

Planning Commission
January 27, 2016
Minutes

The Chairman called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Chairman John Mears, Ned Bromm, Wes Poole, Mike Zuilhof, Pete McGory and David Miller. Jim Jackson was not present. Casey Sparks and Angela Byington represented the Planning Department, along with City Manager Eric Wobser. Clerk - Debi Eversole, Community Development

Chairman Mears called for a motion on the minutes from the December 16th meeting. Mr. Bromm moved to approve the minutes as distributed, Mr. Zuilhof seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

The first item on the agenda was an application for site plan approval for Sandusky Sports Force at 3115 Cleveland Road. Ms. Sparks reviewed the following: Robert Ryan with The Sports Force, on behalf of Cedar Point Park, LLC had submitted a site plan application for Sandusky Sports Force at 3115 Cleveland Road. The property is proposed to be utilized as a multi-use tournament level destination sports park. The property is located within the City of Sandusky and Perkins Township. The portion located within the City of Sandusky is zoned as Commercial Recreation. Planning staff, Perkins Township officials and the applicant have worked together on the proposed site plan. Although most of the areas with concerns were in Perkins Township, staff provided comments regarding fencing, landscaping, parking, building design and access. The most recent submission reflects revisions such as removing one access point, adding additional landscaping and an additional parking area by the service entrance and revising the building design. The applicant is proposing an 8' vinyl coated chain link fence around the perimeter of the development. The maximum permitted height of a fence within the commercial district is 6', as such the applicant will need to apply for a variance.

Staff's main concern regarding the proposed site plan is in regards to walking/ biking trails and access to the back bay area. The City of Sandusky has an easement that is located along the adjacent parcel owned by Erie Metro Parks. This easement could begin the access from Cleveland Road to the northern adjacent parcels owned by the City of Sandusky. It would be the intent of the City to create a pedestrian trail that would run along the perimeter of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project area and provide access to the back bay. A portion of the parcel owned by Cedar Point would be impacted by the proposed trail. Currently the parcels owned by the City of Sandusky and the northern most point of the parcel owned by Cedar Point are located within a conservation easement. Staff has begun conversations with Erie Metro Parks and Cedar Fair regarding this plan and how it would impact these parcels and the surrounding future development. In the near future staff will continue conversations with the stakeholders on this project, however staff would like to see a revised site plan indicating the walking trail along Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Planning staff recommends approval of the proposed site plan for Sandusky Sports Force with the following conditions:

1. The applicant provide a revised sit plan indicating a walking/ bike trail along the perimeter of Phase 1 and Phase 2 giving access to the back bay area.
2. The applicant apply for variance application for the 8' fence that is proposed for the site.
3. If traffic impact study performed by ODOT or flood plain permitting process, or anything to do with wetland litigation were to substantially alter the site plan, staff would request that the applicant come back to Planning Commission with a revised drawing.

Mr. Mears called for the applicant to begin their presentation. Mr. Duff Milkie, 1 Cedar Point Drive, Sandusky appeared on behalf of Cedar Point and Cedar Point Park, LLC. with him, Mr. Rob Decker, Sr. V.P. of Planning & Design along with Mr. Rob Ryan, Director of Design for Sport's Force.

Mr. Milkie began speaking on the benefits of a tournament park to open up a new segment of tourism that doesn't currently exist, and will take advantage of current existing tourism assets including Cedar Point, Kalahari and the Islands. It also will activate the park area and the areas along the bay as a public park. It will also bring another aspect of tourism to the area. Mr. Milkie asked that the commission members listen to the presentation and consider it for approval.

Mr. Rob Ryan, 299 Hunters Ridge, Marietta, GA begins the presentation on behalf of Sports Force. Mr. Ryan showed that the vision of the project is geared toward the sports tourism market, based on sports, family and fun. The added bonus is the destination of Sandusky, Ohio. The sports tourism is a growing market. Mr. Ryan began showing the plan itself. The goal is to create a high quality, high volume sports facility. The model is based off of one that doesn't experience winter weather. Fields are multi-purpose. They are baseball, soccer, lacrosse and softball. The entrance will be a clubhouse that everyone will have to come through. This is a gated, ticketed complex. The plans will be based around where the old runway is located. The plan shows an additional cross axis, which represents where the runway is. There's still a piece of runway that will remain as access to the bay. Mr. Ryan pointed out the wetland limits on his presentation.

Mr. Mears addressed concerns that Mr. Gary Boyle had regarding entrances and parking lots. Mr. Ryan responded that there was a traffic study and that the proposal is for one entrance in and out. Discussion continued regarding the amount of parking and how close it is to each venue. The parking area will be on the outside perimeter of the complex, the outside parking areas are mostly an average 2 1/2 min walk, with the furthest distance being an average 5 min walk. Ms. Sparks added that she believes that Mr. Boyle no longer has concerns with the parking and distance factors.

