



MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2021 6:00 PM

PLACE: COUNCIL CHAMBERS
7232 EAST MAIN STREET, REYNOLDSBURG, OH 43068

A. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Cullinan, Zollars, Hicks, Furst, Benner
ABSENT:

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Planning Commission – Regular Meeting – September 2, 2021

Minutes stand approved with corrections that were earlier submitted and updated.

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda stands approved

4. SWEARING IN OF SPEAKERS

Speakers for the evening sworn in by Mr. Zollars.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. Application #2021-5408; 1649 Graham Road; Applicant Rick Cain (Adams Signs); Certificate of Appropriateness

Mr. Zollars: Emily, what can you get us ready to go on that discussion, please?

Ms. Wheeler: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First item this evening is for a certificate of appropriateness application number 2021-5408. This is for the Church of Christ, located at 1649y Graham Road. The applicant is requesting Planning Commission approval for a new ground sign with an electronic message display on the bottom half of that sign, similar to one actually directly across the street at the United Methodist Church. I know some other churches in the city also have similar signage because this is within the old Reynoldsburg Neighborhood District. We do require a certificate of appropriateness for all nonresidential properties doing any kind of

exterior modifications, which would include new signage. The applicant is here, if there are any questions and I will pull that up. I apologize the monitors are not working tonight.

Mr. Zollars: Commissioners, questions, comments on the church sign?

Mr. Furst: Yeah, I have a number of questions or comments. Is there anything that that the applicant would like to add first before I kind of dive in here?

Mr. Zollars: Please state your name and address for the records if you would.

Mr. Cain: I'm from Adams Signs.

Mr. Furst: So either Mr. Shook or Mrs. Wheeler. The electronic portion of the sign, those are nonconforming uses, are they not?

Ms. Wheeler: I would say the code is vague for this particular zoning district. We do not call out specifically any kind of changeable copy.

Mr. Furst: I saw that there was changeable. I believe the code calls it. Yeah. Changeable copy types available in the district are channel letters only. So, but as far as what constitutes changeable copy and electronic sign is perhaps a little vague, as far as the code is concerned. So I'm just going to kind of go down the list here, and I apologize. But in section 11053C3 under sign lighting it specifies that sign lighting in old Reynoldsburg is exterior illuminated gooseneck, shadow lit, bulbs surround. This appears to be interior illuminated. Is that correct? I don't see how that's conforming to the code. And then the changeable copy type we already spoke about. And then also the size of the sign seems to be nonconforming, I believe the maximum height is six feet and with a 24 foot square surface area. This appears to be about eight feet tall and 40 feet square. And then also, section E-3 allows four colors, this has five. So those are just some of my concerns.

Mr. Zollars: I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name, but would you want to address this? OK, good.

Mr. Bowsher: Rick, I'm sorry. Would you mind pulling that closer? ,

Mr. Cain: My name's Rick Cain from Adams Signs. What we're replacing is an existing sign, and I enclosed a picture of that. That sign, we're actually going to use the same structure and we're lowering the sign. We're taking a foot and a half off the existing sign. We're lowering it by a foot and a half. And as far as the number of colors that's controlled in the software, so for instance, in some municipalities, they only allow a single color at a time. That's all programmable.

Mr. Furst: So the entire sign is electronic? Or just the kind of flag portion there?

Mr. Cain: On the bottom portion where you see a height at two foot seven, that is just a digital sign. The ID sign is led illuminated, but that doesn't change messages. That's a static sign.

Mr. Furst: Right, right. So but I don't know maybe I just counted the colors wrong. But that portion of the sign, which appears to just be kind of a poly sign which light would shine through a corrected that has five colors?

Mr. Cain: Yeah, it's polycarbonate panels.

Mr. Hicks: I think, Mr. Chairman. You know, we've been pretty consistent on new developments as they come in regards to trying to help, you know, as part of our comp plan to build a community identity and branding and trying to make the community and maybe not look entirely monotone or completely cohesive, but to have some form of cohesiveness to the community. And one of the big things that we've requested on, I think almost every single new development has been that they're going to do a sign to be a monument sign with a brick base and sort of follow or look like, you know, in some ways, we've deviated from that a little bit if it matched the building. The Walgreen's building is white, and so they're signs brick, but with white. And trying to create, you know, a brand and identity throughout the city. Considering this is also in the historic district, I think that I wouldn't be able to support an electronic sign there. Frankly, I think that the electronic signs create some problems in regards to I mean, they're normally super bright at night when you're driving. I've noticed them in other communities and I just don't think that it's a good look. So I don't think I can support the change. I think the old sign looks pretty good and gets the message across. But if you guys did need to replace that sign for some reason, I think that a sign that is on a brick monument base that meets the other parts of our code requirements, I think that, you know, I would absolutely support that.

