

BLUE ASH PLANNING COMMISSION

February 2, 2012

Page 1

**ITEM 1: MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Chairman Schafer called the regular meeting of the Blue Ash Planning Commission to order at 7:02 p.m. on Thursday, February 2, 2012.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Raymond Schafer, John Berry, Beverley Gill, John Moores and James Sumner

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Waltz, Assistant to City Manager Kelly Osler, 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: John Berry moved, Jim Sumner seconded, to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 1, 2011 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

**ITEM 4: HEARINGS**

**a. Plainfield Road (the Target outlot) – Chase Bank**

Planned Development approval for a bank with a drive-through

PRESENT: Michael Kady, Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc. – Applicant  
Tom Moffatt, Chase Bank  
Chris Duley, Design Forum Architects

Ray Schafer introduced the agenda item.

The applicant's representatives generally described the site layout and building design. Tom Moffatt noted that there are no proposed signs on the south side of the building. He also acknowledged that the signs proposed on the other sides of the building will need a variance.

Mr. Moffatt said that they will move the proposed ground sign as far back from the south intersection as possible to address potential sight-line issue highlighted by the City Engineer.

In response to a question, Mr. Moffatt explained that the south driveway access is designed to allow drive-up customers to exit the site without having to drive around the building, which may conflict with walk-in customers. He said that they would make it right-out only to address concern expressed by the City Engineer.

BLUE ASH PLANNING COMMISSION

February 2, 2012

Page 2

Mr. Moores asked if the applicant could consider putting the drive-through windows on the north side of the building. Mr. Moffatt responded that they consider the north side the “front” of the building and they cannot do that. He also described how the internal bank layout prohibits locating the drive-through differently on the building.

Mr. Berry asked about the decreased parking ratio. Mr. Johnson noted that he suggested to the applicant that they provide more green space instead of more parking spaces.

Mr. Schafer noted that the Planning Commission would generally recommend that signs satisfy the Code, but recognized that this is subject to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Moffatt explained that the ground sign can be moved further from the right-of-way when the south driveway is made right-out-only and that, even in its current location, it is far enough back that it will not block the view of traffic for a vehicle exiting the site to Plainfield Road. Mr. Schafer noted that he will simply need to ensure that the eventual location satisfies the City Engineer.

Tim Raberding introduced himself as an electrical engineer with Interbrand Design Forum and he did the lighting design for the site. There was discussion about how the lighting levels specified in the Code may not apply well to the proposed LED lighting. In answer to a question, Mr. Johnson confirmed that he believes that the proposed lighting satisfies the intent of the Code, even though the specified foot candles exceed the Code, especially under the canopy. Mr. Berry confirmed that he also believes this to be true.

Mr. Moffatt confirmed that the pole light on the south side of the site already exists and was installed with the Target development. Mr. Gill asked if the soffit on the canopy would be built as indicated; Mr. Moffatt confirmed. He also confirmed that the pole height would match Target.

In answer to a question, Mr. Moffatt confirmed that the landscaping will satisfy the minimum size requirements for trees.

Mr. Schafer opened the floor to public comments.

Ronda Larrick, 8997 Plainfield Road, is the resident immediately to the south of this site. She suggested that the site plan should be flipped so that the drive-through is on the north side, where most of the light is. She also said that the south access drive should be eliminated. She commended Target on trying to be a good neighbor and noted that the access drive is where it is because she asked John Silverman for assistance. She said she thinks a bank is an acceptable use.

Mindy Nemoff, 5400 Belleview Avenue, said that she is Ms Larrick’s sister. She agreed that a bank is fine at this location. She questioned whether the proposed lighting would result in more light than Blue Ash intended to allow in its Code. She also noted that less site lighting would be required if the site were reversed, because there is more ambient light at the intersection and primary entrance to Target. She questioned why the ATM would be at the rear, and darkest, corner of the site. She

February 2, 2012

Page 3

confirmed that Chase was aware that they would not be putting a sign on the south side of the site.

Mr. Schafer closed the public hearing.

Mr. Schafer said that he still does not clearly understand the effect of the proposed lighting as it relates to the intent of the Code. He also does not understand why Chase cannot or is unwilling to consider flipping the building as was discussed.

Mr. Berry said that he does understand why Chase wants to have its front door on the north side of the building.

Mr. Moores said that he is not too concerned by the lighting. He would like the applicant to consider flipping the site to have the drive-through lanes on the north side of the building.

Mr. Gill said that he also thinks the site could be flipped. He also questioned why the ATM is at the end of the drive-through lanes instead of in the wall of the building. Mr. Moffatt answered that doing so would at least partially block the transaction window, which was something Chase does not want to do.

Mr. Schafer summarized the discussion particularly relative to the driveway on the south side of the site, the need to be in compliance with landscaping, an answer to whether the building can be flipped, and a better understanding of how the lighting will affect the general vicinity.

