

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
VILLAGE OF WHITEHOUSE, LUCAS COUNTY, OHIO
February 5, 2018**

Members Present: Allen Kuck, Tom Lytle, David Prueter, and Zac Ries.. Absent: Donald Atkinson. Others Present: Bill May, John & Julie Cunningham, Renee & Kyle Hertzfeld, Bob Keogh, Administrator Jordan Daugherty, Tax Commissioner Tiffany Bachman, Public Service Director Steve Pilcher, and Community Development Coordinator Barbara Knisely.

At 7:00 pm, Chairman Tom Lytle called the meeting to order.

Motion by Zac Ries, seconded by David Prueter to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2018, Planning Commission meeting as written. 4-0

The only agenda item (Staff Report 02-2018) was to review and discuss the preliminary site plan submitted by Kyle and Renee Hertzfeld, dba Five H Properties, LLC, for a new commercial office building at 9910 Waterville Street.

Renee Hertzfeld stated originally they were going to build a new office for themselves, AW Heating & Cooling, but then decided it might be worthwhile to add additional office space that they could rent out within the same building. At this time, they are submitting the preliminary site plan that was previously approved for a retail space on this lot in 2003.

Mr. and Mrs. Hertzfeld have met with Village staff on several occasions to review this plan and get suggestions as to what the Village would require as far as type of building, setbacks, parking locations, driveways, etc.

Chair Lytle stated he would like to go over Staff Report 02-2018 to review the request. The first few paragraphs are background information concerning the original preliminary site plan for this property which was once part of a larger parcel, but was split in 2003 when the Sunoco station and car wash were built.

All parties understand that this property will be required to use the shared driveway with the Sunoco station per agreements from 2003 and the design of the new roundabout at the intersection of Finzel Road and SR64 (Waterville Street). This driveway is “right hand turn in and out only” onto SR64.

This property was granted a variance when the lot split was approved in 2003, as far as the frontage. The current Zoning Code at Chapter 1251.07 requires a 250’ frontage in the Waterville Street Overlay District. However, this lot is “grandfathered” with a frontage of only 181.19’ along SR64/Waterville Street.

The preliminary drawing indicates a front yard building setback of 150’ from the centerline of Waterville Street, which is acceptable per code. However, the drawing shows a landscaped buffer area of only 25’, when Chapter 1251.07 (B)(3), requires a landscaped buffer area of 40’, within the

150' frontage setback. The code does allow Planning Commission the "authority to vary the requirements in furtherance of creativity and excellence in design quality of the landscaped, mounding and screening areas of future development." It was also noted that a multi-use path was installed along the right-of-way within the 150' setback when the roundabout was installed. Much discussion took place concerning the landscaped/buffer area:

- Should parking spaces be allowed along the front of the lot, contrary to code. If it is allowed, this sets the stage for future development to provide parking in the front when the code clearly states parking should be encouraged behind buildings in the Waterville Street Overlay District
- The number and type of tenant spaces was discussed, as this will determine how many parking spaces are needed. Mr. Hertzfeld stated he wants to have plenty so that in the future they don't have a problem with parking.
- Yark currently has cars parked in the 150' setback area – Mr. Hertzfeld feels allowing him to do the same blends the properties together. He understands the requirement, but feels this is a unique lot and is unlike any other along Waterville Street. All other properties are wide-open fields and as those are developed this rule could be enforced. His lot sits between two developed lots that utilize the 150' buffer area, either as parking or driveways.
- Mr. Prueter feels allowing parking in the front here sets the precedence for future development. Yark was an existing business when it annexed into the Village.
- Eliminating the parking along Waterville Street, but allowing the parking next to the front of the building.
- Mr. Ries felt allowing the parking would blend in with Yark, and agrees this is a unique situation.
- Mr. Lytle suggested granting a variance to allow the 25' setback instead of the 40', but eliminate the parking
- Mr. Kuck questioned safety issues if the area is required to be landscaped and mounded – would that interfere when vehicles are turning right as they pull out onto SR64.

The 20' minimum side yard setbacks have been met, however, the Whitehouse Fire Department would like at least a 25' setback on the east side to accommodate the large fire apparatus.

Due to a residential neighborhood (incompatible use) being located to the north (rear) of this property, a 30' rear yard setback is required including a 25' landscaped buffer area. There currently is mounding with trees along the back area, but it is unclear if it is located on this lot or if the residential development installed the mounding and landscaping area when it was built. Once a survey is done and Mr. and Mrs. Hertzfeld know exactly where the lot lines are, it can be determined if they need to install additional mounding and trees on their property.

It was confirmed that no parking, pavement, or buildings are allowed within the rear landscaped buffer area. There has been some discussion to build an additional access drive/street along the back of this property coming from Finzel Road, across the car wash property, and ending at Yark automotive. This would need to be coordinated with the neighboring property owners and the Village would likely assist. The access drive would need to meet Village standards to be at least 29' feet wide.