Mr. Miller asked for clarification as to where Phase 1 and Phase 2 are located, confirming that Sandusky is the Northern part of the project. Mr. Ryan reviewed the renderings of what the project should look like when complete. He shows the center of the park as 2 play areas for kids and there will be several food and beverage vendors available to make it more attractive for the entire family. The plan may also include a miniature golf course, bungee and trampoline areas in the future.

Mr. Mears questioned where the spectators will be sitting. Mr. Ryan stated that there are stands at every field. In the case of the multipurpose fields, there will be bleachers at each end and also in the middle for soccer and lacrosse. Also benches are placed all around the park along with picnic tables.

Mr. Zuilhof expressed the rules regarding chain link fence and adding barbed wire/razor wire. Mr. Ryan commented that the fence would be more decorative.

Mr. Ryan moved on to discuss the entrance and parking areas. The current traffic study suggests a right in, right out access only. He added that there will be potential to add trails and boardwalks leading to the wetlands. Mr. Zuilhof requested clarification as to where trails and boardwalks would be located. Mr. Ryan stated that most of this will depend on Phase 2 of the plan. Mr. Decker added that the trails will ultimately connect the two parcels and that there is no controversy between the two government agencies. Both see the property being developed in full and connected. Mr. Milkie added that the trail will need to be developed since it will enhance the property.

Mr. Ryan reviewed the proposed trail plan provided by the applicant. Mr. Pool questioned the access to the back bay. Mr. Zuilhof indicated that a dedicated bike path should be considered.

Mr. Miller stated that some of the project area is in the flood plain. As far as adding on to the project, adding hotel or other structures, this could be a problem. Mr. Decker stated that it is not a plan to put in a hotel at this point, although if the business grew, there may be an indoor/outdoor facility. Phase 2 has a lot of ideas

being discussed, none have been presented at this time. Mr. Miller wants to know how the flood plain would impact Phase 2 at a later date. Jeff Keefe, Assistant City Engineer, was introduced to answer any flood plain or engineering questions.

Mr. Zuilhof questioned when a plan for the trails would be in place. Ms. Sparks indicated that the applicant provide a plan this evening, and the plan is entered as part of the record. Ms. Sparks stated that the applicant, staff, and Erie Metro Parks are in conversations regarding a conservation easement. Staff is very confident that there will be an agreement between Property Owner, Erie Metroparks and Staff that a biking/walking trail will be put in place. Mr. Wobser added that himself and planning staff have been in constant contact with Erie Metroparks and feel confident that everything will go smooth.

Mr. Miller asked if Sports Force will just be building the facility, or will they be involved in anyway after. Mr. Milkie responded that Sports Force will be the builder and then they will operate it as well. The operational piece of that is very important. Sports Force are experts in building the fields themselves.

Mr. Bromm asked if there would be a restroom facility at each field. Mr. Decker explained there would not be one at each field but that they would be within a short walking distance and that this was something that is always of great interest to the visitors. There are a few designated locations for restrooms as well as a plan that would include and additional family restroom.

Mr. Zuilhof asked about the kind of lighting they will be using. Ms. Sparks commented that the applicant did include sufficient lighting specs for the parking lots and the fields, and added that the parking lot is not in our jurisdiction.

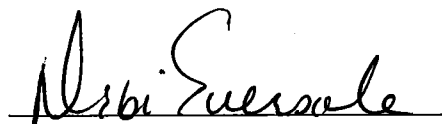
Mr. Zuilhof moved to approve the application. Mr. Poole seconded the motion without further discussion. Motion passes with 6/0 vote in favor.

Ms. Sparks presented an added topic of proposed improvements to Jackson Street parking lot. This is only up for discussion and there will be nothing to vote on at this time.

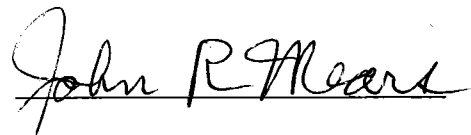
Jeff Keefe, Assistant City Engineer discussed improvements that will be made with grant money received and reviewed the proposal with the committee. Discussion included where the 2 entrances will be, and widening the entrance. The Commission discussed the easement for the dumpsters and the access from the parking lot through Peddler's Alley. The Commission requested a drawing showing all of the easements. The Commissioners also discussed the lighting plan and fixtures. Mr. Zuilhof stated he believes the City has regulations regarding the type of lighting permitted within the downtown area. Staff stated that they would research if any legislation was in place.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVED:



Debi Eversole, Clerk


John Mears, Chairman