



MEETING MINUTES

Planning Commission

December 5, 2023 – City Hall

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

Roll was taken, and the following members were present: Mr. David Frea, Chair Julie Oyster, Mr. Michael Farnsworth, and Mr. Larry Titus, Mr. Jim Rauck was absent. Staff members present Kyle Rauch, Development Director; Kim Shields, Community Development Manager; Dash Logan, Senior Planner; Terry Barr, Development Planner; Terry Ellis, Development Assistant, Jesse Shamp, Frost Brown Todd; Kevin Koesters, Public Service Deputy Director; Matt Dicken, Public Service Superintendent; Laura Scott, Planning and Zoning Manager; Roby Schottke, Council Member; Tami Kelly, Clerk of Council; and Scott Shaffer, EMH&T.

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

Organizational Items:

Chair Oyster requested approval for the November 7, 2023, Planning Commission meeting minutes. Mr. Frea moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Farnsworth seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved 4-0.

New Items:

ITEM #1 – Auto Doctors LLC- Automotive Repair – Special Use Permit

PID # 202311010036

Mr. Barr presented the Development Department's findings. This proposed application is for a Special Use Permit for an automotive and golf cart repair shop at 3515 Grove City Road. The proposed automotive repair service will be located within the 4,224-square-foot building and will operate by appointment only with limited drop-offs available. All repairs will take place within the building and no cars will be stored outside overnight. The property to the north will be used for employee and customer parking and to store scrap tires and parts in the small building. They will be picked up by a metal recycling company every two weeks and tire companies once a month.

The applicant has indicated several improvements for the site including repaving the parking lot and adding landscaping. Current plans show the proposed location of the landscaping within the CSX Railroad property. Staff recommends that planters with arborvitae be placed along the perimeter of the building and the small storage building instead of the proposed tree locations. Staff recommends the building be painted to match the character of the surrounding structures in the area, and that the man doors be replaced noting that some are rusted and in disrepair.

After review and consideration, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to City Council for the Special Use Permit with the stipulations noted in the staff report.

Gregory Drenovas, Auto Doctors, 3283 Harrisburg Georgesville Rd., Grove City, OH., OH was present to speak on the item and mentions he has no issues with the stipulation and recommendations.

Mr. Frea clarified that all employee and customer parking would be located on the western side of the site and no outdoor storage is permitted. Mr. Drenovas replied no cars would be stored outdoors and he doesn't buy or sell vehicles. Mr. Farnsworth asked about the color stipulations. Mr. Drenovas replied that the property owner wanted a light beige color and that his current location is off white with grey door and he might think about a red or blue stripe on the top of the new building.

Hearing no questions or discussion from Planning Commission or the public, Mr. Frea moved to recommend approval of the Special Use Permit to City Council with the following stipulations:

1. Site landscaping shall be added in the form of 5 arborvitae planters along the main building and 3 arborvitae planters along the north side of the storage building.
2. The building shall be painted to match the character of structures in the surrounding area and new man doors installed.

Mr. Titus seconded the motion, and the item was approved 4-0.

ITEM #2 – 3400 Southwest Boulevard LLC- Outside Storage — Special Use Permit

PID # 202306290024

Mr. Logan presented the Development Department's findings. He stated that the applicant requests approval of a Special Use Permit to allow for the temporary outdoor storage of equipment at 3400 Southwest Blvd. Outdoor Storage is permitted in the IND-2 district with the approval of a Special Use Permit. Materials state that the property tenant plans to utilize a portion of the property for a temporary two-year period for a lay-down of equipment. If approved, the applicant will be required to go before the Board of Zoning Appeals to obtain variances for landscaping and setbacks.