Mr. Cain: Now, to be clear on the brightness, the manufacturer we use as Daktronics, which is the largest manufacturer. These signs automatically brighten and dim themselves according to what the ambient light is outside. So it will dim itself in the evening to four percent of total brightness. So because if we didn't do that, it's difficult to read. And you're right, it is annoying or it is too bright, but does allow for the differences in the ambient light.

Mr. Hicks: Understood.

Mr. Furst: And to be clear, I would also support the sign if it was conforming to the other portions of the code. I understand that you are trying to reduce costs and everything by reusing the existing structure and whatnot, but unfortunately it's just not conforming to our code.

Mr. Zollars: Mr. Benner, Mr. Cullinan, any comments? Nothing? Any other comments, anything you would like to add or elaborate on?

Mr. Cain: So what you're saying is in this area digital signs are prohibited? Is that what you're telling us?

Mr. Zollars: I think well, as an example, RUMC across the street has what I think they're just yellow lights, pretty much is that yellow green, whatever color that happens to be. And it's, you know, digital out and I believe it's on a monument. I'm not sure I can't remember exactly.

Mr. Hicks: It's on a brick monument.

Mr. Cain: If it was on a brick monument would it be acceptable? That's what I'm asking.

Mr. Zollars: I believe Mr. First mentioned a number of colors, and this is very busy.

Mr. Furst: Yes, in the top poly carbonate section, if you removed one of the colors and if it was on a brick base and complied with the square footage and height requirements, I think it'd be perfectly acceptable.

Mr. Cain: All right, and your square footage requirements, twenty four square feet, if I recall.

Mr. Furst: Yes. And eight feet tall for the total height of the monument

Mr. Bowsher: Just for clarification for the United Methodist Church, say on a brick base, they have flowers that surround it. It's a solid face Reynoldsburg in green that is channel lettering and so is the logo. And then there is a scrollable text, but typically it's to just say they're dot com, and I don't think it's constantly scrolling and changing. And it's just one color.

Mr. Hicks: Right. And I think that is something that is more acceptable. For example, gas stations, you know, those are digital, but it's a static image. It's not going to be like, Oh, I'm sure this isn't calling it what it's technically called, but it doesn't look like a TV. You know, this isn't a live image that things are moving that, you know, those types of signs I don't think I would ever support in the city, period.

Mr. Cain: So you're restricted to one color. Is that correct?

Mr. Furst: For the electronic portion of the sign? Yeah, I don't believe we have any particular restrictions for that, but the total number of colors used in the sign is expressly called out in the code. So I would suggest that to not create an additional nonconformity, that you would restrict the color of the electronic portion of the sign to be one of the colors already used in the sign.

Mr. Zollars: And any other question or statements from staff or commissioners?

Mr. Furst: I mean, if the applicant thinks that they could revise this submittal and get back to us next month, I think we could consider tabling it. But that's, you know, I guess we'll kind of look to the applicant if they are interested.

Mr. Cain: Yeah, if we could and then we can discuss it and resubmit.

Mr. Zollars: All right. Well, I'll entertain that motion.

Mr. Hicks: I move that we table the application.

Mr. Furst: I second.

Mr. Zollars: OK, very good. Can we get a roll call on the tabling, please?

Ms. Wheeler: Mr. Benner. Yes. Mr. Cullinan. Yes. Mr. Furst. Yes. Mr. Hicks. Yes. Mr. Zollars. Yes.

RESULT:	TABLED [UNANIMOUS]	Next: 11/4/2021 6:00 PM
AYES:	Cullinan, Zollars, Hicks, Furst, Benner	

2. Application #2021-5454; 8555 East Main Street; Applicant Skilken Gold; Rezoning (Sheetz)

Ms. Wheeler: All right, our next application this evening is for a rezoning application 2021-5454. This is for a request to rezone approximately 17 acre parcel on the corner of Taylor and Main Street from Innovation District to Community Commercial District. And the applicants have provided a proposed development plan here, as well as a letter stating their intent for the parcel. I believe they are here this evening. If there are any questions, I should say, has already gone through one first read at City Council, so there would be to two additional reads after this meeting.

Ms. Zollars: Whoever's speaking, you please come up, state your name and address, for the records.

Mr. Elizondo Thank you for having us here tonight. Eric Elizondo, I'm with Skilken Gold Real Estate development, and I'm the project manager and SVP of Operations. 4270 Morse Road, Columbus, Ohio.

