

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
WORTHINGTON ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
WORTHINGTON MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION
VIRTUAL MEETING
September 24, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Worthington Architectural Review Board and the Worthington Municipal Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Mikel Coulter, Chair; Thomas Reis, Vice-Chair; Kathy Holcombe, Secretary; Edwin Hofmann; David Foust; Richard Schuster; and Susan Hinz. Also present were Scott Myers, Worthington City Council Representative; Lee Brown, Director of Planning & Building; and Lynda Bitar, Planning Coordinator.

A. Call to Order - 7:00 pm

1. Roll Call
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Tom Reis
3. Approval of minutes of the September 10, 2020 meeting

Mr. Foust moved to approve the minutes, and Mrs. Holcombe seconded the motion. All Board members voted, “Aye,” and the minutes were approved.

B. Architecture Review Board

B. Architecture Review Board – New Business

1. Handrails – **98 E. New England Ave.** (Mark & Susan Taylor) **AR 57-2020**

Mr. Brown reviewed the following from the staff memo:

Findings of fact & Conclusions

Background & Request:

The property is 62-feet wide and 134-feet deep. The house is a Colonial Revival influence that was built in 1941. This application is to request the installation of handrails.

Project Details:

1. The property owners are proposing to install two handrails along the stairs to the front door.
 - a. The handrails will provide assistance to anyone accessing the applicant’s front door.
2. Approximately 42” high and 42” deep; and will be black (powder coated steel).
3. The house is located approximately 30-feet from the public right-of-way. The existing stoop is approximately 25-feet from the public right-of-way and with the addition of the handrails it would encroach an additional 2-feet and ultimately be located approximately 23-feet from the public right-of-way.

- a. A variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals would be needed to encroach the front yard setback.

Land Use Plans:

Worthington Design Guidelines and Architectural District Ordinance

From about 1915 on, porches generally were simplified and more integrated into the design of the house. Simple square or tapered columns were common, as were simple paneled handrails or handrails with balusters and rails. It was common to find such porches added to older houses that either did not have porches originally or had lost their original porches.

Recommendation:

Staff recommended approval of this application as presented.

Discussion:

Board members did not have any questions or concerns. There were no emails or speakers.

Motion:

Mr. Reis moved:

THAT THE REQUEST BY MARK & SUSAN TAYLOR FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS TO INSTALL HANDRAILS AT 98 E. NEW ENGLAND AVE. AS PER CASE NO. AR 57-2020, DRAWINGS NO. AR 57-2020, DATED SEPTEMBER 14, 2020, BE APPROVED BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS IN THE STAFF MEMO AND PRESENTED AT THE MEETING.

Mr. Foust seconded the motion. Mr. Brown called the roll. Mr. Coulter, aye; Mr. Reis, aye; Mrs. Holcombe, aye; Mr. Hofmann, aye; Mr. Foust, aye; Mr. Schuster, aye; and Ms. Hinz, aye. The motion was approved.

2. Fence Modifications – 541 Oxford St. (Matthew Pasternack) AR 62-2020

Mrs. Bitar reviewed the following from the staff memo:

Findings of Fact & Conclusions

Background & Request:

This Cottage style house was built in 1921 and is a contributing property in the Worthington Historic District. The property is at the northwest corner of Oxford and South Streets. The house was purchased and renovated last year, including repairs to the fence that changed the look. Application for approval of the fence as it currently stands was denied by the ARB in May 2020. In June of 2020 the property transferred to a new owner who is now offering potential modifications to the fencing.

Project Details:

1. The original fence was approved in 1991 as a 42” high wood fence with 4” wide dog-eared

pickets and equal spacing between pickets. The fence that was installed had pickets wider than 4" (closer to 6") with a 4" gap between pickets. The Board of Zoning Appeals approved a variance for placement in the required side yard along South St.

2. Repair of the fence earlier this year involved installation of new 6" pickets wide pickets on the inside of the north and south portions of the fence. The gates on the sides of the house, which had narrower pickets with bigger gaps, were replaced with shadowbox fencing consisting of 6" pickets.
3. This application includes the following:
 - a. Modifying the gates on the sides of the house and a short stretch of fencing on the south side by removing the 6" pickets on the inside of the fence. This would leave gaps between the 6" pickets on the outside.
 - b. Leave the fence along the south side as is with the shadowbox look as there is heavy vegetation along the south side of the fence. The owner would agree to modify the fence to meet the Design Guidelines should the hedge ever be removed.
 - c. Leave the fence along the north property line as is with the shadowbox look, as the view is limited.
 - d. Leave the short stretch of fence on the west side as is because it is hidden from view by a bush. The owner would agree to modify the fence to meet the Design Guidelines should the bush ever be removed.

Land Use Plans:

Worthington Design Guidelines and Architectural District Ordinance

Fencing should be open in style; constructed with traditional materials; 3' to 4' in height; in the back yard; and of simple design, appropriate for the house style. Design and materials should be compatible with the existing structure.

Recommendation:

Staff recommended approval of the proposed modifications, as the most visible parts of the fence would be closer to open style with this proposal. The shadowbox fencing would be changed to open style if the vegetation is ever removed.

Discussion:

Mr. Brown swore in the applicant, Mr. Matthew Pasternack, 541 Oxford St., Worthington, Ohio. Mr. Schuster asked if the applicant sold the house in future, and the new homeowner removed the bushes, how would the new homeowner know that there was an issue with the fence. Mrs. Bitar explained the original approval is on file within the City's records, and if the bushes were ever removed the homeowner would be asked to fix the fence to be compliant with what was originally approved. Mrs. Bitar referenced that the neighbor to the north did not have an issue with the fence. Mr. Coulter asked Mrs. Bitar if there were any emails or outside callers and she said no.

Motion:

Mrs. Holcombe moved:

THAT THE REQUEST BY MATTHEW PASTERNAK FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS TO MODIFY THE FENCING AT 541 OXFORD ST. AS PER CASE NO. AR 62-2020, DRAWINGS NO. AR 62-2020, DATED SEPTEMBER 11, 2020, BE

APPROVED BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS IN THE STAFF MEMO AND PRESENTED AT THE MEETING.

Mr. Hofmann seconded the motion. Mr. Brown called the roll. Mr. Coulter, aye; Mr. Reis, aye; Mrs. Holcombe, aye; Mr. Hofmann, aye; Mr. Foust, aye; Mr. Schuster, aye; and Ms. Hinz, aye. The motion was approved.

3. New Attached Garage – 655 Hartford St. (Ross Builders/Mullen) AR 63-2020

Mrs. Bitar reviewed the following from the staff memo:

Findings of Fact & Conclusions

Background & Request:

A farmhouse was originally constructed in 1860 on this relatively small ~75' x ~127' (9504 square feet) corner lot. Several additions were constructed over the years to create a 2233 square foot house. The owners would like to add a garage.

