

MINUTES
CITY OF REYNOLDSBURG
PLANNING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 3, 2009
6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present:	Mr. James Comeaux Mrs. Marlene Wirth Mr. David Wall Mr. Charles McGrath
Members Absent:	Mr. Lucas Haire
Others Present:	Mr. Aaron Domini, Planning Administrator

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 2, 2009

Chairman Comeaux: The minutes from July 2nd meeting. I believe everyone received a copy. Is that the case?

Mr. McGrath: Yes.

Mr. Comeaux: Are there any additions, deletions, changes to those minutes?

Mr. McGrath: No.

Mr. Comeaux: Then I guess they'll be approved as distributed then.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Comeaux: Are there any additions to the agenda?

Mr. Domini: No additions and no changes.

4. SWEARING IN OF SPEAKERS

(There are no speakers attending.)

5. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

B. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF REYNOLDSBURG ADOPTED BY ORDINANCE NO. 131-95 ON NOVEMBER 27, 1995 AND AS SUBSEQUENTLY AMENDED – 7375 East Broad Street, Blacklick, Ohio 43004; from Unzoned to R-3; applicant, Wesley Hawk and Ann Lane (3.795 ac.)

Mr. Comeaux: Aaron, could you please give us a little background on this?

Mr. Domini: Well, we had a joint hearing with Council on this item. This is a parcel on Broad Street at 7375 and it was unzoned when it was brought into the City. I'll pass something around, because I didn't bring the Power Point with me to refresh you. They want to do an addition on this house and in order to do that addition, it has to be zoned, because we have to have standards on which to evaluate it by. It probably should have been zoned when it came in, but it was not. This property is surrounded by residential on all sides except for the opposite side of Broad Street, which is not in the City of Reynoldsburg. The applicant submitted a very, very thorough application. I have no objection. In fact, I don't see any reason not to rezone this as R-3, because it's bordered by R-3 on almost every side. Does anybody need to be refreshed in terms of the visual of where this parcel is? Do you guys recall the joint hearing?

Mr. Wall: Actually, I think I missed that hearing. Could you just give me cross streets of whereabout it is so I can get a bearing?

Mr. Domini: Meadow Lane and Scenic road. I'll just walk you through it.

Mr. Comeaux: Aaron, this is a single family residence, right?

Mr. Domini: It's an existing single family, right. They're not proposing to change the use.

Mr. Comeaux: And R-3 would keep it so that they couldn't subdivide or anything like that, right?

Mr. Domini: This property would be very difficult to subdivide, because it already functions via an easement. I don't think that's the intent of the owner at all.

Mr. Comeaux: Okay, then the only other question I had was the – you said this was brought in unzoned. Is this the only piece that was brought in still unzoned? Are there contiguous parcels that—

Mr. Domini: There are other parcels up there that are unzoned as well along Broad Street. Those property owners at this time are not interested in being part of the application for doing anything. I did communicate that to the applicant. I thought it might drive down his costs. To amend the map is a \$400 application, so I think he pursued that.

Mr. Comeaux: Okay. Are there any other questions regarding this item? (No response.) Then can I have a motion?

Mr. McGrath: Move for approval.

Mr. Wall: Second.

Mr. Comeaux: I have a motion and a second. Aaron, will you please call the roll?

(Mr. Domini called the roll. Mrs. Wirth voted "yes." Mr. Wall voted "yes." Mr. McGrath voted "yes." Mr. Comeaux voted "yes.")

2. ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF REYNOLDSBURG, OHIO: Amending Chapter 1115 Preliminary Plat; Chapter 1119 Final Plat; Chapter 1127 Standards; Chapter 1143 Zoning Certificate; Site Plan; Plot-Grade-Utility Plan; and Table 1155, "Zoning Code Fees".

Mr. Comeaux: Aaron, can you give us some background on this, please?

