

CENTERVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Work Session

Tuesday, May 25, 2010

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

Attendance: Mr. Paul Clark, Mr. Jim Briggs, Mr. John Palcher, Mr. Jim Brunner, and Mr. Jim Durham. Absent: Mr. Jeffrey Gammell. There is currently one (1) vacancy on the Planning Commission. Also present: Mr. Steve Feverston, City Planner; Mr. Nathan Cahall, Economic Development Administrator; Mr. Greg Horn, City Manager; and Dr. Steve Hinshaw, Finance Director.

Mr. Gammell was excused from the Work Session as he gave prior notice to staff of his absence.

Wright State University Public Administration Program – Thesis Project

Wright State University students, Krista Dorsten, Tonya Folks, Drew Miller and Missy Walters presented their findings of research concerning the redevelopment of The East Franklin Business District (EFBD) primarily focusing on the industrial uses along East Franklin Street, Westpark Road and Compark Road. The students selected the area for their thesis project based on its declining industrial presence and what some business owners have described as an area where no City incentives are available. Their research suggested steps for the City to:

- Encourage growth of existing businesses and made the EFBD more attractive to clean and high tech industry through incentives.
- Retain existing businesses, which historically outgrow the available building space and relocate out of the city, by redeveloping the area with a greater mix of buildings and parcel sizes.
- Enhance the aesthetics of the area to conform to the city's vision through incentives and regulatory measures.

Short Term Strategies include:

- *Community Building* to bring business and property owners together along with City personnel to create a working relationship.
- *Vision* to establish a sense of direction, shared values, etc., to develop a mission for revitalization and redevelopment.
- *Community Appearance Guide* should be created to be available to new incoming businesses as well as current businesses when updating their property. This brochure must be an easy to understand guide outlining standards for facades, signage, lighting, landscaping, parking lots, etc.
- *Website Development* should be established to attract new businesses into the EFBD and provide abundant information.

- *Code Enforcement* regulations must be used judiciously in order to prevent sabotaging other strategies to build community support.

Medium Term Strategies include:

- *Facade Improvement Program* be established to assist owners with facade matching grants to update the exterior of buildings in the district.
- *Matching Sign Grant* to assist business owners in unifying the visual enhancement of the district.
- *Branding* the area as a specific location/district to attract potential business by creating a sense of “place” in the City.

Long Term Strategies include:

- *Economic Incentives/Funding* for a series of public-private partnerships, incremental financing, various tax incentives, and other funding options are required to finance redevelopment within the EFBD.
- *Zoning* should be considered to match the current decline in manufacturing uses and an increase in office, financial and professional uses. Rezoning the district to attract the current trend in users to increase activity will enhance pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow throughout the area with the use of mixed business and residential as well as centralized parking facilities.

The members of Planning Commission congratulated the WSU students for their very well prepared presentation stating the study contained many recommendations for the City to consider in restructuring the areas particularly along Westpark and Compark Roads and East Franklin Street.

Mr. Durham stated the existing lots on Westpark and Compark Roads are too small and not suitable for the needs of today’s type of industrial users. Branding the area is an excellent idea, however, the improvements outlined will only occur with the City Council’s approval to budget the appropriate funds for the many phases contained in the study.

Discussion continued concerning the City acquiring the property to the north of the district in order to create a new entrance which would provide direct access from Clyo Road. That concept was considered many years ago by staff, however it did not develop due to the lack of funds to purchase the properties.

The members again expressed their gratitude to the students for adopting this issue as the topic of their thesis and providing the end product to the City stating it should be taken to City Council for their consideration concerning redevelopment strategies for the area.

Oberer Development – Concept Plan

Mr. George Oberer, Jr., Mr. Mark Costandi, Architect, and Mr. Greg Smith, Project Manager, were present to discuss their development concept plan for the area north of Feedwire Road, south of Brown Road, and east of Wilmington Pike known as the Dille property.

Mr. Oberer stated their approach to the development of the property will be different than designs submitted by the previous development company. He stated there will most likely be no high end anchors within the retail area; however, there will be a grocery store use on the northern end of the property. A community village area along Wilmington Pike will be utilized with smaller scale retail users and as the development extends to the east and towards Feedwire Road, larger retail users will be located. He stated a significant clearing of trees along Wilmington Pike will be necessary to attract future retailers that have expressed concern with appropriate visibility. It is anticipated the concept of the development for the 71+ acres located south of I-675 will not change significantly.

Mr. Clark stated the development of this particular property has been discussed on many occasions over the last several years. He stated the members of Planning Commission walked the property and are familiar with its topography and characteristics. People view the property as the “property with trees” along Wilmington Pike and have valid concerns as to what is going to happen to the property. Additionally, there is concern as to what will happen to the existing house along Wilmington Pike and how it could potentially tie in to a village-type setting, as well as the house with the tree-lined driveway along Feedwire Road. Having not had an opportunity to see the concept plan until this time, Mr. Clark stated it appears to have a lot of asphalt as you view it from Feedwire Road.

Mr. Oberer stated the use of land for retail purposes demands visibility and the most valuable portion of the site is on the corner of Feedwire and Wilmington Pike. The trees along Wilmington Pike only extend approximately 40 feet into the property.

Mr. Brunner stated the members are aware there are many trees that are not necessarily specimen trees, however, they do provide a vision. In order for the development to succeed with the public, it must be done with a park-like setting.

Mr. Clark stated the proposed location for a hotel would be overbearing for the residential development on the west side of Wilmington Pike.

Mr. Palcher stated he was not a member of Planning Commission when the last development plan was reviewed by the City; however, preservation of the trees is essential.

Mr. Durham stated when you take an area that has status in a community; you are absolutely going to get concern from the public. This property has that kind of status. With the crowded land development on the south side of Feedwire Road this should be a real contrast. He stated the City has this area available for development with a clean slate because the Bearcreek plan is gone. This new concept plan itself has followed the existing stream on the site giving it a positive focus. There is no requirement to maintain the existing house or trees on the site, however, credit would be issued for the trees preserved in terms of the landscape standards. Mr. Durham stated one thing the City can do is protect the residential area along Wilmington Pike by requiring additional buffering in exchange for outlots that currently appear to be too small for development.

The members agreed that in terms of creating a community friendly development the house must be maintained and preservation of the trees at the intersection is key. In order for the members to see the potential of the concept, they suggested the trees be superimposed onto the plan.

Mr. Durham stated a view corridor created from Wilmington Pike would be valuable to the development. This type of approach to the appearance of the development would make it different from other commercial developments and would continue the area's status theme. He stated rather than having signs visible from I-675 to identify the area, it might be more beneficial to have building visibility to create the sense of the development. He stated signage will be an additional aspect of the development that needs to be discussed by possibly considering a pylon sign in order to preserve the trees.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Approved 7/27/2010
James D. Quigg
ACTING CHAIR