Ms. Zollars: Go ahead, we'll listen to you and then ask questions.

Mr. Elizondo Yeah, so. We are here because we do have one client that's interested in the site and we'd like to have this property re-zoned from innovation to community commercial for that one use, and we are investigating other uses for this site and the use that would be at the corner of Taylor and Reynoldsburg is a Sheetz convenience store and it would have a drive thru. But at this time we are not. We'll still have to go through the planning process for that project. But right now we're just

working to get this property re-zoned so that we can proceed.

Ms. Zollars: Commissioners questions?

Mr. Furst: Thank you, Mr. Elizondo. To be perfectly frank, I understand that, you know, you don't want to dump a bunch of money into a project that may or may not be allowed if it's not re-zoned. But it makes it rather difficult for us to really make a determination on this without having a better understanding of the use for the rest of the property. I think we're pretty familiar with the Sheetz and how it operates. I understand that would be the retail section that you've called out in your letter here.

Mr. Elizondo Correct.

Mr. Furst: But what would happen on the south of the parcel still seems to be up in the air. And I understand you may have to, you know, engage other partners there and perhaps other tenants and things like that. I'm not necessarily opposed to the rezoning here, but I think. If we could have a little more detail on, you know, what might be there other than, I mean, because it says multifamily housing or office space, I mean, those are pretty significantly different, at least from my perspective. I think having a gas station like the Sheetz would be nice there. But also what would be the worst case scenario in my mind is to have something like a speculative strip mall. Frankly, even anything that's speculative without having tenants that would occupy it on day one, if you will. We already have enough kind of an empty retail space.

Mr. Elizondo Yeah. And so give you a little background of our kind of focus right now in terms of our development focus generally is that that's not really our market. You know, that would not be in our intention here. We were prepared initially on this site. We did have a partner. We have not decided to either go back to that partner or do that. We're still trying to make the decision, whether we continue to develop this whole property ourselves. But you know, with the initial discussions with Andrew and there was some interest from the city for this piece of property and potentially the state. So we, you know, we did have discussions with the city about that. And you know those things could not happen quickly enough for us in terms of the timing wasn't right because we do have a contract on this property and we want, you know, we have a user that's ready to develop. So, you know, we're working to proceed so that we would like that front to potentially be some retail, but it would not be a strip center. Our focus on development is to find multi-use tenants and usually like national players or strong regional players. So that would be our focus on the front part of the property and then the rear were in discussions with office and in multifamily. So I understand where you guys are coming from this standpoint. But you know, the community commercial allows us. I think the reason we're going for that because it allows us, I think, the best opportunity for the uses that we're considering.

Ms. Hicks: I think, you know, the innovation district, or zone, the innovation zone

was a concept that we've been really focusing on in the city and hopes that its job creator, you know, that those that those parcels are job creators for the city to provide jobs for residents and to provide income tax revenue for the city. I know that, you know, as we were going through and creating the new zoning code and effectively rezoning the entire city, you know, we looked at every parcel and had debates about what the proper use was, that each one of these properties and there were things that we did and that was a pretty recent process. One of my points was, is that land use, you know, it's not just one particular project, but we're talking about land use that land use is going to stay land use for a long time. And I think at one point when we were discussing the code, there was reverted language. You know that if basically if you use it or lose it, that you know, if you zoned something for a particular land use that the old code would revert back if you didn't use it within, I think, a two year time period. And I actually argued for us to eliminate that because I think that, you know, when we zone a property, we need to not just be thinking about the next two years, but the next 20 years. And so I'm a little hesitant, along with Mr. Furst, to just blanket rezone this parcel right now without also having some sort of major site plan that can go along with this to where we have a better idea or better control of what exactly is going to happen here. You know, am I supportive of a Sheetz on that corner? Yeah, absolutely. But, you know, there's other ways of addressing it. And I would also agree that I'm a little bit concerned about with no detail at all to just say, you know, that that's going to be 10.6 acres of multifamily within the CC district. Unless I'm missing something if it's Zone C, it's not, wouldn't it? For example, couldn't this have come through with the corner that needs to be the Sheetz zoned as CC? You know, residential medium and the other section and, you know, innovation and the third or you know what I mean, I don't understand why it's all just being zoned CC.

Mr. Bowsher: I think right now, I think they ask from them is because it's just one parcel, and they would have to have ownership there to split the parcel. So as far as the tax parcels are concerned, they were trying to, they picked the one zone that would work and cover all of their bases moving forward in the future. Understanding that the Sheetz requires a conditional use, as well as if they went the multifamily route instead of the office, would also require a conditional yes.