Mr. Domini: The way these changes have evolved is that staff wanted to create some type of a handbook for developers, applicants, whether they're doing an addition on a house or building a new large retail center. We were hearing that the process is not clear. So what we proposed to do was to create a handbook that really identifies the steps an applicant has to take to do everything from a fence to a 90,000 square foot retail center, major site plans, minor site plans, plot grade utility, sheds, fences, signs, certificate of appropriateness. So in the handbook we define each step, the key parties involved and then created a flow chart showing the process for what the applicant needs to do to get approval for whatever they're requesting. And part of doing that, we identified a number of changes that should be made to accommodate, I guess, support the handbook itself. Many of those changes are to the plot grade utility section, which are coming from, primarily, the City Engineer. Lucas and I, as well, recommended a couple of changes. The larger ones are one coming up with a minor site plan submittal, before we had pretty much any new development had to go through a major site plan and the requirements of a major site plan are significant. So anything other than a one or two-family house, pretty much fell under the umbrella of the major site plan. So if you wanted to put a garage on a commercial structure, you were required to do a major site plan which is very time consuming and costly to the applicant. So we wanted to create something in between what would be a zoning certificate for like a shed and a major site plan, which would be a full blown plot grade utility, engineered drawings, etc. So we developed what is the minor site plan which we have in your paperwork before you today.

We also created a change to the sidewalks from 4 to 5'. That pretty much is the industry standard that's being changed now from my experience in what I've seen other

communities doing and what the planning industry's doing, so that was a change that was proposed as well.

More appropriately, I guess, in relation to this handbook, we've created officially the facility demand worksheet for what the impacts are for a new development. We did have specific language in regards to traffic impact study, but we really didn't know what that meant and we rarely required it and we probably should have in certain cases to avoid bearing the load of some of what new development has brought us. So we have included a facility demand worksheet which the applicant would evaluate the development under. If they meet certain tests for average number of vehicle trips or whatever, it would trigger them to do either an access study or a traffic impact study. So that is a much more prescriptive approach for the applicant, the expectations are there in front of what they have to do, as opposed to wondering what this traffic impact study would be.

The final piece is a major change, would be the plot grade utility and what the fee structure is and how they're collected. I can't speak in detail as to what that is, Jim Miller the City Engineer could better answer questions on this issue. I don't think the fees are necessarily changing as much as how they're collected and how they're processed. So that is the overview of what you have before you today. I know there are some specific questions which I'd be happy to answer, as the commission may have.

Mr. McGrath: There's a change in titles, too, in there or was that in there before? City Engineer to Director of Engineering?

Mr. Domini: Yeah, I think that's because the code was wrongfully referring to the Director of Engineering when, in fact, the title is City Engineer. So that's more of a housecleaning item.

Mr. Comeaux: Aaron, I wanted to – I know we talked about this a little bit during the public hearing. I guess it would be page ten, I believe it is, and it's paragraph – it used to be E and is now labeled as B—

Mr. Domini: Yes.

Mr. Comeaux: --and if you go the third line from the bottom it had Director of Engineering sitting by itself and didn't seem to flow with the text at all. You may want to just double-check and make sure that that should stay in there. I think it's just a typo.

Mr. Domini: What line are you referring to?

Mr. Comeaux: It's the – in – I'm sorry. Excuse me. It's the first paragraph of paragraph B, third line from the bottom of that first paragraph. You see Director of Engineering about midway through the line?

Mr. Domini: Yes. And we—

Mr. Comeaux: Stands by itself. I think that's just a typo.

Mr. Domini: Right. Correct. Yes thank you that has been changed.

Mr. Comeaux: All right. And going to page 11 to Section 1127.01, Streets, paragraph A, third line down. It says that "except wherein necessitated by local conditions, dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs will not be approved in residential districts." Can you give me some background as to why we're removing cul-de-sacs from Reynoldsburg, or not allowing in the future. They seem to be a desirable characteristic.

Mr. Domini: The thought was that in terms of access and for safety reasons that the extent to which our road networks can be connected the better. We're seeing that this is also becoming a problem, just for example, now that busing has been eliminated for children to get to A to B to school where there may be cul-de-sacs in place and the school may be right there, they have to walk a quarter, half mile to get to school. So, in my opinion, good planning are connected streets and they're easy to get to and from A to B and it's also easier for emergency responders to navigate a traffic system to get to their destination. Historically, cul-de-sacs were originally used because of certain geographic conditions in which required a cul-de-sac. There was no other way to utilize the land. I think over time they've become more conventional right, wrong or indifferent, but they do definitely do present some challenges in terms of access, both in terms of the daily user, the visitor, but also emergency responders. So that's why that change is there. We tried to leave it somewhat open in terms of allowing cul-de-sacs where we feel the local conditions would require, may be used. But I will say in the grander scheme of what we're trying to do here, that is not necessarily something that I think the staff wants to get hung up on and we would be glad to work with the Commission and Council to address that concern.

