



MEETING MINUTES

Planning Commission

March 4, 2025 – City Council Chambers

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

Roll was taken, and the following members were present: Ms. Kim Wemlinger, Chair Julie Oyster, Mr. Michael Farnsworth, Mr. Larry Titus, and Mr. Chris Roach. Staff members present: Kyle Rauch, Development Director, Kim Shields, Community Development Manager, Dash Logan, Senior Planner; Terry Barr, Planner; Stephen Smith, Frost Brown Todd; Laura Scott, Planning and Zoning Manager; Matthew Dicken, Public Service Superintendent, Kevin Teaford, Safety Director, Tami Kelly, Clerk of Council and Ryan Andrews, EMH&T

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

Organizational Items:

Chair Oyster asked for approval of the February 4th, 2024, Planning Commission meeting minutes. Mr. Farnsworth moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Titus seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved 5-0.

New Items:

ITEM #1 - Ohio Cannabis Company - Special Use Permit

PID# 202501230003

Mr. Logan presented the Development Department's findings. He stated that the applicant is requesting approval of a Special Use Permit to allow for the retail dispensing of marijuana at 1947 Stringtown Road. City Council passed ordinance C-32-24 which established the special use permit process for the evaluation and review of proposed dispensary uses. The applicant has previously submitted a Special Use Permit application for the site which was approved by City Council as Ordinance C-60-24 and ultimately vetoed by the mayor per section 2:10 of the City of Grove City Charter. This proposed application has been reviewed against the regulations and criteria established by City Council for such a use.

Mr. Logan continued, stating materials state hours of operation for the proposed use would be 10:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday through Saturday and 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Sunday. Peak hours are expected to be from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM and from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Materials state that hours of operation will be adjusted based on demand while remaining compliant with Grove City and State of Ohio regulations. Grove City's Code

restricts the hours of operation for this use between 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM, and the materials state the use will comply with these requirements. However, materials also note that the use proposes to comply with State requirements as well, which allow for these uses to operate from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM, which is not compliant with the hours of operation outlined in code. The use criteria established by City Council prohibit any marijuana retailer from locating within 500 feet, measured from the property line, of a parcel that is residential in use, and the proposed location for this use does not comply with this requirement, as two multi-family residential developments located south of this site are less than 500 feet from the proposed location. The submitted materials indicate that a variance to this requirement is being requested. Code states that Planning Commission and City Council may vary any supplementary requirements it determines to be an unnecessary hardship on the property owner and in the best interest of the City.

Mr. Logan stated that the requirements established in code prohibit drive-thrus in association with the proposed use, the applicant is proposing a drive-thru with their application, which requires another variance from the approved rules. The drive-through would be located along the east side of the existing building. The aerial provided showing the location only includes an arrow in the general location of the drive thru, and does not include details related to circulation, signage, pavement markings or physical means of separation from the drive aisles typically required for new drive-thrus. Materials state the drive-thru would be for medical customers only; However, there is no mechanism in place to restrict the use of the drive-thru to medical customers only. Additionally, the code restriction does not differentiate types of drive-thrus based on customer type. Noting that the special use permit criteria for the use prohibits drive-thru, Staff does not support the inclusion of a drive-thru with this use and does not believe a variance from this requirement is warranted. Additionally, it should be noted that a variance for a drive-thru was denied by City Council with a vote of 1-5 (with 1 vacant seat on City Council), as part of the previous Special Use Permit application for a marijuana dispensary on the site.

Mr. Logan continued, stating Materials indicate that only a portion of the existing 10,701 square foot building will be occupied by the proposed use, with a detailed breakdown of the square footage of the floorplan by use, totaling 2,900 square feet, but may expand in the future to occupy the entirety of the building. Materials note that the applicant anticipates between 200-300 cars daily. Based on the Institute of Traffic Engineers trip generation manual, if the proposed use occupied the entire structure, it would have the potential to generate more traffic than a use permitted by right in the C-2 district. Additionally, a recent article in the Dispatch for a proposed dispensary in Orange Township, east of Polaris, indicated traffic counts of approximately 500 vehicles per day. Submitted materials do not show any improvements being proposed for the site. However, Chapter 1136 of code states that whenever there is a change in use, sites must be brought into compliance with the landscaping code. Therefore, the site would need to be brought into compliance with code, which includes parking lot perimeter plantings, parking lot island and peninsula installation and plantings, and service structure screening requirements. Additionally, per Chapter 1145 of code, non-conforming signage would need to be brought into compliance with code, including the removal of one of the two monument signs.