Project Details:

1. The owners are proposing construction of the 24' x 24' garage attached to the south side of the house at the west end. The garage would extend to 6.5' from the south property line, which is also the right-of-way line for E. New England Ave. Because this is a corner lot, the required setback would be 20' so a variance would be needed for this placement. The New England Ave. right-of-way is 66' wide and the distance from the property line to the street is about 25'. A wider curb cut is not shown but would likely be needed. The maximum width at the curb is permitted to be 30' and a permit would be needed to expand the drive. Details of the drive approach are needed.
2. The garage would have two single doors facing south. The roof is proposed to have a gable to match the house above the eastern half of the garage, and a shed roof would extend west to cover the western half of the garage. Siding, roofing, trim and windows would match the house. The garage doors are proposed to look like carriage house doors, with square windows over recessed vertical panels. A picture of proposed light fixtures next to the doors is included in the packet.

Land Use Plans:

Worthington Design Guidelines and Architectural District Ordinance

Residential additions are recommended to maintain similar roof forms; be constructed as far to the rear and sides of the existing residence as possible; be subordinate; and have walls set back from the corners of the main house. Design and materials should be traditional, and compatible with the existing structure.

Staff Analysis:

Although the design of the garage is complementary to the house, and location is at the rear of the house, the view of the garage would be prominent on this corner lot. A detached garage in the rear yard may be more appropriate but would still be visible and would allow much less usable yard space for the family on this small lot. The wide tree lawn may help mitigate the proximity to the

street, as would the retention and addition of landscape materials. Also, the placement of the existing houses at the other three corners of this intersection are closer to the property lines.

Discussion:

Mrs. Bitar swore in the applicants, Mr. Daniel & Mrs. Sarah Mullen, 655 Hartford St., Worthington, Ohio. Mr. Mullen said they were very thoughtful in planning their project. They wanted an attached garage so they could keep as much space as possible for the back yard and preserve many of the mature trees on their property. Mr. Foust asked if the neighbors had any discussions with the neighbor to the west. Mrs. Bitar said there had not been any discussion with the rental property next door. Mr. Coulter asked if there were any emails or outside callers and Mrs. Bitar said no.

Motion:

Mr. Reis moved:

THAT THE REQUEST BY JAMES ROSS ON BEHALF OF DANIEL & SARAH MULLEN TO CONSTRUCT AN ATTACHED GARAGE AT 655 HARTFORD ST., AS PER CASE NO. AR 63-2020, DRAWINGS NO. AR 63-2020, DATED SEPTEMBER 11, 2020, BE APPROVED BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS IN THE STAFF MEMO AND PRESENTED AT THE MEETING.

Ms. Hinz seconded the motion. Mr. Brown called the roll. Mr. Coulter, aye; Mr. Reis, aye; Mrs. Holcombe, aye; Mr. Hofmann, aye; Mr. Foust, aye; Mr. Schuster, aye; and Ms. Hinz, aye. The motion was approved.

4. Plan Modifications – 6733 N. High St. (Samantha Elliot) AR 64-2020

Mr. Brown reviewed the following from the staff memo:

Findings of Fact & Conclusions

Background & Request:

The Architectural Review Board, Municipal Planning Commission and ultimately City Council approved the construction of a new 8,565 sq. ft. Goddard School on a newly created 1.013-acre parcel that was originally part of the 4-acre lot owned and operated by Schoedinger Funeral and Cremation Services and the Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit to operate a preschool in the C-3 Zoning District. The applicant is requesting to amend the previous plans as it pertains to the existing vegetation along the western property line and fencing related to the expanded playground area.

Project Details:

1. Removal of the existing trees along the western property line that are in poor condition, nearing their end of life and have been pruned from the AEP powerlines that run along the rear of the properties.
 - a. There is a 25-foot wide utility easement for stormwater and sanitary sewer that runs along the rear of the property, 15-feet of that easement is on the applicant's

- property.
2. Install new screening along the western property line that will be 6-feet to 7-feet in height Arborvitae staggered between the neighbor's fence and the newly proposed Goddard School privacy fence.
 - a. The City Arborist verified the condition of the existing pines and recommended the Arborvitae as a recommended species that would be a quick grower and provide screening with an average height of 15-feet to 18-feet in height.
 - i. The City Arborist recommended the Arborvitae so that it would not encroach into the powerlines that run along the rear of the properties.
 - b. The applicant has stated that she discussed the removal of the pine trees with the two adjacent property owners to the west, and that they approve of their removal.
 3. The space between the existing neighbor's fencing to the west and the fencing related to the playground will be approximately 15-feet in width and will have rip-rap stone installed over a landscape fabric to keep weeds from growing in this area.
 - a. This 15-feet is the easement area for stormwater and sanitary sewer.
 - i. City staff does not see an issue with the replacement of the vegetation in the easement area.
 4. The previously approved steel picket fence associated with the playground area will be expanded west approximately 15-feet as part of the playground expansion.
 5. Install a new 6-foot high solid fence along the rear of the playground.
 - a. Chesterfield CertaGrain Texture (faux wood vinyl)
 - i. Woodgrain texture and "multi-chromatic" color blends to recreate the look of stained wood.
 - ii. Goddard does not permit the use of wood materials to accomplish the screening needed along the rear property line. Wood is considered a safety issue as it may cause injury to the children.

Land Use Plans:

Worthington Design Guidelines and Architectural District Ordinance

Fences and walls are traditionally used as boundary markers and security features. In commercial districts they often are used to separate a storefront or an outdoor seating area from the activity of the street. Fences and walls can also be used and are strongly encouraged as effective screening for utility boxes, trash containers, and the like. Some businesses have placed seating and tables along the sidewalk for use by patrons having lunch or enjoying a cup of coffee. Such use of the community's sidewalks makes the entire area feel more open and pedestrian-friendly, though business owners should be sure that movement is not obstructed.

Traditional types of fences and walls include masonry walls, cast and wrought iron fences, wood rail or board fences, rows of trees and shrubs, or a combination of these. Avoid nontraditional materials such as concrete, basket-weave, stockade and "cyclone" fencing.

Paint or opaque stain are the preferred finishes for wood fencing but leaving it to weather naturally is also acceptable (the paint or stain will give it a more finished look). If pressure-treated lumber is used for structural elements, wait six months to one year before painting or staining. Fences are

not permitted in front of the building line so the building and storefronts can remain visible. Side and rear fences may be as much as six feet in height, especially when concealing trash containers and utility boxes. Set aside a maintenance budget for fencing and walls so they do not become deteriorated and unsightly.

