

Hillsboro Planning Commission Minutes
January 17, 2018 – Special Meeting
5:40 p.m. Hillsboro Fire Department – Meeting Room – 204 N. East Street

CALL TO ORDER

At 5:40 p.m., Tom Eichinger, Chair, called the Special Session of the Planning Commission to order.

ROLL CALL

The following were present for the meeting: Tom Eichinger, Chair; Charlie Guarino, Vice-Chair; Drew Hastings, Mayor; Mel McKenzie, Safety and Service Director; Ruth Robbins, and Joe Mahan. Rob Holt's absence was excused.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was met.

APPROVE MINUTES

There were no minutes presented for review.

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business

NEW BUSINESS

First United Methodist Church – East Walnut Street – Review Parking Proposal

Ralph Vance and Earl Smith were present to present the plans for parking changes at the First United Methodist Church on East Walnut Street. Mr. Vance explained that the church would like to make a "circle" drop-off area for handicapped persons in front of the newer portion of the church. The plan would be similar to the arrangement at the Catholic church. Parallel parking spaces would then be created along East Walnut Street and the angled parking spots for handicap accessibility would be removed. Mr. Eichinger asked if the plan would encroach on the existing sidewalk. Mr. Vance said it might cut into the sidewalk but the church would be replacing sidewalk there and along the side of the church. He said there would still be plenty of room for sidewalk.

Mr. Vance said the purpose for the change is to allow easy access for drop-off and pick-up. He asked the Commission what was needed to satisfy the City. Mr. McKenzie said that the Catholic church deals with drainage problems since they created their drop-off area. He warned that the design of the "circle" should allow for drainage away from the church and the city would review the plans before construction.

Mr. Mahan advised the church representatives that ADA regulations do not allow parking to be on a grade steeper than two-percent. He recommended that the church consult with

someone familiar with ADA regulations. Mr. Vance said the parallel parking on the street will not be designated as handicapped parking spaces. The spaces would be designated for Sunday service parking. He asked who will maintain the spaces and if the spaces should be concrete or asphalt. Mr. McKenzie said it did not make any difference which material they used. He felt that the Church would be responsible for the total maintenance of the parking spaces since they are creating them and they are set into the Church property. Mr. Vance asked what happens if the city paves the street and the pavement is higher than the parking spaces. Mr. McKenzie said that as long as he has control of the paving there will be no more over-paving without grinding the pavement first.

Mr. Eichinger said it was up to the church to determine if public parking will be allowed in those spaces. Mayor Hastings said that making those spaces private parking for the church will put the church at risk for having to monitor the parking spaces to prevent the public from using the space. Mr. McKenzie cited a city ordinance that prevented parking on the south side of East Walnut Street except for Sundays from 9 a.m. to noon. If parking spaces were created on the south side of the street, they could not be used during the week. When asked if the city would enforce parking for those spaces, Mr. McKenzie answered in the affirmative but if the parking is recessed onto church property, the city will not enforce parking. After more discussion about the parking spaces, it was decided that the Planning Commission would agree to either parking on the street or parking recessed into the church property. The city is only concerned with the specifications for sidewalks and the engineering of the parking spaces and will review all plans for the project. Mr. McKenzie assured the church that the city will work with them.

Overview for Master Plan – McBride-Dale-Clarion (Liz Fields)

Liz Fields from McBride-Dale-Clarion consultants addressed the Commission regarding the creation of a master plan for the city. After explaining her company and her role she outlined options for a Hillsboro plan. It is no longer typical to have a twenty-year plan because technology changes so quickly. The plan should be a vision for improvement, preservation, and development. The philosophy behind the plan is to make it user friendly, practical, and realistic. It can be as detailed and long or as concise and uncomplicated as the Commission wants it to be. Ms. Fields provided examples of three plans:

Culpepper, VA

A very layered and complicated plan that establishes the character of the area, land use, transportation, investment areas, and much more. She did not recommend such a plan for Hillsboro.

Blue Ash

The plan was for land use only. Comprehensive Plans typically address public facilities, traffic, infrastructure, housing, development, and land use. Blue Ash has a need for a land use only plan. Ms. Fields did not envision such a plan for Hillsboro.

Wadsworth

The City of Wadsworth divided their city into potential development areas with an analysis of each area.

Another example was the use of four posters that included a map on one side and the city plan on the opposite side. On-line only plans are also used by cities.

Ms. Fields explained that the scope of the plan can be tailored to the city's budget. A master plan is a guiding document to help make decisions but it is not a law and is not enforceable. The zoning code is the law but the master plan helps the Commission to support their decisions for approval or denial of a plan.

Mr. Eichinger said that a master plan is usually completed before the zoning code is written or revised but in the case of Hillsboro, the zoning code was antiquated and confusing and needed to be amended immediately. After the master plan is created, there may be zoning areas that need to change and the zoning code may need to be amended again. Mr. Guarino would like the plan to show land use at the parks and for the area of Hobart Drive/Carl Smith Road for annexation and development. Mr. Eichinger added the area behind Kroger that is south of Harry Sauner Road and at the end of Roberts Lane. Ms. Fields recommended a plan that would provide the appropriate direction for land use concentrating on certain areas for usage, appearance, amenities, etc. If a business inquires about an area, they will know if their vision fits the city's recommendations for that area.

Mr. Guarino suggested that car charging stations be included in the plan. Mayor Hastings agreed and said that the chargers should be concentrated in the Uptown area to encourage people to walk around while their car is charging. Mr. Guarino said the parks and the college would be good areas as well. Ms. Fields described the planning document as a partnership that creates synergy with other businesses and organizations.

The Commission must decide how to start the plan by determining the scope of work. They also need to consider how much public engagement they desire, how many public hearings, whether to have stakeholder interviews, and the use of a steering committee as opposed to the Planning Commission conducting the work on the plan. Mayor Hastings asked if a plan was ever implemented without public input and Ms. Fields said that on rare occasions when a plan only needs an update are there no public hearings. The Mayor was concerned that the public would not be agreeable to a master plan after the failed attempt to enact Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD) legislation. Mr. Guarino said that a master plan may give the DRD a second chance and Mr. Eichinger concurred. Mayor Hastings liked the style of a plan on a poster and said that it is the responsibility of the commission to create a plan that is easier to pass than it is to fight. Ms. Fields said that a summary plan would be good but Mr. Eichinger said a summary must not be at such a high-level that no one can understand it.

Mr. Eichinger said that Mr. Guarino will be in charge of the development of the master plan and he will be the contact with Ms. Fields. Mr. Guarino will also coordinate with the Safety and Service Director regarding infrastructure issues.

Ms. Robbins said that she would like a plan that moves Hillsboro forward as a “tourist trap” that brings people into the city to shop and hopefully there will be a hotel. Mr. McKenzie said that the Entertainment District that Mr. Mahan proposed last year at Council would help to stop travelers from just passing through to Rock Fork Lake. They would have a reason to stop Uptown.

The Commission discussed the amended zoning ordinance. Billboard signs will be grandfathered if the property is sold. Drones are not a land-use issue and cannot be addressed in the zoning code. If a drone is used to advertise by flying a banner, it would be a violation of the existing sign ordinance which does not allow signs with moving parts or vehicular signs. Airspace above a property is not considered to be owned by the property owner.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is Tuesday, February 20, 2017 (The regular meeting day, Monday, February 19, is a holiday).

Tom Eichinger, Chair

Debbie Sansone, Clerk (Absent)