The provided site plan shows that the existing gravel portion of the site will be enclosed in a six-foot high chain link fence to create a secure area. The storage area will store cranes, lift equipment, pieces of boom, and semi-trucks and trailers that transport the equipment and cranes while the owner of the property prepares another portion of property to permanently store the same equipment and cranes. The proposed storage area is shown with a setback of twenty feet from Lewis Centre Way and the applicant is providing a four foot-high earthen mound with a double-staggered row of evergreen trees for screening. This is less than the required screening for truck parking areas fronting on a public road and therefore a variance will be required from the BZA. A variance would also be required to permit the proposed setback along the east property line, which currently shows only a 5- foot setback and no landscaping. Noting that the site plan provided includes a fuel island measuring 40 feet by 15 feet along the eastern edge of the site with two 2,000-gallon diesel tanks added in the future, staff believes that landscaping should be installed to screen the storage area from the adjacent property to the east. Plans also show the installation of 5-foot evergreens along the site's Southwest Boulevard frontage, noting that the existing mound is not adequate to effectively screen the storage area from the road. To further reduce the visibility of any equipment from the public right-of-way, no stacking of containers or other equipment should be permitted within the storage area. Additionally, all cranes should be stored with booms lowered.

The project representative has indicated through discussions on the project, that the temporary, two-year outdoor storage request will allow Maxim Crane Works, currently located on the Urbancrest property to the north, to store their equipment until the remainder of their property in Urbancrest can be prepared to store this equipment. Future plans for the site in Grove City proposed for temporary outdoor storage would be to build additional structures along the site's Lewis Centre

Way and Southwest Boulevard frontages. These improvements will require more formal paved parking to be installed as well as modifications to stormwater management on the site. To ensure that storage does not continue into a more permanent condition and that appropriate site design standards are upheld, staff are recommending that a Development Plan be submitted to review these items before the two-year expiration of the proposed Special Use Permit.

Mr Logan concluded by stating that provided that adequate landscaping be installed to screen the storage area from the public right-of-way and that the items within the storage area are arranged and stored appropriately, the proposed use can meet all applicable Special Use Permit analysis criteria. Noting that the proposed temporary use of outdoor storage in an industrial area is not counter to any of the 5 Guiding Principles of the GroveCity2050 Community Plan, and after review and consideration, the development department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to City Council for the Special Use Permit with the stipulations noted in the staff report.

Rebecca J. Mott, Plank Law Firm LPA, 411 E. Town St., Floor 2, Columbus, OH, was present to speak on the item. She stated that the gravel has been existing, and the proposed use is a continuation of this condition. She stated that the landscaping to meet the compatible screening requirements would be grouped along Southwest Boulevard for additional screening. She stated that the fuel island would be screened by a six-foot concrete wall, which is not included on the site plan that was distributed to Planning Commission. She stated that they agree to all the stipulations except stipulation six. She stated that they agree that the outdoor storage is temporary but wish to keep the chain link gate for future site access and truck movement and would like stipulation 6 to be removed.

Chair Oyster requested staff respond to the applicant's concern regarding the stipulation. Mr. Logan responded that the stipulation was included to keep the uses on the parcel contained instead of allowing for off-premises use. A future development plan is required, and the fence can be modified or removed as part of the future application.

Mr. Frea asked about the variances required by stipulations #8, 9 & 10. He stated he believes these standards are reasonable and asked for the rationale behind the variance request.

Ms. Mott responded that some of the items may have an existing legal nonconforming status, which allows the conditions to remain. However, the gravel has been expanded over time, and the intent behind the variances is in cooperation with the city to improve the site per code. She stated that the 20-foot setback proposed seems reasonable, and the gravel and landscape mounding and plantings have already been installed.

Mr. Frea asked when the screening and landscaping were installed. Ms. Mott stated she thought the landscaping was new, having been installed a couple of years ago, and the gravel has existed. Mr. Logan clarified that the landscaping was installed in mid-September or early October of this year.

Ms. Mott responded that they had been working on the project for a very long time, so she thought it had been a while ago and that this is why the variances are proposed on the landscaping and setbacks.