Staff Analysis:

1. Faux vinyl wood fences are typically not recommended; however, the location of the fence is at the rear of the property and would be screened by the newly constructed preschool, landscaping and additional landscaping added to the rear of the property.

Recommendation:

Staff recommended approval of the proposed, modifications were appropriate.

Discussion:

Mr. Brown swore in the applicant, Mr. Sam Baker, of Sam Baker Architects, representing 6733 N. High St., Worthington, Ohio. Mr. Baker said they were originally going to leave the trees in place. There were two trees that needed to be removed to install a sewer line and that is when they discovered how badly diseased the pine trees were. Mr. Baker said there was a safety concern because some of the trees were in bad shape, so they contacted the City's Arborist, Mr. Shawn Daugherty, for his opinion regarding the health of the trees. Mr. Daugherty opined the trees were in bad shape and should be removed now instead of later because once the playground and equipment were installed it would be more difficult to safely remove the trees without destroying the constructed area. Mr. Baker said it is known for trees of this size to twist in the wind and their trunks can split in half. The tree limbs could break apart due to high wind or in a bad rainstorm and could possibly damage property or hurt someone. Mr. Baker said American Electric Power (AEP) was fined a few years ago because they did not do enough to clear these trees away from the power lines. AEP is now clear cutting the trees away from lines, they no longer do pruning, they give the tree a major haircut.

Mr. Baker said they would like to plant arborvitae in place of the trees which is a soft needled pine that would provide several advantages. The arborvitae will act as a visual screen and a sound deterrent when the children are outside on the playground running around. They would also like a solid privacy fence in place in the event the neighbors decided to take their fence down. Mr. Baker said he has spoken with several of the neighbors. He explained what they were planning to do, and why, and took drawings with him. Most of the neighbors were okay with the project, but one of the neighbors had some concerns. Mr. Baker said someone asked him about a playground expansion and he said that would be another advantage. He said right now, they are complying with the State of Ohio's rules and regulations for square footage required for classes to be able to go out on the playground. Goddard's operational requirements only allow for two classes to be out on the playground at one time, and the classes are separated by a fence. Each side has age appropriate playground equipment, one side is for toddlers, and the other side is for children age three to five years old for safety reasons. Mr. Baker said there is currently a steep slope in the back. As soon as the children walk off the poured pad there is a twenty-seven to thirty-degree slope from there to the fence line. By pushing the playground back, the slope would be more gentle and safer for the children. He said they would like to remove the trees now, they are

extremely large and in bad shape, and they do not want to destroy the playground after it has been installed.

Mr. Foust asked Mr. Baker if the expansion of the playground was pushing the need to remove the trees, or if the trees could be replaced without altering the playground. Mr. Baker said no, the expansion of the playground would be a benefit but not the primary consideration for removing the trees. The primary reason to remove the trees is because they are in bad shape. The removal of the trees would allow for the expansion of the playground, but it is not the primary reason for removing them. Mr. Foust said the city staff notes state the school's applicant discussed the pine tree removal with the two adjacent property owners to the west and that they approved of the removal, but he had also seen an email from a neighbor that had concerns, so he was reserving any judgement until he heard from the neighbors. Mr. Baker said he spoke with the neighbor to the north and they did not have a problem with the proposal, and he also spoke with Mr. Kemp who owns the property to the south, and he would let him speak for himself.

Mr. Reis said he was familiar with the pine tree issue and the trees longevity. He said the pine trees tend to die from the bottom first and then up to the top. Mr. Reis said he could tell from the photographs that the pine trees have that issue. He said he understood the issue with wind and damage that could be caused from limbs, and the way AEP trimmed trees. He said he also understood how the neighbors had a nice view from the treetops above the fence line, but on the other hand in the next five years the trees could look like awful. Mr. Reis said what the Goddard School has proposed is common sense replacement and he would support the proposal.

Mr. Hofmann said he did not mind the idea editing maintenance that has been neglected for thirty years. He said he understood the trees may be at the end of their life span or maybe seventy percent of their life span and it could be too difficult to determine which ones should remain and which ones should be removed. Mr. Hofmann said surgically removing the trees made sense, but he struggled with arborvitae being the last common denominator as a solution. There is no guarantee the arborvitae will take and grow well. He asked if there could be more variety and thoughtfulness in the replanting so as the years go on, there would be more interest for everybody. Mr. Baker said he did not have an issue with that, but the only caveat is needing to find something that would not grow above twenty to twenty-three feet in height because of the power lines. The City's Arborist suggested the arborvitae would be the best plant to put there based upon the mature height for the shrubs.

Ms. Hinz said she would like to hear more of the discussion about switching the fence. She said his previous submittal was not for a privacy fence. Ms. Hinz said if there was an open fence like previously approved it would be a little more open from the playground. She did not feel landscaping trapped between two fences would do well.

Mr. Brown swore in the applicant, Ms. Samantha Elliott, representing the Goddard School, 6733 N. High St., Worthington, Ohio. Ms. Elliott said they never intended for any of these issues to occur. She said when she was first notified that the trees had to come down, she said she was mortified because she loved the backdrop. She said she was okay with whatever the Board recommended, but there were some issues regarding the fence. The fence that currently sits back there now belongs to a homeowner. The children need to have a privacy fence, it is not for the

aesthetics for the neighbors. She said she cannot have residents from the abutting properties looking in on the playground. No one wants to think about how creepy that is but it is a fact and based upon the location of the school, there has to be a privacy fence for the safety of the children.

Ms. Elliott said they did not prefer to have faux anything, but the fencing material could not be wood due to the fact the children could get splinters, so they had to go with material that would be safe. She said she would like to see interesting landscaping and was open to all suggestions, but the current trees were very unhealthy. Mr. Coulter said he understood the trees needing to be removed but he was not comfortable with the new proposal for the fence. He said he would be okay with pushing the originally approved fence back, and arborvitae could certainly be a part of the landscape, but he agreed with Mr. Hofmann's suggestion and would like to see a mixture of trees to add visual interest.

Mrs. Bitar suggested allowing the speakers to talk next.

Mr. Kemp said when you look at pictures of the trees they do not look very good, but from the view of his yard, the trees look beautiful and that was one of the reasons they bought their property. They have loved living in Worthington for the past twelve years while raising their four children. He said that is their view from the back yard and if he wanted to look at short trees he could move to a new development in a different community. Mr. Kemp said he would like for the removal of the trees to be delayed if possible, to keep the view the way it is now.