Mr. Logan stated that the submitted materials indicate that many of the supplementary requirements for a special use permit for retail dispensing of medical and recreational marijuana will be met by complying with Ohio Administrative Code requirements for such use; However, materials are not specific for many requirements in terms of how the standards will be met. Additionally, the proposed use does not comply with the criteria for such a use as established by Ordinance C-32-24, including the 500-foot residential buffer requirement, and the inclusion of a drive-thru. The proposed use also does not comply with the GroveCity2050 Guiding Principles,

and it should be noted with respect to guiding principle #5, the use providing a net fiscal benefit to the City, recent legislation at the state level could potentially remove any fiscal benefit the city would receive from such a use.

Mr. Logan concluded stating that After review and consideration, noting that the proposed special use permit does not comply with the rules and regulations for such a use as established by Ordinance C-32-24, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of disapproval to City Council for the Special Use Permit as submitted.

Mr. Brian Wingfield, Ohio Cannabis Company, 3136 Kingsdale Center Box 201, Columbus OH, was present to speak on the item. He stated that he believes City Council did not take into account the number of immune-compromised and handicapped individuals when prohibiting drive thrus and believes a drive thru would be beneficial. He stated that finding a space in Grove City that meets the 500-foot requirement from residential property is very tough and is asking for a variance from this requirement.

Mr. Titus stated that while the use is legal in Ohio and he does not have any problems with this use coming to Grove City, he still does not like the proposed location on Stringtown Road. He stated there are places out of the way where a business like this could go.

Chair Oyster stated she agrees with Mr. Titus. She pointed out that this type of business is still new and feels that it is important to comply with the ordinance in place regarding such a use.

Mr. Kevin Teafor, City of Grove City Safety Director, spoke on this item. He stated that he worked closely with the Development Department and Law Director to establish meaningful and fair regulations regarding the retail dispensing of medical and recreational marijuana. These regulations were passed by City Council in Ordinance C-32-24, to address security and safety issues surrounding such a use, balancing the economic benefits, traffic efficiency and neighborhood harmony. He stated that as the community continues to evolve, it is important to maintain these safeguards established in Ordinance C-32-24, rather than weaken them. He stated that the regulations ensure these businesses are properly secured and placed appropriately, rather than adjacent to sensitive locations. He stated that Stringtown Road already experiences significant congestion, and the area between I-71 and Gantz Road is the single highest crash area in the city. He noted that in a recent study conducted by the city, Stringtown Road was one of three areas identified as an at-risk area for high-vulnerability road users. He stated that adding high-traffic businesses has the potential to contribute to these risks and must be managed carefully to minimize risk. He stated that the current regulations help maintain a balance between commercial interests and quality of life for residents and were enacted through a thoughtful and democratic process. City Council was informed by experts and public input and determined these rules were necessary and again emphasized that rolling back or weakening these regulations would disregard the planning that went into ensuring these uses are operating responsible. He noted that the Ohio General Assembly is contemplating changes to current law governing these uses, which could place local laws and regulations in a state of flux. He concluded by urging Planning Commission to stand firm in upholding the regulations currently in place for cannabis businesses.

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 as submitted.

Ms. Wemlinger seconded the motion, and the item was disapproved 0-5.

ITEM #2 - Forestar Plum Run - Preliminary Development Plan

PID# 202501290004

Mr. Logan presented the Development Department's findings. He stated that the applicant is requesting approval of a preliminary development plan for a residential subdivision consisting of 349 lots in two subareas on 144.3 acres at the northeast corner of London Groveport Road and Jackson Pike. There have been two other Development Plans approved for this site, but neither was built and both plans have expired, and zoning has reverted back to SF-1. The Preliminary development plan is the first step in the PUD process, and is meant to assess if the proposed use of a site and basic layout are appropriate for the area, with more in-depth reviews occurring with later applications, which include a rezoning application and Final Development Plan.