Mr. Frea asked Ms. Mott to clarify that the property owner installed landscaping that they knew was in non-conformance with the code. Ms. Mott responded that perhaps the property owner had, but she believes there is a legitimate warrant to these items being a legal non-conformity to remain as-is.

Mr. Farnsworth stated he drove by the site and saw cranes on the property and fuel tanks in the yard already, and asked if there are stipulations included in regard to flammable objects. Mr. Logan responded that no stipulations are included regarding the proposed fuel storage. Ms. Mott said that propane tanks and storage tanks are considered service structures, only requiring a one-foot taller wall, fence, or landscaping around the storage tank, which the client is committing to.

Mr. Farnsworth then asked about traffic access on Southwest Boulevard, as there is no traffic light at the intersection of Lewis Centre Way. Ms. Mott answered that when it was zoned IND-2, a traffic study was performed and met the standards. However, they have committed to using the Lewis Center Way public right of way, not to use Southwest Boulevard.

Mr. Frea asked if the underground fuel storage tanks would be removed when the Special Use Permit expires in two years. Ms. Mott responded that they may want to move the tanks to the Urbancrest site for better operations, but she doesn't have the answer for that today and it would be addressed in a Final Development Plan at that time.

Mr. Frea asked Staff to clarify about the removal of the tanks. Ms. Kim Shields, Community Development Manager, replied that as part of the Special Use Permit expiration, all outdoor storage would have to be removed.

Mr. Jesse Shamp, Frost Brown Todd interjected that the conversation needs to focus on the materials included in the Planning Commission packet.

Hearing no questions or discussion from Planning Commission or the public, Mr. Titus moved to recommend approval of the Special Use Permit to City Council with the following stipulations:

1. The Special Use Permit shall expire two years from City Council approval.
2. All cranes and equipment stored on site shall be stored with booms lowered.
3. There shall be no stacking of containers or any other equipment or material in the storage area.
4. A development plan shall be submitted for the site within two years of approval of the Special Use Permit.
5. No access to the outdoor storage area shall be permitted from Southwest Boulevard.
6. After the Special Use Permit expires, the gate between the site and the property adjacent to the north in Urbancrest shall be removed and replaced with a closed chain link fence to eliminate cross access between the Grove City and Urbancrest parcels.
7. The eastern perimeter of the storage area (+/-332 feet) shall have one 6-foot height evergreen tree planted per every 20 feet of property line and two 18-inch deciduous shrubs planted for every 40 lineal feet of property line.
8. A variance shall be obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals to Section 1136.06(a)(3) of code to reduce the required 45-foot truck parking setback, six-foot earthen mound, and three staggered rows of evergreens to a 20-foot truck parking setback with a 4-foot earthen mound and two staggered rows of evergreens.
9. A variance shall be obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals to Section 1136.06(b) of code to reduce the required 20-foot setback for compatible use districts and relocate the required parking lot perimeter plantings to the southeast portion of the site to screen the storage area from Southwest Boulevard.
10. A variance shall be obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals to section 1136.05(b) of code to reduce the required side yard plantings.
11. A variance shall be obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals to section 1137.05(c) to allow for a six-foot-high chain link fence.

12. A variance shall be obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals to section 1137.11(a) to allow for the gravel parking area to remain.

Mr. Farnsworth seconded the motion, and the item was approved 4-0.