Mr. Brown swore in Mr. Tom Justine, who said he lived next door to Mr. Kemp. He said the two trees that were already taken out, were perpendicular to his yard, and no one told him they were going to remove them and he was disappointed about that. Mr. Justine said he had not spoken with Mr. Baker yet. He said he understood if the trees needed to be removed for the sewer, but he would like to echo what Mr. Kemp said, he liked the privacy of the trees. He said he home schooled his children and would prefer to keep his yard private. Mr. Justine said he has lived in the area for fifteen years and he enjoys living in Worthington. He said he did not want to see the trees removed because whatever they are replaced with would take years to grow and would no longer have any privacy. Mr. Justine said he understood if the trees were diseased, he would not want the trees falling on his fence or causing the power lines to come into his yard. He felt it would take years before he would get any privacy above his fence line.

Ms. Elliott said she empathized with the neighbors. She said never in a million years did she think the trees would have to be removed. She said she was willing to do anything to preserve the trees, but when she was told by the City's Arborist that the trees could come down at any moment, she said she feared for all parties involved. She said she was furious when the first two trees came down because they had looked at this lot so many times. Ms. Elliott said she was not set on just having arborvitae, that is just what was recommended. She said it was trying to preserve what they have, and it was never her intention to have the trees removed. Ms. Elliott said she would like to find a solution to keep all parties involved as safe as possible. Mr. Justine said he wanted to thank the Goddard School representative too for what she said. He said he wanted to be a good neighbor too. There were no other speakers. Mrs. Bitar read an email from Ms. Heather Monroe, 135 Grenglade Ave., Worthington, Ohio, who said she knew how quickly pine trees decayed.

She suggested removing the trees now and going with the Arborist's recommendations. Mr. Baker requested to table the application.

Mr. Schuster moved to table the application, and Mr. Foust seconded the motion. All Board members voted, "Aye," and the application was tabled.

5. Solar Panels – 150 W. New England Ave. (Appalachian Renewable Power/Rogers) AR 65-2020

Mr. Brown reviewed the following from the staff memo:

Findings of Fact & Conclusions

Background & Request:

The property is a corner lot that is 80-feet deep and 120-feet wide on the corner of W. New England Ave. and Evening St. The house is a split-level style that was built in 1959. In 2014 the Board approved the installation of a generator to the rear of the property. This application is a request to install solar panels.

Project Details:

1. The applicant is proposing the installation of 25 solar panels. All are shown on the south side roof facing E. New England Ave.
 - a. The house is situated in a way that the roof only faces north and south.
2. The 1.38" thick panels would be mounted on a metal railing system and sit approximately 6" above the roof.
3. The color of the proposed panels would be black with the railing system also being black to match. The existing roof on the house appears to be Sierra Tan in color.
4. The location of the supporting equipment is shown in the northeast corner of the existing house.
 - a. Existing vegetation on the site appears to screen this equipment.

Land Use Plans:

Worthington Design Guidelines and Architectural District Ordinance

Place solar panels in a location that minimizes the visual impact as seen from the right-of-way and surrounding properties. Generally, panels should be located on roofs in the following manner: the rear 50% of the roof of the main building; the rear inside quadrant of the roof of a main building on a corner lot; or on accessory structures in the rear yard. On sloped roofs, place panels flush along the roof unless visibility is decreased with other placement. With flat roofs, keep panels at least 5' from the edge of the roof, or place at the edge if a building parapet exists that will screen the panels.

Solar panels at another location on a building or site may be acceptable if their placement does not have an adverse effect on the architecture of the building, or the character of the site or Architectural Review District. The equipment to support solar panels should be screened from view.

Staff Analysis:

1. The existing house is situated on a corner lot with a gabled roof that runs east west so that that both sides of the roof are visible from E. New England Ave. and Evening St.
 - a. Solar panels would be visible from the public right-of-way in any location on this home.
2. Equipment is required to be screened from view.
 - a. The proposed location of the equipment appears to be screened by the existing vegetation.
3. The Board should discuss that it appears to be impossible to meet the Design Guidelines as part of this proposal, and determine if the placement has an adverse effect on the architecture of the building, or the character of the site or the Architectural Review District.
 - a. In 2015 and 2016 the Board approved the installation of solar panels on the front eastern elevation of two homes on Evening St., however this did lead to City Council adopting stricter guidelines as it pertains to the placement of Solar Panels in the Architectural Review District.

Recommendation:

Staff recommended denial of this application as presented because it did not comply with the Design Guidelines.

Discussion:

Mr. Brown read verbatim from Resolution #19-2017 as it pertains to the revisions that were approved by City Council for the placement of solar panels in the sustainability section of the Design Guidelines.

Mr. brown stated that he apologizes in advance for the length of what he was about to read but felt that the full outline of the recommendations needed to be on record. Mr. Brown read the following:

Energy conservation methods are encouraged. Making use of the existing buildings inherent efficiency features should occur first. Maintaining building components in good condition helps preserve energy, as well as retaining the integrity of the property. Landscape concepts often complement energy conservation and should be maintained and replenished. Utilize indigenous plant materials, trees, and landscape features, especially those which perform passive solar energy functions such as sun shading and wind breaks. Preserve and enhance green/open spaces wherever practicable.

Manage storm water run-off through the use of rain gardens, permeable forms of pavement, rain barrels and other such means that conserve water and filter pollutants.

Place solar panels in a location that minimizes the visual impact as seen from the right-of-way and surrounding properties. Generally, panels should be located on roofs in the following manner: the rear 50% of the roof off a main building; the rear inside quadrant of the roof of a main building on a corner lot; or on accessory structures in the rear yard. On sloped roofs, place panels flush along the roof unless visibility is decreased with other placement. With flat roofs, keep panels at least

5' from the edge of the roof, or place at the edge if a building parapet exists that will screen the panels.

