

## **STOW PLANNING COMMISSION**

Minutes of the Stow Planning Commission meeting held on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. Brauer, Mr. Kohlmeier, Mr. Ross, Mr. Sprungle

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ms. Taylor.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Director of Planning Rob Kurtz  
Acting Planning Commission Secretary Bonnie Emahiser

**PRESS REPRESENTATIVE:** None

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Mr. Sprungle called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6: 00 p.m. and asked the audience to stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Kohlmeier moved and Mr. Ross seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2015 meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.

### **BUSINESS ITEMS:**

#### **P.C. 2016-006: STOW MUNROE FALLS LIBRARY – CONDITIONAL ZONING CERTIFICATE - PARKING LOT EXPANSION; 3521 DARROW ROAD**

Mr. Kurtz: This is a request by Ms. Linda Sutherland, Fiscal Officer of the Stow Munroe Falls Library, property owner, for the Planning Commission's approval to permit the expansion of the existing parking lot. The proposed expansion will occur on the property located at 1862 Beech Street. The property is zoned R-2 Residential and libraries are conditionally permitted in this district.

The applicant is proposing to modify the existing parking lot which currently has 119 spaces to expand the capacity to 150 spaces. The proposed expansion will occur to the west of the parking lot on the 0.26-acre lot located at 1862 Beech Street. The existing house, which is currently vacant, and the garage will be removed as part of the project. The existing curb cut on Beech Street will remain in the same location. The proposed new parking area will be setback 15 feet from the Beech Street right-of-way similar to the existing lot east of the curb cut. The proposed new parking lot will be located 20 feet from the adjacent property line to the west.

The existing wood privacy fence will be extended to the north to screen the proposed new parking. New landscaping is also proposed to be located in the following locations: west of the new privacy fence; adjacent to Beech Street and Darrow Road; and in the new interior landscaped islands within the parking lot.

The existing lot is here [pointing to the screen]. This is 1862 Beech Street the garage and the house. This is the lot in question [pointing to the screen]. The expansion will occur just west of the existing lot.

The landscaping on the interior parking lot is shown. As I mentioned, this privacy fence [pointing to the screen] that is currently located here will be extended along this new parking lot.

Mr. Sprungle: So it will be extended along the parking lot or will it jog out.

Mr. Kurtz: No, it will be extended along the parking lot.

Mr. Sprungle: So the landscaping will be on the other side of the fence.

Mr. Kurtz: Yes. You can see that the spacing here [pointing to the screen] is greater here than it is here [pointing to the screen]. So the fence will be here [pointing to the screen] and then there will be landscaping on the residential side of the fence as well as new landscaping. There will be low landscaping here [pointing to the screen] and here. There are also some existing street trees that aren't shown along Beech Street. There will also be some additional landscaping in this area here [pointing to the screen]. Additional interior landscaping will be added as well.

There will be a slight modification to the drive-up area. This is the corner of the building [pointing to the screen], this is the drop-off area there [pointing to the screen]. This parking lot is going to be modified. Right now there are multiple parking spaces going the other way. This is going to be reoriented north-south where they are currently east-west. There will be an escape area here [pointing to the screen] so you can get out easily. The parking lot will be repaved and restriped. There are no changes to the building.

Mr. Brauer: The islands are staying the same.

Mr. Kurtz: Yes. Some of them are going to be modified and there will be new ones installed. There will be a smoother entry. When you're coming in here [pointing to the screen] and also leaving going this way [pointing to the screen], this is going to be a little smoother to go out.

In terms of conditions, the Fire Department indicated they did not have any additional comments.

The Engineering Department indicated that stormwater management will have to be accounted for either underground or the existing detention basin will have to be modified to adequately take on any new stormwater. It's generally draining this way [pointing to the screen] towards Darrow Road in a southeast direction so it will not affect any of the adjacent properties there.

Mr. Sprungle: Where are they catching water now?

Mr. Kurtz: In existing catch basins on the lot. Some of those may need to be modified. Engineering indicated there is a flat area near the front entrance. So that will be taken care of when Engineering reviews the final grading plan.

Mr. Kohlmeier: They are resurfacing the entire lot?

Mr. Kurtz: Yes.

The only other condition we recommend would be the City Arborist's approval of the landscape plans. Ms. Mottl has already indicated some preliminary comments in terms of the types of species to be planted. That can be handled with the final landscape plan.

The minimum interior landscaping required is 5% and they are proposing 8.8%. So they are exceeding what is required for the interior landscaping. In terms of open space for the whole site I calculated approximately 28% and the minimum is 25%.

Mr. Sprungle: So there is no variance, it is only conditional approval?

Mr. Kurtz: This is still zoned residential but is conditionally permitted in this district.

Mr. Sprungle: The City has no problem with this?

Mr. Kurtz: Staff would support this request based on the conditions we discussed.

Mr. Brauer: Will they modify the lighting in that corner?

Mr. Kurtz: Yes. I did review the lighting plan and the parking lot will have new lighting and there will be house-side shields on the residential side.

Mr. Ross: We know that for a fact, because we don't have any spec sheets on the lighting.