DECISION: John Moores moved, Jim Sumner seconded, to table in order to resolve issues outlined by Chairman Schafer. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

**b. 9188 Plainfield Road – Gilligan Oil Company (Shell Station)**

Planned Development approval for a new building containing a gas station, convenience store, and two restaurants (one with a drive-through) and a new canopy and fuel pumps

PRESENT: Chris Zimmerman, Gilligan Oil Company  
Eric Morris, Bayer Becker

Mr. Schafer introduced the agenda item.

Chris Zimmerman summarized the proposed project and explained that his company has done projects very similar to this around the region. The new buildings are much more attractive than the former buildings that they replaced.

Eric Morris introduced himself and offered to answer any questions about the site design engineering and architecture.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that the project would remove the existing pole sign and replace it with a conforming ground sign. He noted that the site currently has five employees and that the new use would have approximately 30 employees. He described changes from the original submittal because of staff comments including a

February 2, 2012

Page 4

wider buffer along the roadways, additional landscaping, reducing the width of the driveways, and limiting the north Plainfield entrance to a right-in only.

In response to a question, Mr. Zimmerman explained that the proposed location of the underground storage tanks is to allow the fuel trucks to access them from directly above to limit long term risks of leaks along piping from a remote filling location. Dan Johnson explained that the City Engineer was concerned about the proposed location because a long-term traffic study had indicated the possible need to widen Plainfield Road in the future, which could impact the tank location. David Waltz agreed that there is not sufficient information available regarding any potential future roadway widening plans to be able to clearly direct the location of the tanks. He suggested moving the tanks as far from the right-of-way as possible, and hoping that helps if and when such a roadway project becomes a reality.

Mr. Zimmerman said they would move the tanks as close to the canopy as possible, which will be an additional 3-4 feet further from the right-of-way.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that all of the lighting will be LED and recessed into the canopy. Mr. Johnson noted that the levels are too high, per the Code, but that this site is not adjacent to any residences.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that the reduced buffer along Plainfield Road allows more maneuvering room for vehicles accessing the fuel pumps and the store. He said that another area store was built with a 20-foot access drive and it results in people who are backing out of the store having to do a three-point maneuver just to get out of a parking space.

Mr. Berry asked the applicant to address the landscaping deficiencies described in the Staff Report. Mr. Morris described changes to the site to address those comments. Mr. Johnson said that he had not specifically evaluated the revised plan relative to the type of species and what is still missing, but that it appears very dense. After further discussion, he confirmed that he believes the revised plan can satisfy the intent of the Code.

Bev Gill questioned whether the entire site could be shifted to the west to provide additional room to push the underground tanks even further from Plainfield Road. Mr. Morris explained that the little bit of setback between the drive through lane and the property line is needed to account for grading and stormwater management.

Mr. Moores asked about venting tubes on the USTs. Mr. Zimmerman explained that they will probably be along the south property line, but definitely not immediately adjacent to Plainfield Road.

In answer to a question, Mr. Zimmerman answered that the canopy is at approximately 15 feet, which is high enough to accommodate a semi.

Mr. Summer asked about the parking requirement and whether the proposed amount will satisfy the actual need. Mr. Zimmerman confirmed that they believe it will work just fine. The Dunkin Doughnuts is busy in the morning and the Subway is busy at lunch.

BLUE ASH PLANNING COMMISSION

February 2, 2012

Page 5

Mr. Schafer summarized the discussion relative to the specific items noted in the Staff Report.

DECISION: John Berry moved, Jim Sumner seconded, to approve the Planned Development as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The 10-foot minimum buffer be provided as required by Code, except along Plainfield Road as shown on the latest revised plan
2. Applicant to work with City Staff to come up with an appropriate and sensible landscape plan
3. The ground sign be approved as proposed in the supplemental materials, including removal of the existing pole sign
4. Signs to satisfy Code or be approved by variance by the Board of Zoning Appeals
5. The increased lighting levels be permitted as proposed under the canopy, but all exterior lighting, including under the canopy, be in flush or fully-recessed fixtures (no drop lenses). Applicant to work with City Engineer to ensure lighting levels that satisfy the general intent of the applicable Code provision
6. The north driveway on Plainfield Road be permitted, but reduced to a right-in only to accommodate fuel delivery trucks, with a design to be approved by the City Engineer
7. A Building Permit Application be submitted for the development within one year of approval
8. The applicant move the under-ground storage tanks as far from Plainfield Road as possible

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

**ITEM 5: MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

None

**ITEM 6: ADJOURNMENT**

DECISION: There being no further business to be discussed, John Moores moved, John Berry seconded, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

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Raymond Schafer, Chairman

MINUTES RECORDED BY:

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Dan Johnson