MEETING MINUTES
Planning Commission

March 7, 2023 – City Council Chambers

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

Roll was taken, and the following members were present: Mr. Jim Rauck, Mr. David Frea, Chair Julie Oyster, Mr. Michael Farnsworth, and Mr. Larry Titus. Staff members present: Kim Shields, Community Development Manager; Dash Logan, Development Planner; Terry Barr, Development Planner; Terry Ellis, Development Assistant; Rhianna Bergman, Development Intern; Stephen Smith, City Attorney; Randy Holt, City Council; Kevin Teaford, Safety Director; Tami Kelly, Clerk of Council; Laura Scott, Building and Zoning.

Chair Julie Oyster asked for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Organizational Items:
Chair Oyster asked for approval of the February 7, 2023, Planning Commission meeting minutes.
Mr. Farnsworth moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Frea seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved 5-0.

New Items:

ITEM #1 – Phantom Fireworks – Final Development Plan **PID # 202302010003**

Chair Oyster clarified that this proposal is to review signage. The application is titled Final Development Plan because that is what is used to review signs.

Mr. Barr presented the Development Department's findings. He stated the applicant is requesting a Development Plan to review signage at 1700 Buckeye Place. A Zoning text for the site was established during rezoning to PUD-C in 2002. While the text includes language regarding the character of signage, there are no requirements regarding sign size or dimensions; therefore, standards for the property revert to Chapter 1145.

In 2007 a Development Plan was approved for HH Gregg at this location, which included a stipulation permitting the development to exceed the maximum 200 square feet permitted by code. However, because this request was tied directly to the development plan for HH Gregg with CR-43-07, a new application must be reviewed for the proposed sign modifications. The proposed development plan includes three wall signs totaling 420.4 square feet and a 40 square foot monument sign with a brick base. The south elevation has a circular 63.6 square foot Phantom Fireworks logo sign consisting of purple, green, yellow, black, white, and orange coloring. The west elevation has a 217.3 square foot sign with the same logo as the south elevation and the words "Phantom Fireworks". This elevation faces I-71. The north elevation sign displays the same logo and wording as the west elevation with a total size of 139.5 square feet. This elevation faces Stringtown Road and I-71.

Staff is not supportive of the proposed signage as it exceeds the size permitted by Code and is not in character with the surrounding area and other buildings approved as part of Ordinance C-02-02. While other buildings within the PUD have been permitted to exceed the standard Code allotment of 200 square feet, those buildings are at least four stories in height and have larger façades. No other single-story building within the PUD or having frontage on I-71, aside from the HH Gregg building, has been permitted to exceed 200 square feet of wall signage. Additionally, no other highway-fronting sign in the PUD utilizes more than two colors, in addition to black and white. Staff believes that in order to comply with the standards of the zoning text in terms of creating a unified development appearance, signage should be in scale to the single-story building and utilize no more than two colors in addition to black and white. Staff does not believe that the proposed development meets the GroveCity2050 principles of preserving the character of the area and utilizing quality design for the public and private realm noting previous concerns regarding the scale of signage of area developments.

Mr. Barr concluded after review and consideration, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of disapproval of the Final Development Plan.

Mr. Colin Brinkman, DaNite Sign Company, 1640 Harmon Avenue, Columbus, OH, was present to speak on the item.

Mr. Joe Kordupel, Phantom Fireworks, 2445 Belmont Ave., Youngstown, OH stated it's a large building, it's hard to get to, and it's been sitting vacant for over five years. The adjacent hotels signage is very visible because of the height of their buildings. It's been hard for the City to find a tenant for the space. They are investing a lot of money in this location and hope it to be very successful, but people have to be able to find them. He then states that the signage size is for the purpose of identification and navigation to the site.

Mr. Rauck asked if the signs are back lit or front lit, and if they would be on all night long or only during business hours. Mr. Kordupel replied that they're internally lit and they would only be on during business hours generally from 8:30 am to 10 pm because the store is open 9am to 9 pm. Mr. Brinkman stated to confirm, they are backlit. It's a face lit sign but the LEDs are inside the sign.

Mr. Kordupel also stated that they've placed as little square footage of signs as possible on the side of the building facing the front residential area and hotels, but increased the size on the back, facing the highway, to be able to find the building, just as HH Gregg did. He stated concerns over people being able to find the building and business.

Mr. Titus asked if they did any renderings showing signs that meet our Code on that building. The project representatives indicated that this had not been done.

Mr. Frea stated he agrees with staff's assessment that the sign doesn't meet the character of the surrounding developments, either in overall size or in it's number of colors. He also stated that the previous tenants sign size is not relevant in any way. He is not supportive of this exception. He continued that he's concerned with the wording of the Final Development Plan because it implies that Planning Commission is doing more of an approval of the use of the building and not just on the signs.