The dumpster located north of the building appears to be sitting in the required rear yard setback – that would need to be relocated out of the setback. Appropriate screenings will be required and can be discussed further when a final site plan is submitted.

Discussion concerning the access drive along the rear of these properties included:

- Relocating and eliminating some traffic on SR64
- Safer access to these businesses
- All four PC members in attendance felt that this was a good idea and would support it if neighboring property owners agree.

Discussion followed concerning using knee walls along the front of the property in the buffer area. The Village would like to see the use of stone and other natural materials so that this property blends with the stone features used in the roundabout, placed in front of the Sunoco station and other areas surrounding it. This cohesive look should continue west as development occurs on the Miller property south of SR64 that was annexed several years ago.

Lighting was briefly discussed. It was suggested that motion activated lighting be used in the parking lot and on the building. This newer style lighting dims until motion activates to come on brighter. This would save on power costs and reduce light pollution onto the residential areas. This can be discussed further when a final plan is submitted.

Signage was also discussed and can be included with a final site plan.

The Economic Development Strategy and Land Use Plan that was adopted in 2015 was briefly discussed:

- Again, encouraging the use of knee walls along Waterville Street, using natural materials
- Building design should focus on an upscale look on this gateway into the community

The Whitehouse Fire Department has requirements for an additional fire hydrant near the rear of the lot and a 25' east side yard setback. Mr. Pilcher will work with the Hertzfelds concerning looping the fire hydrant into the hydrant on Yark property.

Requirements were submitted from Mr. Mike Melnyk of the Lucas County Engineer's Office concerning EPA permits and requirements. This can be discussed further when a final site plan is submitted.

Chair Lytle asked if there were additional comments or concerns:

1. PC member Kuck: "What if we allow a variance to the front yard setback, but eliminate the parking along 64. This is the first building to be built and if we allow it here, what happens to the next development?"

2. Bob Keogh expressed concern that if we allow the access drive in the rear, it will eliminate some parking there too.

3. Zac Ries stated he is OK with granting a variance to allow the 25' buffer area and allowing the parking along Waterville Street since it will blend with the existing businesses on both sides of this lot.

4. Mr. Hertzfeld said they could eliminate the parking along the front, but what if in the future as tenants are secured, they realize they do not have enough parking. Could it be looked at again and possibly allowed?

5. PC member Prueter stated that he is concerned if they deviate from the code requirements now, what happens in the future as developments come before the PC.

6. Mr. Hertzfeld feels this situation is different because this lot is located between two existing businesses that have vehicles in the front. Probably not another lot like it in the Waterville Street Overlay District. He feels that if done properly, mounding, knee walls, and landscaping would hide the vehicles that are parked along the front. They would design it with safety in mind so that vehicles are able to pull out.

7. Chair Lytle stated that normally they have more detailed plans to look at, but understands this was a preliminary discussion. He thanked the Hertzfelds for coming in early and agreed that this was the best way to get some of the issues out in the open before spending money on final designs and drawings.

8. Administrator Jordan Daugherty stressed that the Village wants this business to succeed with an upscale look. He appreciates the fact that PC has the authority to be creative with their approval of this development.

Briefly discussed how wide the access drive would need to be. Mr. Pilcher stated it would depend on whether it is a private or public road. It could be 29' with curbs and gutters or 25' with swales. The Village would be happy to entertain all ideas if the neighboring property owners are agreeable to this idea. Mr. Daugherty confirmed that additional discussion could be had once other owners are on board.

Mr. Kuck stated he feels the PC needs to give the Hertzfelds more direction on how they should proceed. Are they being granted variances to allow a 25' buffer area instead of a 40' buffer? Is the parking along Waterville Street being eliminated? Mr. Hertzfeld asked if they were to incorporate knee walls, mounding, and shrubs along the front, could the parking stay.

Mr. Ries stated he would support the variance to allow a 25' buffer area since this lot sits between two other lots that have parking/driveways in the front. He feels that an access road in the back would be beneficial.

Mr. Kuck stated he's not sure they need the parking along Waterville Street, but agreed it's hard to determine without knowing how many and what type of tenants. If PC does not allow the parking now, could the owners come back later to request it?

Mr. Prueter stated he wants this business to succeed, but believes there is quite a bit of parking shown without putting it next to Waterville Street. He is leaning towards requiring the 40' buffer area.

Mr. Hertzfeld reiterated that this lot is unique and there is not another one like it along Waterville Street. It's not one small lot in a big open field, it sits between two existing businesses.

Chair Lytle agreed that Mr. Hertzfeld's comments have merit. There are many large open fields with undeveloped land. This lot has established businesses on both sides with vehicles in the front. He feels that it could work if landscaped properly along the front.

As guidance to the applicants for the design and submittal of a final site plan, all PC members stated they are agreeable to allow parking along the front if it is heavily landscaped with a classy look and knee walls.

With no other business to come before the Board, David Prueter moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Allen Kuck. Motion passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Knisely
Community Development Coordinator