ITEM #3 – Grove City Innovation Center– Final Development Plan

PID # 202308310031

Mr. Logan presented the Development Department's findings. He stated the applicant is requesting approval of a development plan to construct two multi-tenant flex buildings totaling 270,000 square feet and associated site improvements on a 27.41-acre parcel. The site is currently zoned IND-2 (Heavy Industry) which permits a variety of manufacturing, warehousing, and production uses. The purpose of the submitted development plan is to review plans for compliance with the requirements of the IND-2 district. The site will contain two buildings, each totaling 135,00 square feet. Site access will be off Grove City Road, and parking will be located to the west of the building with truck loading to the east of the building. Plans show that a new 8-foot-wide multi-use path will be installed along the western property line, which will act as a piece of the City's regional trail network by providing a connection between the Autumn Grove Subdivision and the Town Center area. The site plan preserves the existing wetland and wooded area at the southeast corner of the property. A retention basin is proposed south of the second building to manage stormwater for the site, which was designed to consider regional issues. As a result, waivers will be required from the City's Stormwater Design Manual, but staff is supportive of these waivers noting that the basin has been carefully designed to prevent any downstream drainage issues while utilizing a smaller-than-typical release rate. However, to eliminate safety concerns about pedestrians or cyclists given the proximity to the proposed elevation change of the basin, a fence or guardrail should be added along the western elevation of the s basin adjacent to the multi-use path.

Mr. Logan continued, stating that the proposed buildings measure 675 feet by 200 feet, for a total area of 135,000 square feet and could be divided into tenant spaces as small as 15,000 to 20,000 square feet, depending on tenant needs. The maximum building height shown on the elevations measures 37 feet 6 inches, which will require a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals to exceed the 35-foot maximum. The applicant, staff, and the city's Urban Forester met on-site to assess the existing landscaping along the western property line adjacent to the Tanglebrook Subdivision and determine the most optimal means of screening. Based on the visual condition of the existing trees and noting that a sanitary line will be installed along this property line, a four-foot-tall earthen mound with a double staggered row of evergreen trees is proposed. However, this screening does not extend along the property line adjacent to the basin, where the existing vegetation is sparse. Therefore, staff is recommending that landscaping be added along the west property line where it is determined that the 80% opacity requirement between incompatible land uses is not achieved through existing, on-site, vegetation.

Mr. Logan concluded by stating that the proposed development is in line with the current zoning on the site and the GroveCity2050 Community Plan, and therefore After review and consideration, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to City Council for the Final Development Plan with the stipulations noted in the staff report.

Chris Bradley, The Camber Co., LLC, 6760 Colt Court, Dublin, OH., was present to speak on the item. He stated that his team misinterpreted the landscaping code with respect to stipulation #2, and they are fine with supplementing the landscaping in this area. To meet stipulation 3, it is likely that a rail be installed to keep pedestrians separated from the retention area. He stated he would like to discuss stipulation #4, regarding signage stating "All trucks must turn left". He stated he has been in discussions with the city on how to prevent truck traffic from exiting the site into the Town Center area and believes there has been a spirit of cooperation to prevent semi-trucks from routing this way. He stated he

believes that Demorest Road is the optimal routing for any truck traffic, noting recent roadway improvements. He reiterated that this is designed to be a single-load building with no off dock parking, not designed for distribution, but that inevitably there will be trucks at the site. He stated he is fine with installing signage at the site exit, as long as it could be clearly communicated to trucks that they could use Demorest Road but does not believe this is the case with the existing signage. He requested that stipulation #4 be revised to state that the signs at their exit would be installed provided the existing Demorest Road signs are updated to clearly communicate that trucks have the right to use Demorest to get in and out of the proposed facility.

Chair Oyster asked staff to address questions regarding recommended stipulations on the fencing along the detention area as well as signage. Ms. Shields noted that the fence or guardrail along the pond is a safety measure noting the grade change resulting from the pond design needing to accommodate the regional over-detention and that the city anticipates this trail to become a regional connection in the network. Ms. Shields noted agreement to working with the applicant on the aesthetics of the fence.

Ms. Shields noted that staff has had continuing discussions with the applicant regarding area signage and that current plans show that there would be truck signs at the exit for the property so staff believes the stipulation is reinforcing a requirement of what is shown on the plan sheets, and that it is appropriate as it stands noting that requirements to change off-site signage is outside the scope of this private development application. She stated the city is happy to continue the conversation with the applicant.

Mr. Bradley appreciates that the signs are shown on the plans, but they were included based on the understanding through conversations with staff that the Demorest Road signs would either be removed or changed. Ms. Shields stated that conversations have been ongoing with the Safety and Service Departments as well as Administration regarding the signage along Demorest Road, and ultimately, the proposed stipulation is the conclusion that was reached.