Solar panels proposed for another location on a building or site visible from the principal right-of-way are to be strongly discouraged and may be acceptable only if their placement does not have an adverse effect on the architecture of the building, or the character of the site or Architectural Review District. The Board shall consider the following criteria to determine whether conditions exist to support an application for the placement of solar panels in a location visible from the right-of-way:

1. The inclusion of panels, visible from the right-of-way, shall not alter the historic character of a property and the character shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
2. If panels are to be placed on a roof, visible from the right-of-way, the Architectural Review Board shall first identify functional and decorative features of the roof such as, but not limited to, the roof's shape, such as hipped, gambrel, and mansard; decorative features, such as cupolas, cresting chimneys, and weathervanes; and roofing material such as slate, wood, clay tile, and metal, as well as its size, color, and patterning and conclude that the addition of solar panels does not impact the functional or distinctive features.
3. Preservation of the architectural character of the structure and of the Architectural Review District shall be the Board's primary consideration and the efficiency of the installation shall only be considered once other considerations of the Guidelines have been satisfied.
4. Should efficiency be considered, the applicant shall have demonstrated that the addition of solar panels advances an over-all plan of energy efficiency and sustainability. As evidence of this requirement the Board shall consider the following and such other criteria as the Board considers appropriate:
 - a. The use of alternative methods of energy conservation such as awnings, insulation and landscaping.
 - b. Other sustainable steps the applicant has taken including but not limited to, rain catchment systems, pervious pavement, native plantings, and energy efficient window systems, energy efficient mechanical equipment and appliances.
5. The Board's review shall apply to the entire Architectural Review District. A property's location in the Historic District, as that term is used in the application for National Register of Historic Places designation, or the identification in that application of a property as "contributing" or "non-contributing" shall be of no effect.
6. The Board shall consider all alternative technologies that may be available at the time of the application and approve the existing technology most consistent with the architectural guidelines.

7. If placed on a roof location visible from the right-of-way, the panels, working or faux, should cover as much of the roof as is possible to make them appear as one continuous unit.

The equipment to support solar panels should be screened from view.

Mr. Brown swore in the applicant, Mr. Patrick Rogers, 150 W. New England Ave., Worthington, Ohio. Mr. Rogers said he read the Design Guidelines and felt that the roof he was installing would not have any decorative features, the roof would be plain. In regard to the point about covering as much of the roof as possible, he said there is a Fire Code that does not allow for covering the roof as exemplified in the resolution. There has to be a three-foot walkway on either side and eighteen inches from the top and bottom. He said they followed the Fire Code and covered as much as they could. He said he understood city staff had an issue with the color so he contacted a roofer to see if his roof would last another thirty years and he was told no. Mr. Rogers said he chose a color for the new roof that would blend well with the solar panels. The roof does not have any cupolas, weathervanes, or any historical features that he is aware of. He said the solar panels are flat and black to match the roof, and do not have any distinctive features. The chimney would not be impacted at all.

Mr. Rogers said he and his wife moved into Worthington in 2014. He said they liked the progressive area that was environmentally conscious, and this plan is one of the last steps for them to have their house be environmentally efficient and for them to be better stewards of the planet. Between 2016 and 2019, they replaced all their appliances to be energy efficient, including the oven, dishwasher, washer, dryer, microwave and refrigerator. They also installed a smart thermostat to program and control room temperatures and spent over \$1,000.00 dollars fitting the house with LED bulbs which can be controlled remotely. They converted the outside lights to be dusk to dawn and paid an additional fee for an extra recycling bin. They also hired an Arborist to trim the trees around the house so they can continue to be healthy and provide efficient shade. Mr. Rogers said he drives a hybrid car, and this is the next step in their plan. He intends to install equipment for an electric car, and a tankless electric water heater. Mr. Rogers said there was only one portion of the roofline that would be affected by the tree.

Mr. Foust said when City Council went through the process to develop the guideline, they decided that you needed to start with a base position that solar panels would be allowed in all situations unless there were specific problems that would stop it, or you took the base approach that in general solar panels would not be allowed in the Architectural Review District unless they met certain requirements that overcame the major concerns. The major concern that they have discussed in the past, brought up by the other examples in town that led to legislation, was visibility. Since solar panels were not part of the original design of the area, their approach has been that the panels needed to be on the back of the house, or somewhere where they cannot be readily seen from the street. He felt this application did not meet the criteria that was established by City Council.

Mr. Coulter said prior to approving solar panels in the district, it would need to be proven by the homeowner that they have done all that they possibly could to make their home energy efficient and based on the homeowners' presentation they have done that. He said they have taken care of the windows, they have switched the bulbs to LED's, they have switched their appliances, so that

part of the requirement has been met. Mr. Coulter said he agreed with Mr. Foust, that there is still the visibility issue that is a concern. Mr. Hofmann asked Mr. Rogers if the panels were in the back of the house if there would be a big decrease in viability and Mr. Rogers said yes, he was told the panels would have to face the south for full effectiveness. Mr. Brown pointed out the house is located on the corner, so both sides of the house would be visible from the street. Mr. Rogers asked the Board what visible panels would be allowed for approval.

Mr. Brown swore in Ms. Keri Dunn, representing Appalachian Renewable Power on behalf of the homeowner for 150 W. New England Ave., Worthington, Ohio. She said she wanted to bring up another point which is the low slope of the roof which reduces the visibility of the panels as well as the black on black panels and the black railing which would blend with the new black asphalt shingles.

Mr. Schuster said one of the things Mr. Brown read was if this would change the design of the house. He said he applauded the homeowners for all the things they have done to become energy efficient, but unfortunately the solar panels on the front of the house, changes the look of the house. He said the house sits within the Architectural Review District, and within the Historic District, and he felt the panels did change the look of the house.

Mr. Brown said he wanted to point out the update to the 2017 Design Guidelines from City Council. He said if you delve down into the additional criteria outlined in the Guidelines the one thing it does start off to say is if the panels are to be placed on a roof, visible from the right-of-way, the Architectural Review Board shall first identify functional and decorative features of the roof such as, but not limited to, the roof's shape, such as hipped, gambrel, and mansard; decorative features, such as cupolas, cresting chimneys, and weathervanes; and roofing material such as slate, wood, clay tile, and metal, as well as its size, color, and patterning and conclude that the addition of solar panels does not impact the functional or distinctive features. Mr. Brown said after learning the additional information about the new black shingles, that the applicant met the criteria for this particular criterion, but going onto the next portion, about the preservation of the architectural character of the structure and of the Architectural Review District shall be the Board's primary consideration and the efficiency of the installation shall only be considered once other considerations of the Guidelines have been satisfied. The original materials submitted as part of this application by the applicant did not address any of the considerations outlined in the 2017 amendment to the Design Guidelines, it is only tonight that we are seeing things for the first time. Mr. Brown reiterated the rest of the criterion and felt the applicant has met most of the criterion, but there still needs to be the discussion with the Board.

Mr. Reis said he felt the intention of the Design Guidelines was to not have solar panels visible from the right-of-way. All the conditions met were very applaudable, and the applicant has certainly invested a great amount of work to the home internally, but he felt the general intent of the Design Guidelines were for the panels not to be visible from the right-of-way. Mr. Reis said if you go through the Architectural Review District there are a lot of other houses that have the same roofline, and should this be approved, it would be setting a precedent for most the other homes in the district to have solar panels on the front of the house.

