

Southwest Area Commission  
Meeting Place: New Horizons United Methodist Church  
1665 Harrisburg Pike, Columbus, Ohio 43223

Southwest Area Commission (SWAC)  
Prepared for approval by Liz Reed

Chair: Stefanie Coe  
Vice Chair: FeLisa Jenkins  
Secretary: Elizabeth (Liz) Reed  
Fiscal Officer: David Kerr

Meeting Location: New Horizons United Methodist Church  
1665 Harrisburg Pike, Columbus, OH 43223

Minutes for: August 21, 2019

7:00 p.m. Meeting called to order.  
Pledge of Allegiance

**Commissioners**

Present: Stefanie Coe, Erin Crome, Michelle DelZell, Peggy Fossett, Kristin Hayes, FeLisa Jenkins, Maurice Jenkins, Barbara Parsons, Don Parsons, Liz Reed, and Patty Spencer.

Absent: David Kerr, George Wagner

**Routine Business:**

Stefanie announced that the majority of the meeting would be limited to discussion of the Cooper Stadium site due to the number of attendees interested in this topic. Information about the proposed site will be presented, then Commissioners will have limited time to speak, then audience members may speak, but should submit speaker slips to ensure that opportunity as the meeting will end at 9:00 p.m. Police Officers are available should anyone become disruptive, although this expected to be an orderly discussion.

It was announced that Peggy Fossett and Elizabeth Reed were re-elected.

Beth Fairman Kinney, City of Columbus Neighborhood Liaison announced; the schedule of the area commission training; the best neighborhoods conference on October 12, a My Brother's Keeper event, and a free flu shot clinic offered at the Health Department on September 26.

Jeff Brown, the attorney representing the re-zoning application for the Cooper Stadium site stated that the site was currently zoned for an entertainment complex with an automotive race track. The owners couldn't get things to line up and that project is dead.

This zoning application is a request for rezoning from a CPD (Commercial Planned Development District) to a CPD (Commercial Planned Development District H-110) and a council variance to allow for mixed-use with residential, laboratories, and/or warehouses. Mr. Brown gave background information about the site.

He stated that Columbus is a good and growing city and the site owners are looking to develop a new type of neighborhood that can develop and change. The site is so large that reinvestment can attract outsiders to come to the area. They plan to renovate existing buildings and are asking for a variance in code to allow residential with the first floor.

Mr. Brown showed a graphic representation of what can be done. They are proposing residential in back. Wants a combination of uses throughout the site. He stated that the ability to work and live in the same area is desirable for millennials. They stated that they may want to add the entertainment, but that would be later and would require a new and different approval process.

Part of the zoning application allows for shipping containers to be used as barriers. Mr. Brown gave examples of what one can do with shipping containers.

Mr. Brown stated that they shared concepts with Greenlawn Cemetery. The representative stated that they may be interested in some of the land.

Mr. Brown stated that with these over 40 acres, what happens here makes a difference to the community. This is an opportunity to attract people to the area.

Upon questions from the Commissioners:

Mr. Brown explained that they are seeking the laboratories in the effort to attract experimental labs that could do research and testing. That is in the application to have it covered. These laboratories would still need to comply with restrictions regarding the types of materials that are permitted to go through neighborhoods.

They don't know the likelihood of an entertainment center. There are no immediate plans for an entertainment center and the odds are medium to low for such a request.

When asked if this would be high-end residential, he stated that it would draw the same level that you see downtown, but due to the gravity of the project, this could be the same level of design. The design targets young people who like to work near where they live and do not want to deal with. They believe the office and distribution would be limited. The request is for CPD rather than Industrial. They are asking for specific warehouse uses, labs, and first-floor residential.

When confronted with the written concerns recently drafted by the various City agencies regarding the zoning request. These written concerns were submitted to the Southwest Area Commission earlier in the day. Mr. Brown stated that they haven't gone through

the comments or had discussions with the city, yet. He also stated that most plans have some city rebuttal.

They will still need to do a traffic impact study and will comply with storm and sewer requirements. There is a possibility of stacked parking.

Unlike a Casino, this is open and visible and should improve the area. The area is in need someone to come in and move the needle. This can change the feel of the streets. There are industrial neighbors. Additionally, there is a low-income housing project nearby.

The variance for first-floor residential could benefit seniors. If the business that comes in is all distribution, then it could result in 30 jobs. If there are office and retail, then this could result in 100 jobs.