Mr. Stephen Smith, Law Director stated he agrees with Mr. Frea about what happened with HH Gregg is irrelevant because it was done as part of the Zoning process and because the store sat for so long that any rights approved by that process have gone away . He continues to state that he agrees that the application being called a "Final Development Plan" is misleading because the application is for a sign issue and that the use is permitted by code and that the plan is presented in this way because it is the most appropriate way to get it in front of Planning Commission and City Council.

Mr. Farnsworth asked about the 8-foot sign on the ground. He thought there was a 4-foot sign limit on one of the restaurants previously reviewed. Ms. Kim Shields replied that the previous case he was thinking of was for a PUD Zoning text, for Parkway

Center East. This has a different set of standards. There are no specific standards for the dimensions for signage in this PUD Text which is why it reverts to 11.45 for straight zoning. For commercial development monument signs, 50 square feet up to 8 feet in height is allowed.

Mr. Farnsworth also asked if freeway signage was in the plans as well. Mr. Smith responded that in this instance, they are limited to the monument sign and the signs on the building up to 200 square feet. They would not be permitted to have any type of free-standing highway sign and that the city has been removing that type of existing signage whenever possible.

Mr. Kordupel repeated the fact that the building sat vacant for over five years, probably because of its location and it's hard to get to. The signage will help people get to the building. Whatever the board finds in their hearts to grant, they appreciate it.

Mr. Lester LeMaster, Commonwealth Sign Company, 1824 Berry Blvd., Louisville, KY., stated he's been doing work for Phantom Fireworks for 10 years or more. That he came into town to look at the job site but couldn't find the building, he was in a motel parking lot. He also stated they are a first-class company. The landscaping on their other properties, the interiors and parking lots are clean.

Mr. Smith made a clarification that this board is only a recommending body so they can't grant anything. All they can do is forward a recommendation either positive or negative to City Council.

Hearing no questions or discussion from Planning Commission or the public, Mr. Frea moved to approve the Final Development Plan.

Mr. Titus seconded the motion, and the item was denied 0-5.

ITEM #2 – Southgate Business Park – Lot Split **PID #202302010004**

Mr. Barr presented the Development Department's findings. He stated the applicant is requesting to split 2.20 acres from a 17.988- acre parcel located on the east side of Haughn Road, backing to I-71. In 2022 City Council approved the annexation of approximately 63 acres on the east side of Haughn Road which included the parcel proposed to be split.

Following Planning Commission approval, the split can be taken to Franklin County for finalization. The parcel is zoned Light Industry (IND-1) and the proposed split will create a lot that meets the lot requirements for a Light Industry (IND-1) parcel per zoning code. Materials submitted by the applicant states the reason behind the lot configuration is to accommodate future roadways as shown on the Grove City Thoroughfare Map.

Mr. Barr concluded after review and consideration, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission approve the Lot Split as submitted.

Mr. Floyd Wicks, WM1 Corporation,2699 Fair Avenue, Bexley, OH, spoke on the item.

Mr. Rauck asked if there was a thoroughfare map to look at. He wondered why there was a gentle curve. Mr. Wicks responded it was surveyed so that the gentle curve sits just outside what might be proposed right of way in the future. Also, that they talked to staff about being able to deed the rest of the lot to the new owner.

Mr. Farnsworth asked about two references to different acreages on the documentation. Ms. Shields responded that sometimes there's a little bit of discrepancy in terms of calculated acreage versus surveyed acreage on the Auditor's website.

Hearing no questions or discussion from Planning Commission or the public, Mr. Titus moved to approve the Lot Split as submitted.

Mr. Rauck seconded the motion, and the item was approved 5-0.

Item 3 – Tobacco King – Certificate of Appropriateness **PID# 202302020005**

Chair Oyster clarified that this proposal is to review exterior modifications to the site since the building is in the Historic Preservation area, and the proposed use is not being examined.

Mr. Logan presented the Development Department's findings. Mr. Logan stated the applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior modifications to the building at 3586 Broadway in the Historical Preservation Area. This application originated at the Building Division, who deemed the modifications significant, requiring the applicant to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from Planning Commission and City Council per Section 1138.05.