Mr. Rogers said he had the Ordinance and the Guidelines up on his computer and it gives examples

of what the solar panels could look like. He said he felt he met the criteria to be allowed to have solar panels. Mr. Coulter said he felt it makes a difference as to what style the home is. If the home was a Victorian style, or maybe a farmhouse style like his neighbor has, solar panels do not fit the look of the house when visible from the street. When looking at Mr. Roger's house, the panels would probably be more appropriate for that type of a house, than the style of home owned by Mr. Foust. Mr. Coulter said he did share the same concerns though as Mr. Reis, and that was if you open the door it is awfully hard to close it again. As stewards of the Architectural Review District they must be extremely careful as to how they proceed with this. Mr. Rogers said he appreciated the concerns, but felt people are also stewards of the planet. If his house met the criteria, then this should be encouraged. His house could be a good example of how the criteria was met. Mr. Rogers said he understood the genie is hard to get back in the bottle, but the Architectural Review Board would still have to look at each case individually. He said having more solar panels in the district is not a bad thing. Mr. Hofmann said he felt the entire Board was struggling with this. He said he would like to see energy efficiency encouraged, but this must be done thoughtfully, but he would still prefer to see the panels on the other side of the house.

Ms. Dunn said if the panels were placed on the northern side of the house, with the sun coming from the southern hemisphere, you lose over thirty percent of your production in a year. She said as it stands with type of an array Mr. Rogers is set to reduce the amount of carbon emissions of 276 acres of trees. He is also reducing the emissions of burning 233,000 pounds of coal and taking 45 vehicles off the road, and he does have the goal of being an environmental steward. Mr. Rogers said this array would produce 110% of the amount of energy he needed to efficiently run his home.

Mr. Myers said as the drafter of the legislation he would like to give some of the background for the legislative history behind what came out of this. He said the guidelines were presented to City Council after six months of debating combined with public input, that the general rule within the Architectural Review District is that solar panels are not to be allowed period, but if certain criteria can be met, they would be acceptable with the district. He said they specifically discussed they were not going to discuss whether the property is a contributing factor. They were looking at the district as a whole, and that is why the language came out in the fashion that it came out. Mr. Myers said the operative language in that provision is the last paragraph, the middle paragraph of subsection C, which provides that solar panels in another location on a building, meaning a visible location, if that placement does not have an adverse effect on the architecture or the building or the character of the site or the Architectural Review District. The point was that the entire district had to be viewed any time a panel was being put on. He said the debate between the Board, the citizens and City Council over this, what they had was a conflict between two values in Worthington. One was sustainability, which Worthington has a history of going back at least twenty years. Sustainable Worthington has been one of the more active groups in Worthington, and that was one side of the debate. The second side of the debate was an intense desire to maintain the overall historic character of the Review District, which was one of the first communities in Ohio to adopt review standards for an Architectural District. He said it is a core value of this community, and it was a heated and lengthy debate. Mr. Myers said he himself ran on a platform for his first campaign that he wanted solar panels on every roof in Worthington to show that it was a progressive city and good stewards of the planet. He said that position lost out, and the citizens said no. The more important value at this point in our history is to preserve the integrity of the Review District and solar panels as Mr. Foust pointed out did not exist in 1803. Therefore, by

their very nature they do not protect the integrity of the district. Ultimately, the Design Guidelines were a compromise. He said, as well all know, the two things you do not want to see being made are sausage and law. Mr. Myers said they had input from Sustainable Worthington, from the Old Worthington Association, and the Worthington Historical Society. They spent six months drafting the language after considerable public debate, and this is what the public wanted. He said maybe in five years when we come back, attitudes will have changed, and the more important goal will be sustainability, but three years ago when this was enacted, the citizens of Worthington, said the more important goal is the integrity of the Architectural Review District. He said if you are going to deviate, you have to say why, and it cannot impact the entire district, not just one house. The other point of efficient steps taken by the property owner was placed there when a property owner came in and thought solar panels were going to be a one size fits all panacea for all their energy needs and they said no, you cannot put them in a visible location unless you can demonstrate to the Board that that is the only place they will work and that you have done everything else to reduce your electric bill.

Mr. Myers said he applauds the property owner and he could not agree with him more, but he did not feel that that criteria was applicable to this application. He said he could not offer an opinion as to whether the panels should be allowed or not, he just wanted to give the legislative background regarding the solar panels. Mr. Myers said there were other people that did not agree with the decision that was ultimately reached but of the 14,000 citizens in Worthington the majority thought this was the way to go.

Mr. Coulter asked if there were any emails or callers regarding this application and Mrs. Bitar said there was one caller.

Mr. Brown swore in Mr. Tom Burns, 1006 Kilbourne Dr., Worthington, Ohio. Mr. Burns said he wanted to speak in favor of the applicant's proposal because he felt he fulfilled all the necessary requirements of the Resolution that was passed by City Council. Mr. Burns felt maybe the community may once wanted to say no to everything a few years ago, but now maybe they understand their role in the bigger picture of the ecosystem and how important it is for everyone to be good stewards of the planet. He urged the Board members to support the application.

Mr. Brown swore in Mr. Matt Gregory, 48 Howard Ave., Worthington, Ohio. Mr. Gregory said he would like to speak in support of the applicant. He said he wanted to echo Mr. Burn's comments and as the world changes and things progress they have to remember their forefathers also face tough decisions such as when electricity was discovered and poles had to be put up near residences, people back then had to deal with changes, but they adapted for obvious reasons. He said this is just another time to adapt.

Motion:

Mr. Reis moved:

THAT THE REQUEST BY APPALACHIAN RENEWABLE POWER ON BEHALF OF PATRICK ROGERS FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS TO INSTALL SOLAR PANELS AT 150 W. NEW ENGLAND AVE. AS PER CASE NO. AR 65-2020, DRAWINGS NO. AR 65-2020, SEPTEMBER 14, 2020, BE APPROVED BASED ON THE

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS IN THE STAFF MEMO AND PRESENTED AT THE MEETING.

Mrs. Holcombe seconded the motion. Mr. Brown called the roll. Mr. Hofmann, nay; Ms. Hinz, aye, she felt the applicant met the criteria that was necessary; Mr. Schuster, nay, because of the current proposed location for the panels; Mr. Foust, nay, because this would not be compliant with what City Council passed; Mrs. Holcombe, aye, because she felt the applicant met the criteria that was necessary; Mr. Reis, nay, because the panels would be visible from the right-of-way; and Mr. Coulter, aye, because he felt the applicant met the criteria necessary. The motion was denied.

*At 9:15 p.m. there was a meeting break, and the meeting resumed at 9:20 p.m.