Ms. Hicks: So the multifamily or office would also be a conditional use?

Mr. Bowsher: The office would be permitted,

Ms. Hicks: But multifamily would still have to be a conditional use?

Mr. Bowsher: Correct.

Ms. Hicks: I guess my other question would be is can a major site plan? I mean, this is we're still working on the new code. So working on this, could a major site plan be submitted along with this rezoning request? Like and go at the same time through here so that we would actually I mean, you know, the way we did this, we said, OK,

well, we know it's going to be a Sheetz, but I mean, you could just plop the Sheetz down in the middle of the parcel. And you know, I mean, I know you're not going to do that, but I'm trying to understand.

Mr. Elizondo Yeah, we're not going to do that. So yeah, that happen. I mean, it's the Sheetz is going to be at the corner of Taylor and Main Street.

Ms. Hicks: I guess if you're in a hurry, you know, is possible for you to have submitted a rezoning request and the major site plan at the same time in order to get the priority project accepted sooner? Then that at least helps us fill in the blank on where one piece of this is going to be and understand maybe the how the rest of this. And in that time, you might have some other commitments. I just I like to have the whole thing planned out.

Mr. Elizondo Sure.

Ms. Hicks: What's feasible for the applicant?

Mr. Elizondo Yeah, I mean, I understand, I understand Mr. Hicks where you're coming from, and we would too. The issue is that we do have we have a tenant that is on, you know, we have a timeframe on the whole property and a timeframe on the lease for a major client. So you know, our approach, whether we can further discuss, obviously, that's why we're here is to get the get that piece. At least get the whole parcel rezoned so that then we can proceed. And like I said, we waited a couple, you know, we've been working with you guys for a couple of months to try to understand, and that has sort of pitched us a little bit in terms of timeframe. So I mean, we have the site plan, I can show it to you. We have a site plan.

Mr. Bowsher: We've seen it as well. Staff has seen the site plan for it, just the Sheetz. There's been nothing else that's been planned. I'm sorry.

Ms. Zollars: Well, let me ask, let me throw this out and forgive me for thinking this way. But couldn't you purchase the property go through getting that parcel separated and then we can have a discussion and you can deal with the other?

Mr. Elizondo Other it just doesn't work that way. I mean, we have obligations that we have to fulfill for the contract in order for both our tenant and for the purchase. So yeah, I just that's not the way the contracts are written.

Ms. Zollars: Well, I agree with Mr. Hicks and Mr. Furst. I'm not sure what the other piece of the property is or the other pieces.

Mr. Furst: Yeah, I mean, I don't think there would be any opposition really to the Sheetz there, even knowing that it requires a conditional use. I don't I don't foresee that being an obstacle.

Mr. Elizondo So the other piece of this is that we still would have to get approval on those other projects. You know, so you know, we're not it's not...

Mr. Furst: Sort of, there are permitted uses that, you know, remember when we are rezoning it, that's a blank check for you to. So the problem is because we don't know we would be giving you a blank check to do that and we're not necessarily inclined to do so.

Ms. Hicks: Everything that's approved use within that.

Mr. Elizondo Sure. Sure. Understood. Understood.

Ms. Zollars: Mr. Benner, you have something?

Mr. Benner: Yeah, I appreciate it. Thank you very much. Mr. Furst took the words right out of my mouth were basically, or what you're asking for is a blank check for everything other than the Sheetz, anything that's within our code. And we would like a little more specificity to what's going to go in there. I, for one, am a little leery of giving up on our innovation zone. I mean, we've pushed out its part of our comprehensive master plan. We haven't had a great deal of luck with it, but. And no offense to Sheetz but giving it up for a gas station. I'm just I'm not real comfortable doing that. 17 acres. I don't know how large a plot to six acres or how big is the..

Mr. Bowsher: Oh, it's two acres.

Mr. Benner: Two acres for the Sheetz. So we've got 15 acres of property that could be. And there are permitted uses in there that I'm not sure I would be totally on board with. Yes, if you wanted to put multifamily or things like that, then we would have recourse, but there's a lot of things that could go on community commercial, such as that strip mall that you said you wouldn't do. But you don't. Once this is changed, you can do whatever you want.

Mr. Elizondo Well, so let's talk about that. So do you have the authority? Could you put conditions on the CC rezone with uses? Could you do that to say that we want to approve CC, but where there's conditional conditions on top of the uses that exist currently in the code?

Ms. Zollars: Mr. Shook, you want to weigh in?