Mr. Logan continued stating this application is to examine if the proposed modifications and materials are appropriate given the site's location in the HPA and does not examine the proposed use, as retail is permitted in the C-2 (Retail Commercial) zoning district. The building is proposed to be modified to accommodate retail tenants with the installation of aluminum storefront windows and doors. A cast stone veneer is proposed along the north and east elevations, which front on public right-of-way. Both the aluminum storefront and stone veneer are proposed to be colored "smoke gray". The existing vertical siding on the building is to be painted "agate gray", and the existing wood shake roofing is to be painted "gunpowder". The existing brick pillars at the northwest corner of the building will also be painted to match the wooden shakes. Staff is supportive of the proposed colors, as both the gunpowder and agate gray colors are included in the Historical Preservation color palette.

Mr. Logan stated that per chapter 1136 of City code, whenever there is a change of use associated with a structure, all existing non-complying parking areas and drive aisles are required to be brought into compliance with code. The existing parking lot on site does not comply with the requirements, and the applicant is proposing modifications that will bring the parking lot into compliance. The required 10-foot parking and drive aisle setback will be established on site, along Broadway and Southwest Boulevard. A continuous 3-foot-high row of shrubs is proposed along the parking lot frontage to screen headlights from the public right of way. Additionally, trees are proposed along the site's Broadway and Southwest Boulevard frontage, meeting the parking lot perimeter planting requirements outlined in code. New site lighting will be added to the site to meet the minimum of 0.5 footcandles required by code and the proposed fixtures will match those used on the CVS site across Broadway.

Mr. Logan concluded after review and consideration, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to City Council for the Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Mr. Joe Youst, Berardi + Partners, 1398 Goodale Blvd., Columbus, OH, was present to speak on the item.

Mr. Titus asked how much of the space will Tobacco King occupy and stated he appreciates them moving into and cleaning up that corner. Mr. Youst replied they're not sure how much space they need yet, whether it will be all of it or half of it.

Mr. Frea echoed that it is a nice upgrade to the building and lot. He asked Staff about a staff comment in the review letter regarding narrowing the curb cut onto Southwest Boulevard. Mr. Dash Logan, Planner replied staff are always looking to narrow curb cuts, when possible, but noting this is existing and that it is not something that has to change with this application per code, the city is okay with leaving the curb cut it as is.

Mr. Frea stated he is concerned with safety noting how close the curb cut on Broadway is to the intersection, and asked if the cut could be changed to a right-in right-out only. He asked about a right in, right out on Broadway. Mr. Youst responded he would speak to his client but thought a right-in right- out on Broadway was a decent fix to ensure intersection safety.

Mr. Rauck asked if there would be any rear entry doors to the back of the building at all. Mr. Youst replied that there are no doors proposed on the rear of the building at this time.

Mr. Rauck asked about the possibility of adding a dumpster enclosure at the rear of the building Mr. Youst replied there is room for a dumpster and will look at adding a rear door, making sure there will be sidewalks with accessibility. He would agree with that. Mr. Logan responded that currently the back of the building is just grass but the applicant could certainly put a dumpster back there, which would need to comply with the screening requirements outlined in code.

Mr. Kevin Teaford, Safety Director for the City of Grove City shared information that the Administration feels that it has a public health and safety interest in this issue and that the City is in the process of drafting legislation that will require permits to sell tobacco products here in the city. If City Council approves that, it will likely be presented in the next month.

Hearing no questions or discussion from Planning Commission or the public, Mr. Titus moved to recommend approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness to City Council with three stipulations:

1. The curb cut onto Broadway shall be limited to right in, right out access only.
2. A dumpster enclosure shall be added to the rear of the building.
3. Doors shall be added to the rear of the building to provide access for the tenant spaces.

Mr. Rauck seconded the motion, and the item was approved 5-0.

Item 4 – Castro Rose Avenue – Rezoning (R-2 to PUD-R) **PID# 202210040052**

Mr. Logan presented the Development Department's findings. Mr. Logan stated the applicant is requesting approval to rezone 0.189 acres on Rose Avenue from R-2 (Single-Family Residential) to PUD-R (Planned Unit Development- Residential) with a zoning text. The proposed rezoning would allow for three dwelling units on site with a proposed duplex and a carriage house garage with second story apartment.

Mr. Logan stated that a Preliminary Development Plan for the proposed project was recommended for disapproval by Planning Commission at the November 8th, 2022, meeting and denied by City Council at the November 21st, 2022, meeting. During these meetings, concerns were voiced over several items with the proposed project including the number of units, building placement on site, and parking. The GroveCity2050 Community Plan Land Use and Character Map designates this parcel as Town Center Core Neighborhood, which lists multi-family residential as a primary use. Town Center Core Neighborhood also promotes a variety of building types and housing, with detached garages located off rear alleys. Although the proposed residential use of the property may meet the general land use identified in the GroveCity2050 plan, staff is not supportive of the proposed rezoning, noting the previous denial of the Preliminary Development Plan by City Council and that the proposed zoning text would result in the same density and design displayed on the Preliminary Plan.