Mr. Logan continued, stating that the site is proposed to have two subareas separated by the stream corridor that runs through the site. Subarea A, to the north and east of the stream corridor, is proposed to have three main access points, as well as two connections to the Scioto Meadows subdivision to the north. These access points are shown in similar locations to those on the previously approved Development Plan, and Staff believes that these access points are appropriate. Materials state that the roadways in Subarea A will be public, and plans show roadway widths as 29 feet from back-of curb to back-of-curb, which will allow for a pavement width of 28 feet. Several block lengths exceed the 800-foot maximum block length permitted by code, and the applicant will need to ensure that appropriate traffic calming measures are integrated into the design to ensure a safe roadway network. Subarea A is proposed to contain 266 single-family homes on 70-foot-wide lots. This width and lot size is consistent with the Scioto Meadows subdivision to the north and the previously approved Development Plan for the site. The plans state that homes will have a minimum size of 1,500 square feet for One Story and Ranch homes, and 2,000 square feet for two-story homes. The minimum home sizes proposed are smaller than the previously approved Development Plan for the site, which were a minimum of 1,600 square feet for one story and ranch homes and 2,200 square feet for single-family homes.

Mr. Logan stated that Subarea B is located south of the stream corridor and is shown with one primary access point and an emergency access point connecting to London Groveport Road. Subarea B will contain 83 single-family homes, which are smaller in size than the single-family units. The lots in subarea B are proposed to be a minimum of 52 feet in width, which matches the lot sizes on the previously approved Development Plan for Subarea B. However, it should be noted that this subarea contained condominiums on the previously approved Development Plan. Materials state that the homes in subarea B will be a minimum of 1,500 square feet, which is larger than the minimum square footage of the condominiums included on the previously approved development plan. While architectural standards and requirements will be established during the rezoning process, other recently approved developments in the area including Farmstead, Trail View Run, and the previously approved development plan have required that no less than 25% of front elevations include brick, stone, or cultured stone, exclusive of windows, door openings and garage doors. As such, Staff expects the proposed development to have similar architectural standards, which will be established during the review of the zoning text for the site. The applicant has provided preliminary renderings for illustrative purposes, which include six different two-story models and nine different one-story or ranch models. Each of these models would offer varying elevations, based on the materials provided. Specific details were not provided on the types and breakdown of materials used. However, several of the elevations provided would not meet the architectural requirements approved with the previous PUD-R zoning and development plan for the site in terms of façade

materials, and final home elevations will need to comply with the standards outlined in the future zoning text. Standards to ensure architectural diversity throughout the development will also need to be included in the zoning text.

Mr. Logan continued, stating that several open space areas are shown dispersed across the site. Per code, 19.1 acres of open space is required to be dedicated, based on the number of single family lots proposed. Materials state that 29.6 acres of open space is proposed, with an additional 25.16 acres of green space provided. This additional green space includes areas in the floodplain, setback areas and other areas that cannot be counted towards dedicated open space per code. Additionally, 18.57 acres of green space is shown within the Plum Run Stream Corridor. Similarly to the previously approved development plan for the site, the applicant will need to include measures to activate this stream corridor as an amenity, through trails, overlooks and other measures. The plans also show a multi-use path network throughout the site, which would provide bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the site. A trail is included along the site's northeastern frontage along London Groveport Road, which will allow for a future connection to the Scioto Grove Metro Park. A multi-use path is shown running to the site's entrance along Jackson Pike. However, A trail should be installed along the Jackson Pike frontage of the site, running from Plum Run Drive to the northern property line, to allow for future connectivity with planned trails along Jackson Pike, which will provide future connectivity to the City's growing trail network.

Mr. Logan stated that While landscaping standards will be established during the rezoning process to address buffering requirements, street trees, entry features and other landscaping associated with the development, preliminary landscaping details were provided. The existing tree row along the northern property line will remain, and plans show a 20-foot "No Disturb Zone" along this property line, while noting that supplemental landscaping may be planted in this area to augment the existing tree line. The proposed stormwater basins throughout the site will need to comply with the design and planting requirements outlined in the City's Stormwater design manual. Preliminary utility information was provided along with the application submission, showing the site can be serviced by public utilities in the area. However, staff have concerns related to the proposed utilities in subarea B, south of the stream corridor. While the roadways are shown as private, plans are not clear on whether the utilities throughout this subarea will also be private. Further discussions will be needed regarding ownership and maintenance of utilities as part of the Final Development plan.