Mr. Frea asked how many trucks there would be a day. Mr. Bradley responded they will not know for sure until the space is leased, but in his experience, it is infrequent as the site is not designed to be used as a trucking terminal.

Ms. Shields reminded Planning Commission that they can decide to strike stipulation #4 if they choose, and staff would continue conversations with the applicant address these issues.

Mr. Frea asked for clarifications on where future parking is located on the plans. Mr. Bradley clarified on the site plan the future parking locations at the north and south ends of the buildings.

Mr. Frea asked for clarification, noting that the existing wooded area in the Southeast corner would be maintained because the plans show a much larger group of trees that's outside of the preservation area noted in the staff report. Mr. Bradley noted that landscaping would be preserved as much as possible outside the construction area.

Mr. Frea noted that he liked the trail and does believe it will act as a regional connection. Mr. Bradley discussed the increased setback along the west property line to allow adequate space for the trail as well as mounding and landscaping. He also noted that the building is oriented so that the truck area is on the opposite side of the building from the residential area.

Mr. Farnsworth asked for clarification on why a height variance is needed. Mr. Bradley replied that it is for architectural reasons to achieve needed parapets and for additional inside space, if needed. Additionally, the height of the building was designed to meet the requirements of JobsOhio leads.

Ms. Shields added that this variance is not uncommon, and it is less than what most modern industrial buildings require. She further noted that the heights proposed as well as the other measures the applicant has noted such as the orientation of the building and its divisibility will help fill a void in our market and offer spaces we do not currently have in the city in terms of smaller flexible spaces, and that the site is designed so that the tenants will not be heavy truck users.

Mr. Roby Schottke, Council Member, 4912 McNulty Street, said that he has been working on the project for a couple of years. He stated that this area is sort of a blighted area being close to railroad tracks, and from his understanding, most of the truck traffic is box trucks. He believes stipulation #4 creates an untenable situation for a developer. The problem is the tenants will not be able to get their trucks back to the freeway. He asked that the Planning Commission consider eliminating stipulation #4.

Mr. Frea moved to strike stipulation #4 of staff's recommended stipulations:

4. Signage stating "All trucks must turn left" shall be installed at both exit drives from the site.

Chair Oyster seconded the motion, and the stipulation removal was approved 4-0.

Hearing no questions or discussion from Planning Commission or the public, Mr. Frea moved to recommend approval of the Final Development Plan to City Council with the following stipulations:

1. A variance shall be obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals to exceed the maximum permitted building height of 35 feet by 2 feet six inches for a total overall building height of 37 feet six inches.
2. Landscaping shall be added along the west property line where it is determined that the 80% opacity requirement between incompatible land uses is not achieved through existing, on-site, vegetation.
3. A fence or guardrail shall be added along the western elevation of the stormwater basin where the basin is adjacent to the multi-use path.

Mr. Farnsworth seconded the motion, and the item was approved 4-0.

ITEM #4 – Beulah Crossing– Final Development Plan

PID # 202311060037

Mr. Barr presented the Development Department's findings. This application is for a mixed-use development plan for Beulah Crossing along Columbus Street. The property was initially rezoned in 2018. City Council Approved the rezoning amendment for subarea B in 2023.

The proposed 3.407-acre mixed-use development is broken into two sections along the north and south sides of Columbus Street. The northern section has one 5,623-square-foot three-story mixed-use building with proposed outdoor patios. The applicant is requesting a deviation for an additional 65 square feet of residential over the permitted 1,500 square feet on the first floor. The second and third floors will be residential, bringing the total number of units to 20. Access to the northern section is provided from one access drive on Columbus Street near the railroad crossing. The northern building is 49 ½ feet in height and meets all setback and parking requirements. The building will be finished with a variety of high-quality materials. Due to the proximity of the outdoor patio west of the entrance and drive aisle for this section, bollards or impact-resistant planters should be installed for additional safety.