Mr. Logan continued that the proposed zoning text permits one residential structure containing two residential dwelling units, and a carriage house garage with a second-floor dwelling unit, for a total of three units. The proposed carriage house is to be accessed from the alley along the rear of the lot. Per the text, the duplex structure is to be a minimum of 2,635 square feet, and the above-garage unit is to be a minimum of 873 square feet. Setbacks established in the zoning text for the duplex structure are 34-feet for the front setback from Rose Avenue, and side setbacks of five feet. The carriage house garage will be setback fifteen feet from the alley and require side setbacks of eight feet. Architectural standards are included in the text to ensure quality development on site. The text states that the elevation fronting on Rose Avenue must contain at least three architectural elements per elevation. Per the text, the home is to be finished with vinyl vertical board and batten siding in gray or other neutral earth tones. The proposed trim on the home is to be colors complementary to the siding. The maximum height of the duplex structure is proposed to be 35 feet and the maximum height of the carriage house garage is proposed to be 28 feet from grade to peak of roof.

Mr. Logan concluded after review and consideration, based on feedback from Planning Commission and City Council on the Preliminary Development Plan, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of disapproval to City Council for the Rezoning as submitted.

Mr. Patrick Castro, 4016 Arbutus Avenue, Grove City, OH., 43123, was present to speak on the item. A lot of the items in the Preliminary Development Plan were addressed in these plans. He stated he has talked to staff and sent letters to area neighbors. Within a quarter mile of the site there are over 100 multi-family units and asked what concerns Planning Commission members had with the proposed plan. Mr. Castro stated the amount of parking has been increased to exceed the requirements of multi-family.

Mr. Frea commented that he is struggling to see what is different with the proposal this time verses the Preliminary Development Plan and asked for clarification on the proposed changes. Mr. Castro replied that the buildings are the same. However, the parking shown on the Preliminary Development Plan was below three spaces per unit, which is now exceeded by additional parking. He stated that compared to a project approved on Park Street he believes he exceeds what was required for this property.

Mr. Frea stated for clarification that the difference is the number of parking spaces, not number of units proposed or site layout. Mr. Castro responded that this is correct and that he can also shift the house over to the west, closer to the property line.

Mr. Castro stated that currently there are no driveways in this area along the street and brought pictures to share with Planning Commission members. He stated that pictures he brought also show that there is not a lot of on-street parking being utilized throughout the day by his lot.

Mr. Logan noted a point of clarification, stating that the text that is before Planning Commission is currently written based on the plan that was provided to staff, so if there are any changes required such as building placement, the text would need to be revised to reflect those changes.

Mr. Rauck asked staff if two parking spots could be added to the rear to allow for on street parking. As it is now, as he believes that the curb cuts will eliminate two on-street spaces. Mr. Castro responded, if he understands Mr. Rauck's question, he can shift both buildings forward, matching the other houses on the street, and adding additional parking spaces in the rear. Mr. Logan replied that's certainly an option that could be pursued if Mr. Castro choses.

Mr. Castro stated he is looking for issues and feedback on his plan, as he did not receive any at City Council. He stated that the proposal aligns with the recommendations for Town Center Core Neighborhood in the GroveCity2050 plan and has been done elsewhere in the Town Center including Park Street, and asked why a similar project was appropriate on Park Street but not his proposed location.

Mr. Frea stated his issue with the project was never related to parking and was that there are too many residents on the lot. He does not like the duplex sitting out in front of the two houses that sit next to it even though those are a little further back than the rest of the road, and the garage with the carriage house in the back. He would be okay with just a garage, no tenants, or no garage at all.

Mr. Castro again questioned why a similar project was appropriate on Park Street, as they are both part of the same designation in GroveCity2050. He continued the goal is to match the average setback on the street instead of the outlier properties. Having the duplex set back between their properties, he believes you can look into other homes. If the duplex is kept forward, it's not as close to those houses.

Mr. Frea stated he would defer to area residents on the preferred building placement, but his opinion is that a residence over the carriage house is not appropriate. Mr. Castro stated he will take this into consideration but is stumped on why it is appropriate on Park Street in the Town Center Core but not his lot. He stated there are numerous other multi-family homes in the area and that there is a history of allowing three units on smaller lots.

Chair Oyster asked about the driveways in the front. She wanted to know if they would be similar or if he had made any changes to them, and asked if they will be paved. Mr. Castro responded that he made the driveways longer, at 36 feet, so that two cars can pull up in the driveway, and that he is open to suggestions on the driveway placement and type. Mr. Castro passed out examples of driveway materials to Planning Commission members.