Mr. Logan continued, noting that the previously approved development plan for the site showed improvements to both London-Groveport Road and Jackson Pike associated with entrances to the site, as well as improvements to the intersection of London Groveport Road and Jackson Pike, necessitated by the development. While the previously approved plan permitted 360 lots and the current plan proposes only 349 lots, staff's expectations are that a similar level of improvements will need to be made to accommodate the proposed development.

Mr. Logan concluded, stating that the proposed development can comply with all PUD analysis criteria, resulting in a quality development, And is in line with the goals and objectives outlined in the GroveCity2050 Community plan, including the future land use identified for this site, Noting the need for continuing discussions regarding utilities, building architecture, and public roadway improvements, After review and consideration, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to City Council for the Preliminary Development Plan as submitted.

Mr. Mike Huber, Dinsmore & Shohl, LLC 255 E. Fifth Street, Cincinnati, OH, 45202 was present to speak on the item. He thanked staff for their help throughout the process. He clarified that Forestar is a lot developer and not a home builder and the elevations provided would be up to the developer as to what the final product would be. He continued that any homebuilder would be required to meet the standards approved in the development text approved with the rezoning. The developer has started conversations with the City on a development agreement to address off-site improvements. He mentioned a traffic study would be conducted during the rezoning to address the necessary improvements. Open to install the trail along Jackson Pike SR104. The lift station in subarea B will be privately owned and maintained. The developer plans to activate the area along Plum Run with a multi-use path to provide access to residents. Mr. Huber concluded by stating that they will broadly comply with the requirement from the approved Pulte development and that traffic calming will be installed along the 800-foot blocks. He mentioned they held a community meeting that week prior to go over the development.

Chair Oyster mentioned that Planning Commission had received and reviewed an email from a resident of Scioto Meadows.

Ms. Wemlinger asked if there were drainage concerns with the development and Plum Run Creek. Mr. Huber responded that no development would take place in or disturb the flood plain and Plum Run Creek would remain the same. Mr. Logan stated that stormwater and drainage reviews would take place during the rezoning process.

Mr. Farnsworth asked why the home sizes were decreased from the Pulte development. Mr. Huber stated it is based on the home builders and the products they offer.

Chair Oyster asked if lot owners would select the home builders. Mr. Huber stated that Forestar would sell the lots to builders and there could be multiple builders based on the market and final product. He stated that the elevations were from DR Horton who is a preferred buyer. Mr. Farnsworth asked if there could be multiple builders and Mr. Huber stated there could be, but they would all be subject to the same approved development standards.

Mr. Roach asked about the HOA for Subarea B and what maintenance they would cover. Mr. Huber stated the HOA are typically created by the home builders and that they would cover private open spaces, road etc. Ms. Wemlinger asked if there would be separate HOAs because they could be separate builders. Mr. Mark Connor, Forestar, 1900 Polaris Parkway Columbus, OH. The idea is there would be a master HOA with sub HOAs for different areas.

Mr. Huber confirmed that the developer plans to install trees and mounding along the property line of subarea B and 790 London Groveport Road. Mr. John Riley, 790 London Groveport Road, complimenting the developers for addressing comments from the public meeting. Mentioned he is not against development, likes the reduced density from Pulte but it still seems quite dense.

Mr. David Ott, 791 London Groveport Road. He is concerned with the number of homes and traffic. Mentioned a petition signed during the Pulte development process that was sent to City Council. He mentioned the dangerous curve on London Groveport Road and current visibility problems that would be worsened by building houses on the property.

Ms. Wemlinger asked if those concerns would be addressed during the traffic study. Ms. Shields mentioned that the study will identify the amount of traffic, and any improvements warranted.

Mr. Riley mentioned he likes using different builders because it adds variety.

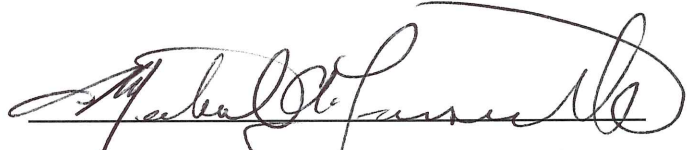
Hearing no additional questions or discussion from Planning Commission or the public, Mr. Farnsworth moved to recommend approval of the Preliminary Development Plan to City Council as submitted.

Ms. Wemlinger seconded the motion, and the item was approved 5-0.

There being no additional discussion, Chair Oyster adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.



Kim Shields, Community Development Manager


Julie Oyster, Chair
Michael Farnsworth
vice chair