Mr. Comeaux: Yeah. I guess it's a tough thing to address, because I understand exactly what you're saying and I agree with you that having free-flow access, specifically for first responders is important. The other side of the coin is, is it's a very a desirable thing to have in residential communities because it then, therefore, it lowers the speed of traffic. A perfect example is the home I used to live in just outside of Reynoldsburg. It was a thru street that had a posted speed limit, I believe, of 25 and I can guarantee you daily we had kids cutting through there in excess of 50 miles an hour. So the cul-de-sac does provide an opportunity to calm traffic and it's desirable in residential neighborhoods. I don't know if it's worth going and really dragging it out. I understand that. I would encourage your department and your staff to look at it when it's possible and to help make a neighborhood more desirable. That may be something to consider.

Mr. McGrath: There's a tendency when people build these developments they want them to be their own little conclave, they don't want anybody else. We had the —

they had the problem when I was first on this committee with Slate Ridge. Slate Ridge didn't want anybody else to ever be able to get in there and Mel Clemmons happened to be on the panel then and Mel was dead set against having those closed places. We've had other occasions throughout the city where it's been done that they've stopped the street from coming through so they couldn't get – Briarcliff is one of them, by the way. They were going to bring a street in from Lancaster into Briarcliff. People in Briarcliff didn't want to mix with the people on Lancaster and so it was stopped by the powers-that-be, that type of thing, many, many years ago before I ever got on here. I just wondered – I think it's a good idea though. I think they should be able to get around all the time for every place. Yeah, I'd like to see that street opened if it's still available from Lancaster.

Mr. Domini: There are other – in terms of traffic calming, some of the worst streets that we have with speeders have cul-de-sacs all along them. The primary collector is where everybody's speeding. You only have a couple houses where the traffic is calmer. This is a way of design to mitigate thoroughfares where you can get increased speed on these collector neighborhoods, collector streets induced. You can get more of a curvilinear pattern. You can do shorter streets with shorter blocks, but I think the intent is the connectivity more than anything.

Mr. Wall: And I understand that.

Mr. Comeaux: And when I read it, I read it as an aspirational thing, that going forward the City would look for the connectivity. I think if residential development ever occurs again that developers will find a way to create these unique features that they will say require a cul-de-sac and so if you're going to have it as an aspiration, then the City – people like you -- are going to have to consider whether they want to question the developer on his or her – if you have a hundred acre parcel or whatever the acreage is, the developers can come in and fill it with a whole bunch of cul-de-sacs.

Mr. McGrath: They get more money for a cul-de-sac, by the way. And the profit margin there is higher.

Mr. Domini: Yes.

Mr. Comeaux: Regardless. But, again, I saw it as aspirational and something that is more an administrative thing.

Mr. Domini: Checks and balances of this is if the developer chooses to push the issue, they need to bring a plan to the Board of Zoning & Building Appeals with cul-de-sacs, so there are checks and balances there.

Mr. Comeaux: Sure. I just wanted to bring it forward. It's something to consider. I've got one last comment and I think it's a typographical error again on page 22, item number 20, the text reads, "complete facility demand and worksheets as provided by the Planning and Planning Administrator."

Mr. Domini: That was a clerical error, which has been corrected.

Mr. Comeaux: Yeah. Just wanted to bring it to your attention so it can be modified. That's all I have. Were there any other comments questions for Aaron otherwise on this item? (No response.) Can we have a motion regarding this item?

Mr. McGrath: Move for approval.

Mrs. Wirth: Second.

Mr. Comeaux: Have a motion and a second. Can we have the roll, please.

(Mr. Domini called the roll. Mr. McGrath voted "yes." Mr. Comeaux voted "yes." Mrs. Wirth voted "yes." Mr. Wall voted "yes.")

D. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Comeaux: There is no Other Business before us and therefore we are adjourned.

E. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at _6:58_____ o'clock.

James Comeaux, Chair

Aaron Domini, Planning Administrator

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