Mr. Kurtz: We don't usually distribute those to Planning Commission but I have them and I have reviewed them and confirmed with the applicant's engineer they will have shields on the residential side.

Mr. Ross: Is there timing on the lights in terms of their evening hours?

Mr. Kurtz: We can ask the applicant that.

Mr. Ross: I would definitely assume if I were a neighbor I would like to have the cut off as well as the timing control for that.

Do we have any idea what percentage of the time the parking lot is at capacity currently?

Mr. Sprungle: We can get someone from the library to answer that.

Mr. Brauer: Does the City take care of snow removed for this lot?

Mr. Kurtz: No. The library contracts that.

Mr. Doug Dotterer – 2369 Harvester Drive – Stow, Ohio. I am the Executive Director of the library. I've been the Director for 12 years as of today. I've worked there 18 years total.

Mr. Dotterer was sworn in by the secretary.

Mr. Dotterer: I'm here tonight to begin the process of seeking your permission on expanding the library. Before I begin the few comments that I have, I want to begin by thanking the committee

for allowing the library to come tonight. I want to thank Rob Kurtz and the City Engineer for coming over and visiting the library and working with us.

I brought some guests tonight. I'm going to start by introducing them before I begin my comments. We have Jorge deCardenas head of our IT Department; Mike Dywert, who works with the Rulin Company and he will be our project engineer full-time on this project; lastly we brought David Myers from Thorson Baker who can answer any technical questions regarding civil engineering of the project.

The library has undergone a renaissance growth over the last 10 years. This project will allow us to expand our parking from 120 to approximately 149 spaces. Now the library has been around since 1924. We have not expanded this current property in parking since 1997.

We continue to have a number of vehicles and people come in our library. That keeps us quite busy. Our average walk through on a daily basis is, I believe, 746 visits per day. As you can see the library is quite busy and it keeps us going.

Part of the problems we've experienced over the years is parking. As we grow, as we prosper, as we add programs at the library we find that we need additional parking space. We've had overflow parking go over to our neighbors, to the church across the street, as well as the dental office next to us.

Many of our programs, again once the parking lot fills up they start parking on Beech Street and Elm Street and the residents don't like that due to the fact it is so narrow.

Again, we have been saving over many years to do this complete expansion of parking. Now this is a complete tear out. We've had some water issues over the years and we're attempting to rectify that as well and this complete tear out will allow us to do this.

As you can see from some of the key facts right here [pointing to the screen] the library really is an asset to this community. The period of growth is really an amazing thing to see and we're very proud of it.

The parking, what we're looking at is we have purchased the property to the west of us at 1846 Beech Street with the intention of taking that property and demolishing it and adding additional parking. Now the library has a reputation of being a good neighbor to the area residents around us and we continue to want to be good neighbors and work with all the residents when it comes to landscaping or any issues that they may have. So again, this is something that we are going to be very opened minded about.

I think we're trying to start this process, do it as carefully as possible, mitigate some of the parking issues that we've had causing problems for the area residents and really start the library on a second period of growth that will continue.

Again, that's why we're here tonight to talk to you a little bit about the parking and seek your permission as we move forward.

Mr. Ross: What percentage of the time do you have overflow parking?

Mr. Dotterer: I don't have an exact figure. As I said, we average over 700 individuals coming into the library on a daily basis. Our programs are throughout the day. We have story times

throughout the day, evening programs and community groups. Really the library has morphed more into a community information center; and our computer training and so forth. I don't have an exact figure but it's substantial. If you try to approach the library anytime on a weekend or an evening night, you may have an issue.

Again, this is a frustration that has been conveyed to me time and time again from our patrons. Many times I hear our patrons coming to the library and they drive around and drive around and can't find a space and they leave. Well, we're trying to pay attention to that.

We're trying to address some of the water issues over the years that we seemed to have had in our parking lot. This would be a substantial from the ground up renovation, a complete tear out of the parking lot. This would add spaces; it would redesign the lot and add all new landscaping. Many of the trees that were planted when we first renovated in 1997 for the addition of the building died.

We're trying to address traffic flow to make it easier for people to come into the parking lot. Some of the issues we've had are with the concrete islands. My plan is to take out those concrete islands around the library area, increase parking and make it easier for handicapped to get in and out of the building. Those are trip hazards, they are maintenance issues and we believe by addressing this in the new plan we will be able to alleviate those problems.

Mr. Ross: Are you saying these islands are not curbed?

Mr. Dotterer: No, the islands are however, when they were built, they're just not used enough. Many of the handicapped individuals that get out of their cars do not want to climb up onto the concrete islands and walk them and then get down again. We have addressed it, maintenance wise, trying to repair them. They are also a hazard to our snow crew in the wintertime and they really take away from the added parking spaces that I see.

This plan again will narrow that down to more of a green space with trees and shrubbery. So we feel this will be a very positive impact on the library.

Mr. Ross: Where is your next expansion for the parking lot?

Mr. Dotterer: I don't follow you.

Mr. Ross: It looks like you're either going to have to acquire more property or you're landlocked.

