

Planning Commission
December 17, 2008
Minutes

The Chairman John Mears called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Paul Ernst, Mike Zuilhof, John Mears, Ned Bromm, Lee Silvani and Brett Fuqua. David Miller was excused. Alex MacNicol & Steve Poggiali were present to represent the City's Planning Department.

Mr. Fuqua moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, November 19th as presented; Mr. Silvani seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The first item on the agenda was an application for site plan/off-street parking approval for an addition to 2025 Hayes Avenue, Providence Care Center.

Mr. MacNicol stated that staff felt this would conform with the zoning. A plan had been submitted before and this plan actually provided more parking and a better situation. Staff recommended approval subject to three things, submission of a landscape plan, submission of a drainage plan and submission of a storm water pollution prevention plan.

Mr. Bromm commented that once again, they were asked to approve a plan for off-street parking without dimensions. He stated that he did scale it and the spaces on the north side did not meet the City's parking requirements. Mr. Harkin, the architect stated he would take responsibility for not having dimensions on the plan and he stated that they were completing a survey and locating the trees on the north side and they would be revising the parking to keep as many trees as possible. He stated the spaces would meet the City's requirements.

Mr. Zuilhof moved to approve the application subject to the conditions as recommended by staff, Mr. Fuqua seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was a discussion of the wayfinding & signage plan.

Chairman Mears commented that although the plan looked nice, it was a matter of finding funds to pay for it. He suggested a couple of items that should be included, such as the Merry Go Round Museum, the Sandusky Library, and Little Italy. Chairman Mears commented that he was on the board of the Merry Go Round Museum and they have been talking to the State for years trying to get signage directing people to the museum. He said that the State doesn't allow a lot of signage, but if the City was doing it, they should recognize the museum. Mr. Zuilhof asked if this draft incorporated any changes from the previous draft.

Mr. Poggiali stated that this was the same draft that had been made available to the Bayfront Corridor members. Mr. Fuqua commented that an informal presentation had been made to the City Commission; however approval hadn't been given by the City Commission because they didn't have the locations or money yet. Mr. Poggiali stated that Mrs. Handy had recommended that it be tabled at this meeting.

Mr. Zuilhof stated that he hadn't thoroughly reviewed the entire draft, but he commented on the inclusion of the Circle Tour and he felt that the signage plan should incorporate the Coastal Trail more.

The next item on the agenda was a discussion on the draft ordinance for wind energy conversion systems.

Mr. Zuilhof commented that he thought that this ordinance would generate a lot of discussion because there was sentiment among some that wind energy shouldn't be regulated at all, it should be encouraged by not having an ordinance that would restrict it in any way. Mr. Zuilhof stated he had the opposite feeling because if they didn't do it, it would leave too many questions unanswered and actually would discourage it. A well written ordinance would answer some of those questions ahead of time and reduce the risk to people wishing to invest in wind energy and encourage it.

Chairman Mears commented that you had to have clear distance in case something fell down and that's what this was all about. Mr. Zuilhof agreed and stated they needed to be concerned about safety and the rights of neighbors. He commented that the neighborhood in the vicinity of the City Building has been abuzz over the surprising amount of sound energy emitting from the new turbine and that was a good illustration of what the possibilities were. He has seen some quiet ones of various sizes and he has never heard one that loud.

Mr. Zuilhof asked who was working on the project and Mr. MacNicol stated that Carrie Handy was. He had spoken with Mrs. Handy and she had given him some comments. Mr. MacNicol stated that he & Mrs. Handy had some concerns with regards to the proposed size of units allowed in residential areas. He commented that in the draft ordinance, a small wind conversion system could be up to 50 kilowatts and that might be a little loud in a residential area. He thought all the aspects needed were covered in the proposed ordinance but the suggested minimum lot sizes might be too great. You may be eliminating too many areas with that.

Chairman Mears commented that he had been at a seminar and they had talked about the funnel type of unit that could sit on top of a roof. Mr. MacNicol stated that would fall under the small system. Mr. MacNicol stated that they had noise

limits but they really needed to look at the size of the units. He commented that he didn't have enough knowledge about the systems but there was a committee of ECEDC which had some City people on it and they have been looking into this issue for a while. He felt that it would be worthwhile to have that committee review the ordinance because they have done a lot of background work on it. He stated there were some professional people involved with that committee and they could review this draft and give comments on it.

Chairman Mears asked if Ohio Edison had given any input on these systems. Mr. MacNicol thought they did on the committee. Mr. Zuilhof agreed that having the committee review the draft would be beneficial and he would like to see their comments.

Chairman Mears commented that it seemed silly to have a lot of individual companies put up wind turbines if Ohio Edison could put up a whole field of them.

Mr. MacNicol commented that the committee was working with the nonprofits and providing some funds especially for the political subdivisions where they would provide money to do a study to determine what kind of turbine would work for that facility, whether there would be enough wind and whether the energy demands would be enough to make it worthwhile. There were some government grants involved and the committee was looking into those also.

There was further discussion with the size of lots in the City, the noise issue and the size of system that should be allowed. Mr. Zuilhof commented that the ordinance proposed that every turbine have a conditional use permit and he suggested that the City could possibly waive the fees for that conditional use permit which might encourage people. Mr. MacNicol clarified that a conditional use was a permitted use with conditions so if all the conditions were clear in the permit, it should be okay.

Mr. Bromm was concerned about the design standards and how the noise limit was only specified in the residential section. Mr. MacNicol commented that the commercial section referred back to the conditions in the residential section.

Chairman Mears suggested that some type of insurance bond or other device be implemented to tear down the turbine even if the company went bankrupt. He stated that there were signs & buildings around town that should be torn down but people just walked away from them. Mr. Zuilhof commented that they should do this for all kind of things around town, such as signs, cell towers, etc. Chairman Mears stated that this would give the lawyers a chance to examine the entire situation and figure out what they could do and then apply it to the other things. Mr. MacNicol commented that administratively it could be difficult to

implement. Mr. Poggiali agreed that it was worth looking into. He stated that the good thing was that you go into these things and think it through ahead of time before enacting legislation and then going back and making changes.

Chairman Mears stated it was time for the election of officers for 2009. Mr. Fuqua moved to keep the current officers in place, Mr. Silvani seconded the motion and all voted in favor. John Mears will continue as Chairman, Dr. Ernst will continue as Vice-Chairman and Ned Bromm will continue as Secretary.

There was no further business before the Commission and the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

Mary L. Grendow, Clerk

John Mears, Chairman