The southern section is proposing the same three-story building proposed on the northern section, requesting the same deviations and a 2,862 square foot one-story building located along Columbus Street and Lincoln Avenue. Access to the

southern section is provided from a full access drive on Columbus Street, Front Street, and Cleveland Avenue, with a right-out access onto Lincoln Avenue. The southern three-story building is finished in the same material, similar in color to the one proposed to the north, and meets all setback standards. The one-story building is 31 feet in height and meets all setback requirements and is finished in the same material and similar in color. A landscape plan was submitted showing the proposed landscaping meeting the requirement for screening. A 6-foot black vinyl fence is proposed along the western property line to provide additional screening for the residential property to the west and north of Cleveland Avenue. The applicant will preserve trees when feasible along Cleveland Ave and the eastern property line along the northern parcel. Additionally, a memorial park bench is proposed on Lincoln Avenue with landscaping.

The proposed development meets all applicable PUD Analysis and Grove City 2050 principles. After review and consideration, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to City Council for the Final Development Plan with the stipulations and deviation noted in the staff report.

Rebecca J. Mott, Plank Law Firm, LPA, 411 E. Town St., Floor 2, Columbus, OH., was present to speak on the item and mentioned the revisions to the project throughout the duration of the project regarding landscaping, site maneuverability, building space breakdown and the requested deviation.

Mr. Frea asked if the tenancy signs on the eastern sides of the buildings closest to Columbus Street were in the residential sections. Ms. Mott replied that the first floors of the fronts of the buildings on Columbus Street and the railroad tracks will be retail commercial spaces, and the ADA dwelling units are in the rear of the buildings and that restaurants are the primary target users.

Mr. Frea asked how many residential units there are and what their sizes are. Ms. Mott stated there will be 20 units per building, 40 total. Mr. Carter Bean, project architect stated each of the 2nd & 3rd floors has 9 units each; 2, two bedrooms per floor, 6 one-bedroom units, and 1 studio unit. The two-bedroom units are 850-900 sq. ft., the one-bedroom units are 620-650 sq. ft., and the studio unit is mid 400 sq. ft. He stated that each floor has common outdoor balcony spaces in addition to outdoor residential space. Mr. Frea mentions that spaces like this are not common in Grove City and that it provides an option for people looking for smaller more communal living spaces. Carter Bean mentioned the variety of housing within Beulah Park and that this development provides additional variety.

Mr. Frea asked if what looks to be a 4th-floor window is for residents. Mr. Carter Bean stated it is not a true fourth floor and creates a parapet to screen rooftop mechanicals.

Mr. Farnsworth asked if the northern area had only one entrance for traffic flow. Mr. Mike Reeves, Engineer, Kimley Horn responded the northern portion goes back to the beginning of the project in 2017 when Columbus Street was designed. The drive apron was installed when Columbus Street was built. He believes the one access point will be sufficient.

Mr. Farnsworth asked if the ADA parking is just for the ADA units in each building or for both the units and people going to the restaurants, he feels it's limited. Mr. Bean responded that the ADA parking code is based on the number of parking spots in the whole lot, not the uses in the building, and the ADA units could be leased by someone without a disability. The proposed ADA spaces complies with code.

Hearing no questions or discussion from Planning Commission or the public, Mr. Titus moved to recommend approval of the Final Development Plan to City Council with the following stipulations:

1. A deviation shall be granted to the approved Zoning Text to allow for up to 1,565 square feet of accessible multi-family residential uses on the first floor of each three-story building.

2. Bollards or impact-resistant planters be installed around the northern section patio adjacent to the drive aisle and Columbus Street access point.
3. The individual parcels comprising the site south of Columbus Street shall be combined into one parcel.

Mr. Frea seconded the motion, and the item was approved 4-0.

With no additional discussion, Chair Oyster adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.



Terry Ellis, Development Assistant



Chair Julie Oyster