Mr. Shook: Yeah, the only conditions that Planning Commission and council, if they approve the zoning district change can put on the approval is to incorporate a development plan. They can incorporate that development plan as part of the zoning district change. And then if that development plan does not go through within a two year time frame, it reverts back to the old zoning district. That's the only condition. So if you have a development plan for the whole site, then yes, that can be incorporated.

Mr. Elizondo So right now we are saying retail and multifamily office. So a strip mall would not be, you know? So retail. So we use strip...

Mr. Furst: Right. This has been a scenario that's occurred in the past unfortunately, with the city. We had some difficulty resolving it as well. So I agree somewhat with Mr. Benner and Mr. Hicks, too, that I think it would be a lot more palatable even not having a major site plan available if it was restricted to a job engine. You know, if it was offices or something that would employ a significant number of persons. So that way, it maintains at least the major aspects of the innovation district. But since if I understand Mr. Shook correctly, that we can't restrict the additional development on the parcel other than the Sheetz to something like that, absent a site plan, then I'm not sure what the path forward is here.

Mr. Furst: Could thirty days give you enough time to get something in front of us that we can see?

Mr. Elizondo Yeah, I think so. I do think so and I know so. So yes, I think that's definitely possible and we would like to do that. But I would also like so I would like to make sure we're clear on terms. I'm clear in terms of the uses that you would like. So I'm hearing office job generators. What about hotels? So is there some uses that you could just whether it comes from? You know, I'd like to hear that.

Ms. Zollars: Well, anything along those lines, as far as I'm concerned.

Ms. Hicks: I think a lot of the uses we're talking about the innovation district, I mean, that's what it's zoned now. So I mean, that's what our intent was when we when we laid out the new zoning map in the new code and trying to the job creation. Just from what I'm hearing from fellow commission members is that the Sheetz is an acceptable use of that location. I mean, it's a busy corner and it's a high quality product that we've obviously seen for other applications. So I would say, you know, trying to work within those bounds as tightly as possible. There's, you know, in regards to like a multifamily use, I think that it's a little bit more challenging. I mean, I know that, you know, innovation, we want to see job creation. That's the primary focus. So that's I would leave it at that. And if there's a way that you know, I think your options are that I don't know exactly what all the options are, but if we recommend non-approval, we would be a recommendation to council for non-approval. I can't remember that changes their voting requirements.

Mr. Furst: It does.

Mr. Shook: They would need a three fourths vote.

Ms. Hicks: So that makes it more challenging at council at that point in order to pass it. If we give a recommendation for non-approval, but I think if we table tonight, it definitely gives you a chance to see what else you can do. I know that you guys are

very professional and have a lot of projects going around in Central Ohio and think you can find the right answers to make something work here.

Mr. Elizondo Yeah, thank you. I appreciate that.

Mr. Bowsher: Thank you. I'm going to I guess summarize what I think that I'm hearing here is something very similar taking out of the Westerville playbook for their medical male there and what exists there on Cleveland Avenue. Our area will also have a BRT here in the next few years. I think that is pretty indicative. I think there is some commercial that we would typically see commercial retail. There's obviously the local canteen and there's other stuff, but there's a lot of offices that are sort of situated in there. There's the new hotel that's there. So I think all of that, you know, coupled with the Sheetz that's on there, I think it fits. I think if you do take a look at all of the list of the community commercial, I think there will be a few that probably pop out to you that they're probably more afraid of than other ones, and they just don't want to be able to have that out there.

Mr. Elizondo Sure. Now this inputs very helpful, very helpful.

Ms. Zollars: All right. With that, Mr. Hicks.

Ms. Hicks: I move that we table the application.

Mr. Furst: I second.

Mr. Furst: Okay, very good. We have first and second. Emily, can you call the roll on that, please?

Mr. Benner. Yes. Mr. Cullinan. Yes. Mr. Furst. Yes. Mr. Hicks. Yes. Mr. Zollars. Yes.

RESULT:	TABLED [UNANIMOUS]	Next: 11/4/2021 6:00 PM
AYES:	Cullinan, Zollars, Hicks, Furst, Benner	

E. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Wheeler: I'm sorry. I think there was a calendar in your packets. I was just to look at 2022 dates and make sure everything looked OK. I don't think there was anything too out of the ordinary.

Mr. Furst: Yeah, all that's fine by me.

Ms. Wheeler: And does, the time still work 6:00 p.m. Thursdays?

Ms. Hicks: Andrew, do these dates work for you? Are these good?

Mr. Bowsher: I'm going to have to check my new calendar and get back with you.

Ms. Hicks: Do we need to do a motion for the new schedule or not?

Ms. Zollars: I think we're alright.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman

Planning and Zoning Administrator