The shipping containers are only for commercial use. The containers could be tenant-specific. This has the potential of such a WOW factor.

The current concept leaves room for an entertainment venue, but we don't need to discuss this, we're not asking for this at this time. They will need to come back to us for an entertainment venue.

They are currently unsure of the number of residential units. There will be landscaped areas and could be a dog park or other green space.

The planning of the space will be market-driven.

Upon questions from the speaker slips the additional information was discussed:

The ideas are trendy, but since the bleachers won't be used, why keep them?

SPARCs holding LLC currently owns the property.

As the application is currently written the space could all become retail, all distribution or all residential, but that's not really what they want.

This is a vision or a concept for the area. They are unsure if it will become a reality, but they want to move forward and this is the first step in making changes.

Bill Schottenstein, one of the owners, spoke and stated that they worked on the original plans for 5-6 years, but they could not get the financing and get the project launched. Since then the world has changed, downtown is active and Franklinton is active. He stated that they think a beta site that is tech-forward would be ideal, but it's a tough area. They struggled with upkeep on the property due to security issues and they need to secure the site so they can build without the tools and equipment being stolen. He stated that we won't get into allowing something on the site that will be a problem. He

said that they have someone interested, but they can't sit on this. This space is designated as an opportunity zone and the dollars allotted for these types of zones are getting low, timing is important in getting these dollars. This is a large project, there are easy access and proximity to downtown, which makes it an ideal location.

It's important to keep this area safe and create goodwill in the area. This project is needed to bring dollars in from out of the area. Development is needed in the area. They have an interest in a brewery, restaurant, warehouse operation, and hydroponic grower. Must have sufficient parking. They are not interested in a low-end project but—not the highest end. Currently, people want amenities and variation of residential properties.

They stated they had difficulty with keeping the property clean and the grass cut due to theft of equipment from the property. The building has been reviewed by a structural engineer—it's fine. Joe Sugar said all code violations have been fixed.

Comments from the Commissioners and public attendees included:

Conceptually this is a good idea, but there are not enough details regarding when various parts of the project will be done and if any of the project will be done. There are a lot of things that need to be worked out. Due to the importance of this property to the City, the City needs to step up and assist.

They need to have communication with Greenlawn.

They need to provide a minimum and a maximum number of residential, essentially some guarantee of mixed-use.

The area needs a boost, we are need of affordable rental rentals.

There are concerned about the traffic and access to the property.

One commissioner asked for a straw vote from the audience and most attendees were for, a few against, several who did vote.

Vagueness is a problem. We need some guarantees regarding the use of laboratories use.

Don't want to see neighborhood go down and this property has gone down. Investment is needed and this property needs brought up.

Didn't appreciate the disparaging comments about the neighborhood.

Changes do need to be made to the application and there will be changes and we'll need to vote on any change to these applications.

The Franklin Township Trustee mentioned the frustration of this property that was removed from the township, being stuck with the burden of maintaining the roads without the tax-base to do it.

Stefanie Coe made a motion and Patty seconded the motion.

The motion was to support both applications, Z19-060 and CV19-082 **conceptually** with the following comments/conditions:

- We ask the City to engage with this applicant quickly and effectively to help ensure this project is a catalyst for development in our community. We feel forgotten by the City over the last decade and expect the City to help our community enjoy some of the positive development happening around the City.
- The applicant and the City will reach agreement on traffic with a traffic study.
- The applicant and the City will reach agreement on stormwater issues.
- The applicant will communicate directly with and work with the two cemeteries to determine their comments and recommendations for the shipping container aspect of the project.
- The applicant will include language with minimum and maximum residential units in the text.
- The applicant will ensure the language of the text requires mixed-use and does not leave the community with forty-plus acres of just residential or just warehousing.
- The applicant will include language as to what “phase” of the project will be completed first and together. Again, the goal is to ensure that we don’t end up with just one portion of the project that is less desirable.
- Portion 9 although it will be left undeveloped initially until specific development is determined it will be maintained in a better condition and appropriate for the temporary uses.
- Greenspace will be included in the development of this space.

Seven voted for, four opposed, the motion carried.

During the National Night Out event, FeLisa graciously used her tent. It was destroyed by the weather. Stefanie made a motion to replace the tent for \$195.85. Michelle seconded the motion and the commission voted to yes. The motion was carried.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: September 18, 2019