Ray Schafer reminded him to keep the residential feel as much as possible. David Waltz said that overall this is a nice transition project for an under-utilized corner and encouraged support. Ray Schafer thanked the applicant for incorporating the comments that were discussed at the meeting last month.

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DECISION: Jim Sumner moved, John Moores seconded, to approve recommendation to council for special use at 9415 Plainfield Road subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval of final detailed plans by City Staff and City Engineer.
2. Lighting on the site is limited to low-level fixtures, with poles no taller than 16-feet and per Code.
3. Landscaping for the site includes additional vegetation along the sides of the building that abut Plainfield Road and Old Plainfield Road.
4. If substantial development has not occurred with 12 months of approval, the applicant may be required to return for further review and approval.
5. Site is to have appropriately sized trash collection and mechanical areas shielded with materials of construction consistent with the building.
6. That the Plainfield and Reed Hartman Highway profiles retain a residential appearance.
7. The site may have two ground signs. The Reed Hartman Highway sign shall not exceed 8-feet in height and the Plainfield Road sign shall be smaller and have only low-intensity lighting as approved by City Staff.

A roll call vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ITEM 6 – MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

David Waltz advised that zoning districts adjoining residential properties are being reviewed for noise at the request of Council as a result of complaints. These recommendations should be presented to Council in April. He said the temporary sign regulations will also be reviewed and modified specifically for “for lease” and “for sale” signs. He also advised that streetscaping meetings have begun and will most likely present renderings to Council in April.

Dan Johnson presented the members of the Commission with binders of the Code.

ITEM 7 – ADJOURNMENT

DECISION: There being no further business to be discussed, Jim Sumner moved, John Moores seconded, to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Raymond Schafer, Chairman

MINUTES RECORDED BY:

Traci Smith, Administrative Clerk