Mr. Dotterer: At this time the library has no plans to expand beyond where we're at. It's not to say that can't happen some day in the future but there are no plans to do that. The library likes the location we're at. The board has no intention of coming up with an alternative place for us to move to. We're very satisfied with it.

This came to us at the last minute. We were approached by the executor of the estate that wanted to create a fair deal by selling this property to us. We wanted to go ahead and work with the Fisher estate as well and give a fair price to the property as well.

Again, part of the issue we've had over the years is parking and we're trying to remedy this headache for us and do it in a reasonable responsible way.

Mr. Sprungle: So what you're saying is there are no future plans, however, if another piece of property became available you'd look at it at that time probably.

Mr. Dotterer: It would have to be very far down the road but I think it's incumbent and prudent on us to explore all possibilities but at this time, we're not looking actively at all to expand.

Mr. Ross: Admittedly the drawings we're looking at are very small and somewhat difficult to read. Is there any landscaping on the islands themselves?

Mr. Dotterer: In terms of how we have it set up there is greenery and grass and trees. I will have Mike address the landscaping issues.

David Myers - Thorson Baker – 3030 West Streetsboro Road was sworn in by the secretary.

Mr. Myers: I'm not a landscape architect. I'm actually a civil engineer but we did submit a landscaping plan and actually Mr. Kurtz has it pulled up on the screen now. You can see the very large circles with the "X" on the landscaping islands. Those are honey locust trees.

Mr. Ross: Anything low?

Mr. Kohlmeier: It looks like just grass with the pentagon.

Mr. Myers: I don't see a height listed on the drawing.

Mr. Sprungle: What are you questioning? Are those trees going to be planted at street level or are they going to be up in an island.

Mr. Brauer: The islands are remaining correct Mr. Kurtz?

Mr. Ross: They are getting modified but they are still there.

Mr. Brauer: So those trees are going to be planted on the islands.

Mr. Sprungle: Some of the islands.

Mr. Kurtz: The trees are in the interior landscaping. There are a couple of notes indicating low shrubbery. Low shrubbery is indicated along Beech Street.

Mr. Ross: Just the perimeter.

Mr. Kurtz: Right.

Mr. Kohlmeier: If you look at the existing plan and compare it to the new one you'll see the configuration of the parking has all changed. The islands are all moved.

Mr. Sprungle: So it's all new islands.

Mr. Ross: I assume with the additional parking you had to incorporate additional accessible locations.

Mr. Myers: We have the same number of accessible locations but we relocated them to the easterly side of the parking lot for better access to the building.

Mr. Ross: So you added 50 additional spaces but didn't add any additional handicap parking.

Mr. Myers: Yes, primarily because we didn't increase the square footage of the building.

Mr. Sprungle: I assume there's some [?] on that.

Mr. Ross: The American's With Disability Act has nothing to do with the price of eggs. It's the number of parking spaces in the lot.

Mr. Sprungle: Is there a formula for that Mr. Kurtz?

Mr. Ross: Yes, it's scheduled under ADA.

Mr. Kurtz: It is not a Zoning Code requirement it is a Building Code requirement.

Mr. Sprungle: There is an adequate number.

Mr. Kurtz: Again there is no Zoning Code requirement for handicapped spaces. It is a Building Code and when it gets reviewed by the Building Department they will make sure...

Mr. Sprungle: Make sure there's the right amount based on the code. Okay.

Mr. Kurtz: The handicapped spaces are in this middle island right now.

Mr. Gary Greenwald – We are going to live in the new house being built across the street at 1851 Beech Street – was sworn in by the secretary.

Mr. Greenwald: Are you going to go with LED lighting?

Mr. Kurtz: I think they are LED.

Mr. Kohlmeier: They have LED specified on the plan.

Mr. Greenwald: Did I hear you say you're going to cut a new entrance to the west of the existing entrance?

Mr. Kurtz: No. Can you see the existing entrance [pointing to the screen] that is going to remain in the same location? Your house is 1851?

Mr. Ross: It's not listed there.

Mr. Kurtz: So the existing library driveway will be in the same location.

Mr. Greenwald: Will you change any of the curbing going down Beech Street?

Mr. Kurtz: No.

Mr. Greenwald: So it will still remain the same.

Mr. Kurtz: Right. There will be no changes to the Beech Street entrance. The only changes will be additional landscaping along Beech Street.

Mr. Brauer moved to approved P.C. 2016-006. **Planning Commission recommended approval subject to the Engineering Department approval of storm water management plans (ensuring new impervious area is accommodated by either modifying existing retention basin or providing underground storage and adjustment of catch basins near entrance to prevent ponding in the parking lot); Building Department approval of construction plans; and City Arborist approval of landscape plans.**

Mr. Ross seconded the motion.

YEA: Brauer, Kohlmeier, Ross, Sprungle.

NAY: None. The motion passed 4-0.

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Brauer moved and Mr. Ross seconded the motion to adjourn. It was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

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Richard Sprungle  
Planning Commission Chairman

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Pamela H. Daerr, CPS  
Planning Commission Secretary