6. Redevelopment – 7227 N. High St. (DRP Worthington LP) AR 66-2020

&

C. Municipal Planning Commission

1. Planned Unit Development

a. Redevelopment – 7227 N. High St. (DRP Worthington LP) PUD 02-2020

Findings of Fact & Conclusions

Background & Request:

The Worthington Mall (The Shops at Worthington Place) was originally constructed in the mid 1970's and has been added onto, renovated and reworked many times over the years. The property transferred at the end of 2019, and the owner of the mall property is planning to redevelop the northern and western part of the property by removing part of the existing mall and adding Class A office, entertainment, hotel/multi-family, retail and restaurant uses with structured parking and open public spaces. The property owner will be rezoning the site from the C-2 District (Community Shopping Center) to a Planned Use District (PUD) to accommodate the redevelopment of the site in two phases. The property owner's team will discuss the proposal at the meeting and is looking for feedback from the ARB/MPC and the public.

Existing Conditions:

There is approximately 138,000 sq. ft. of leasable area in the mall today. Approximately 45% of the space is not producing revenue and overall is underperforming. Previous improvements and changes in use have enabled the eastern portion of the mall to operate at a higher level. The addition of medical service providers in the mall has also been helpful. The overall performance of the western side of the mall and those with only interior access is where the mall is struggling in today's retail environment. The site also suffers from poor pedestrian and vehicular flow throughout the site.

Project Details:

Phase I:

- Class A Office Space – North Building

- 100,000 sq. ft. to 125,000 sq. ft.
- 8-10 stories with a public parking garage on the first 4-5 floors
- Approximately 85,000 sq. ft. of the existing mall will be demolished
 - Atrium of the mall and the northwest portion of the mall will be removed as part of this phase.
- Creating of a new east/west connector south of the proposed new office building for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Creating a new north/south connector in what would have been the original atrium of the mall for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Creating a temporary outdoor public open space area.
- Installation of public amenities

- Refacing the portions of the mall that will now be exposed.
- Restaurant and retail space – Approximately 11,600 sq. ft.

Phase II:

- Class A Office Space – South Building
 - 100,000 sq. ft. to 125,000 sq. ft.
 - 8-10 stories with a public parking garage on the first 4-5 floors
- Approximately 35,000 sq. ft. of the existing mall will be demolished
- Boutique Hotel – 100 keys
 - Option for 100-units of multi-family if after 2-years the property owner is unable to find a hotel flag for the site.
 - 8-10 stories
- Restaurant and retail space – Maximum of 30,000 sq. ft.
 - 2-stories
- Permanent outdoor open space
- Installation of public amenities
- Reconfiguration of the roadways for pedestrian and vehicular connections.

Discussion Items:

- Proposed Uses
- Site Design
 - Circulation, Access, Setbacks etc....
- Architectural Character
- Screening & Landscaping
- Lighting
- Signage
- Traffic & Parking
 - A Traffic Study is required and is underway by the applicant.
 - Bicycle parking
- Stormwater
- Sustainability practices that will be incorporated as part of the redevelopment
- Public Space Amenities
- Phasing

- Streetscape Improvements
- Creation of 3-D renderings that provide an objective sense of what the topography will look and feel like from multiple directions and distances has been requested.

Worthington Land Use Plans:

Worthington Design Guidelines and Architectural District Ordinance

1. Scale, Form & Massing: Simple geometric forms and uncomplicated massing tend to make buildings more user-friendly and help to extend the character of Old Worthington into the newer development areas. Inclusion of sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled signage, and planting and lawn areas will help communicate a sense of a walkable pedestrian scale. Carefully designed building facades that employ traditional storefronts -- or similarly sized windows on the first floor -- will help make new buildings more pedestrian-friendly.
2. Setbacks: Parking areas should be located toward the rear and not in the front setbacks if at all possible. Unimpeded pedestrian access to the front building facade from the sidewalk should be a primary goal. Building up to the required setback is desirable as a means of getting pedestrians closer to the building and into the main entrance as easily as possible.
3. Roof Shape: Generally, a traditional roof shape such as gable or hip is preferable to a flat roof on a new building. Roof shapes should be in scale with the buildings on which they are placed. Study traditional building designs in Old Worthington to get a sense of how much of the facade composition is wall surface and how much is roof.
4. Materials: Traditional materials such as wood and brick are desirable in newer areas, but other materials are also acceptable. These include various metals and plastics; poured concrete and concrete block should be confined primarily to foundation walls. Avoid any use of glass with highly reflective coatings. Some of these may have a blue, orange, or silver color and can be as reflective as mirrors; they generally are not compatible with other development in Worthington. Before making a final selection of materials, prepare a sample board with preferred and optional materials.
5. Windows: On long facades, consider breaking the composition down into smaller "storefront" units, with some variation in first and upper floor window design. Use traditional sizes, proportions and spacing for first and upper floor windows. Doing so will help link Old Worthington and newer areas through consistent design elements.
6. Entries: Primary building entrances should be on the street-facing principal facade. Rear or side entries from parking lots are desirable, but primary emphasis should be given to the street entry. Use simple door and trim designs compatible with both the building and with adjacent and nearby development.
7. Ornamentation: Use ornamentation sparingly in new developments. Decorative treatments at entries, windows and cornices can work well in distinguishing a building and giving it character, but only a few such elements can achieve the desired effect. Traditional wood ornamentation is the simplest to build, but on new buildings it is possible to use substitute materials such as metal and fiberglass. On brick buildings substitute materials can be used to resemble the stone or metal ornamental elements traditionally found on older brick buildings. As with all ornamentation, simple designs and limited quantities give the best results.
8. Color: For new brick buildings, consider letting the natural brick color be the body color, and select trim colors that are compatible with the color of the bricks. Prepare a color board showing proposed colors.

9. Signage: While the regulations permit a certain maximum square footage of signs for a business, try to minimize the size and number of signs. Place only basic names and graphics on signs along the street so that drive-by traffic is not bombarded with too much information. Free-standing signs should be of the “monument” type; they should be as low as possible. Such signs should have an appropriate base such as a brick planting area with appropriate landscaping or no lighting. Colors for signs should be chosen for compatibility with the age, architecture and colors of the buildings they serve, whether placed on the ground or mounted on the building. Signs must be distinctive enough to be readily visible, but avoid incompatible modern colors such as “fluorescent orange” and similar colors. Bright color shades generally are discouraged in favor more subtle and toned-down shades.
10. Sustainability: The City of Worthington and its Architectural Review Board are interested in encouraging sustainable design and building practices, while preserving the character and integrity of the Architectural Review District. Energy conservation methods are encouraged. Landscape concepts often complement energy conservation and should be maintained and replenished. Utilize indigenous plant materials, trees, and landscape features, especially those which perform passive solar energy functions such as sun shading and wind breaks. Preserve and enhance green/open spaces wherever practicable. Manage storm water run-off through the use of rain gardens, permeable forms of pavement, rain barrels and other such means that conserve water and filter pollutants. Bike racks and other methods of facilitating alternative transportation should be utilized. Streetscape elements should be of a human scale. Make use of recycled materials; rapidly renewable materials; and energy efficient materials. Use of natural and controlled light for interior spaces and natural ventilation is recommended. Minimize light pollution.