Mr. Rauck asked staff if the alley along the rear of the lot a city alley or a street. Mr. Logan replied it is right of way, so it is a public alley.

Mr. Rauck stated he would like to see a redesign of the parking to all be in the rear, allowing for a front lawn. Mr. Castro replied he could look into this change.

Chair Oyster agreed with Mr. Rauck that parking in the rear would help the aesthetics the neighborhood, allowing for the front yard.

Mr. Farnsworth stated he agrees with the proposed change of relocating the parking to be in the rear, and would like no living space in the rear, just a garage.

Mr. Castro asked if the concern is the number of bedrooms or the number of units. He stated each duplex has three bedrooms total. He stated the upstairs bedrooms can be changed to make that flex space, to reduce the total number of bedrooms from eight to six, with the carriage house being a one-bedroom unit.

Mr. Frea responded that his concern is the number of units, not bedrooms.

Mr. Farnsworth stated that his concern is the number of units as well.

Mr. Castro asked about the house being shifted to the west to allow for a six-foot side setback.

Mr. Rauck asked staff what variances are required right now for his plan. Mr. Logan replied that right now a PUD zoning is proposed, and the text is written to meet his plan, and the text would be written to include the proposed setbacks. Code requires a six-foot side setback under the current R-2 zoning, and the plan shows a 5.29-foot setback. What is proposed now is slightly less than what would be required by Code with the current zoning, but the text allows for the setbacks to be reduced to five feet.

Mr. Frea asked for clarification on the purpose of moving the house to the west to establish a six-foot setback on the east property line. Mr. Castro replied that if shifted he would only be asking for a variance on one side of the setback.

Mr. Rauck asked how far the building would need to be moved to the west to accommodate the six-foot setback to the east. Mr. Castro replied that it would only need to be shifted about eight inches to the west.

Mr. Frea asked if Mr. Castro could reduce the size of the building and live within the setbacks. Mr. Castro replied that it is extremely difficult to design with a staircase and trying to accommodate wider doorways for walkers and wheelchairs. He believes there is a need in the city for elderly population housing. He stated that reducing the number of bedrooms would not be an issue for him and believes stipulating the number of bedrooms is a better path forward rather than the number of units. He stated he is open to tabling the vote so that Mr. Logan can receive recommendations from Planning Commission and go from there and revise the text.

Chair Oyster asked Mr. Logan if he would have to revise the text for some of the items. Mr. Logan responded that tabling the application would be the cleanest way to revise the text based on feedback received.

Mr. Castro again stated he his open to tabling the application but is seeking feedback and guidance on changes that Planning Commission would like to see made.

Mr. Frea asked if there were any speakers in the audience before they consider tabling the vote. He feels hearing from the residents is more important than hearing from them.

Mr. Castro stated he received the comment from the property owner to the east regarding the lot not being owner occupied. He stated that per FHA guidelines the lot would still qualify as owner occupied. He noted the neighbor stated concerns about other rentals and feels he should not be held responsible for the shortcomings of other landlords, as all his properties in the City have been maintained.

Mr. Rauck asked staff if the house on the east side is encroaching on his property. Ms. Shields responded that these are historic, narrower lots and that it is common for these types of homes to encroach into setbacks. They were developed under different standards, and they are now a legal non- conformity, and should not pose an issue for the application in question.

Mr. Castro asked if anything had changed since 2020 in the Town Center core for density reductions or the number of units per lot in terms of the Grove City 2050 plan. Ms. Shields replied that with the PUD the goal is to match the character of the area, which is where getting feedback from Planning Commission and Council is going to be key to ensure that what is designed here, is in their opinion, appropriate. She stated that just because something was approved on Park Street, although it is under the same future land use designation of 2050, there is obviously a great diversity of development patterns in the Town Center core, so it is important to make sure that the standards that are being drafted for Rose Avenue are appropriate for Rose Avenue, which may not be exactly what was approved on Park Street.

Chair Oyster asked Mr. Logan if revising the text would be cleaner. Mr. Logan replied that it would be preferred to table the application to allow for the text to be revised, but it is up to Mr. Castro.

Mr. Castro responded he wanted to table the vote and asked Planning Commission members to provide their feedback and ideas to the city.

Hearing no questions or discussion from Planning Commission or the public, Mr. Frea moved to postpone the Rezoning to a future meeting.

Mr. Rauck seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

There being no additional discussion, Chair Julie Oyster adjourned the meeting at 2:41 pm.

Terry Ellis, Development Assistant

Julie Oyster, Chair