



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES
May 1, 2023 at 2:00 PM
Council Chambers

Chair: Tyler Harriman **Vice-Chair:** Brad Swank
Members: Jody Carney, Dustin Adler, Tom Jaskiewicz

Call to Order:

Mr. Harriman called the meeting to order at 2:06pm.

Roll Call:

Present: T. Harriman, J. Carney, T. Jaskiewicz.

Absent: B. Swank, D. Adler.

Communication: Nothing to report.

Work Session:

Zoning Code Discussion – Planned Development Chapter

Mr. Hutchinson provided a brief update on the most recent revisions to the Planned Development section of the zoning code. From this Commission's work session in April, the consultant, OHM, incorporated the comments and suggestions which are depicted in the draft before the Commission today. Additionally, the current draft has incorporated all the different district types into one section in an effort to streamline the code. Several open space requirements have also been adjusted according to the Commission's suggestions.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that the maximum two-story stipulation for a single-family residential use may need revised. He advocated for a height requirement based on dimensions versus a two or three-story requirement. Mr. Jaskiewicz also prefers a distance-based requirement. Mr. Hutchinson said that, in his experience, a 35-foot requirement is common and generally only applies to single family residential units. Mr. Harriman said that he agrees and believes that the 35-foot requirement matches the current capabilities of the Fire Department and their equipment. Mayor Carney stated her agreement. Mr. Harriman also said that he believes the overall desire of the Village is to have two-story residential structures and understands that four or five story apartment buildings may not fit aesthetically with the rest of the Village.

Mr. Harriman inquired if the density per acre requirement should be revised to accurately reflect a developer's desire to have taller residential structures in order to have more people per acre. This would reflect the concept of "building-up" versus "building-out" in being able to fit more residential units on a smaller parcel of land. Mr. Harriman however, and the Commission, noted and agreed that "high-rise" residential structures would not fit well in the pre-dominantly rural area that encompasses the Village. All agreed that the visual presentation is an important factor that must be weighed heavily when considering future residential developments.

Mr. Jaskiewicz commented that one of the benefits of having a planned development district is that certain details, such as specific height requirements and density per acre, are negotiable depending on the lot size, lot location, developer plans, and other factors. The Commission agreed and Mayor Carney emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance of different architectural styles, including structure height.

The Commission also discussed the importance of having aesthetically pleasing transitions from one style of building to another. For example, the transition from a cluster of two-story buildings to a small number of three-story buildings, must be done appropriately. The Commission deliberated the advantages and disadvantages of having certain policies and guidelines written in the code versus a standalone document. All members agreed that having a design standards document is imperative.

The Commission discussed the potential for a vision statement to be formed and implemented that would assist in development planning purposes. Mr. Hutchinson said that Mr. Stanford has been working on a project similar to this that would be included in a "developer welcome packet" and which would incorporate these concepts.

The Commission deliberated the density per acre requirement, noting that their previous suggestions had been incorporated into the draft. Mr. Hutchinson provided additional clarifying details on commercial versus residential density requirements and what has changed in the code draft. The Commission expressed their desire to

ensure that the density requirements match the building height requirement. For example, in order for a developer to meet a density requirement, the developer shouldn't have to build a five-story building when the height requirement prohibits anything over three stories. The Commission agreed that the draft accurately reflects that objective.

Mr. Jaskiewicz noted that developers should be expected to develop a sense of character within neighborhoods, especially when using the existing topography and landscape. Ideally, this character would closely align with the historical nature and environment of Plain City. He inquired if that concept should be explicitly outlined in the code. Mr. Hutchinson said that it may be better placed in the design standard document. The Commission agreed and provided several examples of existing desirable landscaping styles within the Village.

The Commission discussed the possibility of requiring certain exterior materials in new developments. For example, a requirement could be included that states new developments must use natural materials on exteriors such as wood, stone, or brick and incorporate multi-gabled roofs. The Commission acknowledged that not every future development will have the capacity to meet all of these expectations but the code must be written in such a way as to be flexible to meet the needs of the Village and its residents.

Mr. Jaskiewicz discussed the advantages and disadvantages of a tiered density bonus list to encourage developers to build houses in the style previously discussed, incorporating all natural materials, gabled roofs, etc. He also stated that all acronyms should be defined somewhere in the code, whether that is in an appendix or typology section.

Mayor Carney asked for clarification on the density bonus requirement in which a developer could, potentially, receive a bonus for meeting a stipulation that is required elsewhere in the code. For example, the requirement of meeting certain amounts of tree and landscape features is listed as a density bonus but is stated as a requirement elsewhere in the code. As it is drafted, the developer would essentially receive a double bonus if they meet the basic requirement. The Commission agreed that verbiage should be adjusted so that a double bonus does not occur. Mr. Hutchinson noted the requested verbiage change and agreed with the Commission that a double bonus should not exist since the density bonuses are designed to reward a developer that goes above and beyond expectations. Mr. Hutchinson stated that the density bonuses may not need to be offered at all depending on how many overlaps there are between the bonus requirements and basic requirements. The Commission agreed that the density bonus section needs updated to incorporate these suggestions. Mr. Hutchinson said that he would conduct more research on this topic and implement the Commission's suggestions where applicable. The Commission emphasized the

importance of maintaining flexibility for Village staff and the Commission to create developments that are aligned with the Village's and residents' desires.

The Commission discussed the conservation section and setback requirements from natural landscape areas, specifically the Big Darby Creek area. Mr. Hutchinson said that moving forward, the setbacks would match what the Ohio EPA require at a minimum. Other regulations would apply to developments outside of the Big Darby Creek area where natural landscapes and resources may not exist or exist in a different state. Mr. Hutchinson noted that he would adjust the language accordingly.

Mr. Harriman inquired if, in regards to the open space section, certain open spaces should not be calculated as such if it's not truly usable open space. He prefers to have certain spaces not qualify towards the open space requirement if they aren't usable by the general public. Mr. Jaskiewicz discussed the concepts of active versus passive open space and the benefits of both concepts. Mr. Harriman agreed and noted that it may need to be calculated on a case-by-case basis. The Commission acknowledged that stormwater retention ponds are often calculated as open space while simultaneously meeting retention requirements for stormwater. This exemplifies a situation in which meeting one requirement satisfies another but the Commission agreed that, overall, these scenarios will need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Hutchinson stated that the draft contains verbiage that permits the Commission to have influence on the final open space calculations. The Commission stated that they wish to retain that verbiage.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that the landscaping screening and buffer requirements will be in the design standards document.

Mr. Harriman asked for verbiage to be included that would require slight curves in residential roadways to prevent too many straight-line roads which are unsafe. The Commission agreed. Mr. Jaskiewicz stated that it is important to also have roadways that are aligned with each other to prevent staggered intersections. Mr. Hutchinson said that the Village Engineer will review those concepts during the site plan and technical specification review phase but the overall topic will be included in the design standard document.

The Commission noted that it may be beneficial to implement a timeline requirement in which developers have a limited amount of extension opportunities or a certain number of years until a project must be started. Mr. Hutchinson said that the Ohio EPA and the building department have their own permitting process. Each of these entities have their own timelines that are outside of the control of the Village. He stated that it is difficult to incorporate an accurate timeline within the code due to these variables.

Mr. Hutchinson said that the overall next steps will be to incorporate today's comments and suggestions and to present a final draft to this Commission for a

recommendation of approval or disapproval. He will present the typology section for the Commission's review as well. He noted that a public hearing will be held before the Commission and will then go before Council for a public hearing and final vote.

Adjourn:

Mr. Jaskiewicz motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mayor Carney. Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.