

BLUE ASH PLANNING COMMISSION

May 1, 2014

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ITEM 1: MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Ray Schafer called the regular meeting of the Blue Ash Planning Commission to order at 7:03 p.m. on Thursday, May 1, 2014.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Raymond Schafer, Paul Collett, Jr., Mike Duncan, John Moores, and Jim Sumner

ALSO PRESENT: Community Development Director Dan Johnson, Council Member Stephanie Stoller, 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: Paul Collett moved, Jim Sumner seconded, to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 6, 2014 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ITEM 4: HEARINGS

a. 4765 Glendale Milford Road – Rombes Station

Amendment to the existing Rombes Station Planned Development to allow additional parking area in the rear of the building

PRESENT: John Grier – Applicant

John Grier, architect, is representing Ellene Steppe of Rombes Company who is proposing to add 19 parking spaces on the south side of the site. They will be putting up a fence and leaving existing trees. They did not add curbs due to the expense and the sheet flow. Since the site is too tight, they did not add any planting areas. The parking area is hidden behind the building next to the railroad tracks, so they felt that was a reasonable request.

Jim Sumner asked if the fence on the south property line was new. Mr. Grier said it will be new since the current fence stops by City Barbeque. Mr. Sumner asked if there were any concerns with additional sheet flow causing problems in the additional residential lot. Mr. Grier said City Engineer did not feel it would adversely impact the adjacent property. Dan Johnson confirmed that John Eisenmann reviewed and thought it was sufficient. Also, since the size of the lot is under an acre, storm water detention regulations technically do not apply.

The Commissioners were concerned with the run-off on the neighboring residential lots and accumulating in their yard. Mr. Johnson said John Eisenmann thought this was an appropriate method and not sufficient in size to be an area of great concern. He also said that the property owner was notified prior to the meeting and he did not hear from them with any concerns they might have.

Paul Collett feels the curb should be continued and a 10 foot setback should be maintained since it is a commercial property abutting residential. John Grier said the area is not steep so would not require a deep percolation and would be able to sustain a normal rainfall. Mr. Collett said he is not challenging Mr. Eisenmann's decision, but feels it should be consistent with the rest of the parking lot that has a curb. Mr. Grier said that

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would cut down on the parking and the main goal is to give parking to the businesses. He said they presently have 10 spaces and hoping to add 9 more.

John Moores asked about the possibility of rotating the parking so it parks north to south instead of east to west. Mr. Moores looked at the sketch provided and appeared that parking into the building north to south at the building and leaving clearance into the building that roughly 18 spaces could fit.

In order to avoid engineering on the fly, Dan Johnson suggested that if the buffer setback is important to the Commission and a limitation they are not willing to give on in an approval, it should be left up to the applicant to redesign and come back with a design that works.

Mike Duncan said they only need an additional 5 foot setback, because they currently have a 5 foot buffer, but doesn't know if that is absolutely necessary since in the back of the residential property and almost completely sheltered by the building and by the railroad tracks. He did notice that some of the trees to remain do not appear to be very healthy, along with a lot of honeysuckle which he assumed would be removed as part of the landscaping plan. He would like to have a consistent curb. From an environmental standpoint, the best way to dispose of rainwater on a site without a detention basin is to let it percolate into a grassy area, which is what it would do on the adjacent area. He has some concerns into the neighbor yard, but unless there are torrential rains, it probably would be adequate. The curbed area back to it would be preferable for site continuity, but with the location of City Barbecue dumpster, they really are two separate parking areas. He was unsure about rotating the parking area because of access in and out which create concerns when backing out. He thinks that removing the two spaces, #21 & #28, to provide a circular drive would be a benefit. He agrees with the City Engineer to get by without a curb and being environmental. Maybe there could be a stipulation in the approval that curbs would need to be added if there is too much run-off.

In answer to a question by Mike Duncan regarding the small dumpster not being enclosed, Dan Johnson said that generally when there is an update to a site, compliance with current codes can be required in any area that is reasonably associated with the improvements. So, if the Commission felt like that should be enclosed, it could be required as part of the approval.

Paul Collett asked if the fence was part of this approval. Mr. Johnson said that since a fence is part of the submission, they would be obligated.

John Grier asked if the Commission gives any feeling toward economic hardship. Ray Schafer said they look at the Code and regulations and, as a Commission, cannot measure economic hardship.

Ellene Steppe said this new parking area would be for employees of Rombes Station or City Barbecue to help free up as many spots in the front for customers. Paul Collett suggested that Rombes Station contact City Barbecue to share a dumpster.

Chair Schafer opened the meeting for public comments, but there were none.

Paul Collett said he is more okay without the curb than about the setback and would like to see them to explore the possibility of sharing the dumpster with City Barbecue.

Jim Sumner asked if it is in their discretion to modify the buffer. Dan Johnson confirmed and said they have the ability to approve as a minor modification without going to Council, if they consider this as minor.

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Mike Duncan said if they can increase their parking spaces and get the 10-foot buffer, he would be happy with that. If it cannot be done, he thinks they can have a 17-foot aisle and still have plenty of safety for the truck coming in for the dumpster and they definitely need to extend the fence line regardless of what the Code says since it is adjacent to a residential property.

Dan Johnson said they could have the option of doing the buffer as one tree at 25-feet with a double row of 6-foot hedge, then at that point, they do not need to do a fence but the thing to consider is if the existing plantings would be sufficient to meet than plan.

Ray Schafer commented that there are a lot of variables.

DECISION: Paul Collett moved, John Moores seconded, to table for further consideration by the applicant. A roll call vote was taken. Three members present voted aye, Mike Duncan and Jim Sumner voted nay. Motion carried to table.

Ray Schafer summarized some of things they are looking for; shared dumpster, reorient the spaces to get more spaces but still maintain a 10-foot buffer as that is the priority of the Commission.

There was general discussion regarding dumpsters and what criteria the Planning Commission is looking for at next review.

Jim Sumner offered comment for consideration when this comes back to Planning Commission to limit the scope of their prevue to just the expansion and not open up an evaluation of the property for code compliance that are not really appropriate when considering minor modification. Mike Duncan agreed, but still a credible issue that could be potentially addressed by Planning Commission.

ITEM 5: MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

a. Election of Officers

Dan Johnson said with the resignation of John Berry, a new Vice Chair needs to be elected.

DECISION: John Moores moved, Mike Duncan seconded, to nominate Paul Collett as Vice Chair. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ITEM 6: ADJOURNMENT

DECISION: There being no further business to be discussed, Paul Collett moved, Mike Duncan seconded, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Ray Schafer, Chair

MINUTES RECORDED BY:

Traci Smith