Wilson Bridge Road Corridor Study

The Wilson Bridge Road Corridor Study, adopted in 2011, makes recommendations for the Wilson Bridge Road corridor from the Olentangy River to the west to the Railroad Crossing to the east. The Study recommends the need to promote the redevelopment of the Wilson Bridge Road Corridor into a mixed-use area that will generate new economic growth within the City. These requirements are intended to foster development that strengthens land use and economic value; encourage a mix of uses; enhance livability of the area; to augment pedestrian and bicycle connections; and to promote construction of high-quality buildings and public spaces that create and sustain long-term economic vitality.

The 2011 Wilson Bridge Road Corridor Study identifies this area as Mixed-Use with a mix of retail and office and a recommended height of 5-6 stories in height in the area.

Wilson Bridge Corridor Districts

Chapter 1181 was adopted by City Council in 2016 to facilitate implementation of the Wilson Bridge Road Corridor Study, which promotes the redevelopment of the Wilson Bridge Road Corridor into a mixed-use area that will generate new economic growth within the City. These requirements are intended to foster development that strengthens land use and economic value; to encourage a mix of uses; enhance the livability of the area; to augment pedestrian and bicycle connections; and to promote construction of high-quality buildings and public spaces that help create and sustain long-term economic vitality.

The area was recommended for WBC-3 Mixed Use that would allow for a mix of retail and offices uses both vertically and horizontally with a maximum height of 4-stories. Retail uses are encouraged on the first floor of multi-floor developments. Pedestrian and public spaces are encouraged. Some residential uses may be appropriate in this area.

Comprehensive Plan Update & 2005 Strategic Plan for Worthington

States that retail development trends appear to be shifting toward mixed-use, adaptive reuse, and entertainment-oriented uses.

Increase Commercial Office Space:

Worthington's office space currently consists of 4% of the total land use. Because the income taxes generated from these office uses are crucial to the City's financial stability, great efforts should be made to encourage the private market to add additional commercial office space within the City. This can be accomplished by converting some land to office use and by allowing increased densities on office sites. This can also be accomplished by keeping vacancy rates low and by encouraging home-based offices and telecommuting in the City. Recommendations include:

- Encourage the renovation and redevelopment of the existing highway office properties to make them more competitive and attractive in the market. Increased densities through expansion and use of structured parking (parking garage) should be promoted.
- Support and work to meet the needs of companies in the business incubators, such as the Worthington Commerce Center.
- Promote the addition of amenities and services around the existing commercial areas to make their location more attractive.
- Work to attract work-at-home employees but develop a system to monitor/capture the income tax from these home office locations.

Freeway Commercial Area:

- Promote the improvement of the Worthington Square area, including redevelopment of the west side. Encourage a mix of uses including urban village residential development based on a town center design with streets that create synergy with the mall and street level retail. New development in this location will improve this retail node and return regional focus to the mall and highway commercial area.
- Consider allowing phased redevelopment of existing office space – such that new structures are placed on the site adding to or replacing the existing building. This will be facilitated by the inclusion and integration of structured parking. Phasing may create situations where the site does not meet parking code, but this is acceptable on a temporary basis.

Chapter 1174 - Planned Unit District - PUD

The purpose of Planned Unit Development is to promote variety, flexibility and quality for the development of properties in the City of Worthington. Planned Unit Development allows for more creative planning and design and enables a greater range of uses than traditional Zoning regulations. Planned Unit Development allows for the design and mix of uses necessary to meet changing economic and demographic demands; permits implementation of development standards, plans, studies, and guidelines adopted by the City Council; and provides the opportunity

to retain and enhance the character of the City, and the health, safety and general welfare of the inhabitants. PUD

City Initiatives

The City has been evaluating the Old West Wilson Bridge Road and Corporate Hill intersections for quite some time and are in the process of designing improvements in this area. This includes the possible extension of Corporate Hill Drive to Old West Wilson Bridge Road. Additionally, as part of our continued efforts to look at traffic in this area, we have our traffic consultant Carpenter Marty evaluating short, medium- and long-term opportunities to improving traffic

flow at the Wilson Bridge and High Street intersection. We expect this study to be completed during the project review and will help inform and guide decision making.

Recommendation:

Staff recommended tabling of these applications after gathering input from the Board, Commission and public so that the applicant is able to meet all the requirements of the PUD.

Discussion:

Mr. Brown swore in the applicants.

Mr. David Watson said he is the Managing Principal of Direct Retail Partners, and other members of his team were taking part in the virtual meeting, including their Entitlement Officer, Ms. Kendra Stevenson; from O'Brien Architects, their Head Designer, Mr. Mick Granlund; from their Civil Engineer team E.M.H.&T., Mr. James Peltier, and Mr. Brian Quackenbush; from POD Design, Mr. Steve Kolicz will handle Landscape Design; and BFC Group, Mr. Bruce Field and Mr. Jake Fields, who will be overseeing construction.

Mr. Watson said they purchased the Shops of Worthington Place in December 2019. They were aware the mall was really struggling, so over the last ten months they discussed what changes could be made. He said they researched with great depth how to best repurpose the asset. He said this is not a unique problem to Worthington. Nationally, indoor malls have been declining since the 1990's. Two-income families just do not have the time to shop anymore when presented with the stress of everyday life, and online retail sales have soared. Obviously, there has been a change in the way America shops and its away from closed malls. They researched what is attractive to the consumer today. Guys and gals are interested in health-related items and they are interested in highly interactive activities. They are interested in dining patios, and entertainment opportunities. Mr. Watson said through no fault of Worthington, or its citizens, or the tenants in the mall, its clear the mall is performing dismally and basically dead in many places. He said they are trying to create an environment where the tenants and the community can re-connect. Mr. Watson said the best examples of that are evidenced at Easton, and Bridge Park. This mall is very poor for vehicular and pedestrian circulation and there is extremely limited access and limited visibility especially for the western interior spaces.

Mr. Watson said they considered different options, researching what they could do to repurpose the western portion of the mall. What could they do to not spend the money necessary to make radical changes. He said it would be impossible to anchor activity with the way the mall is

currently set up. The best option would be to fully redevelop the mall and provide the opportunity for community connectivity. Mr. Watson said the City of Columbus has one of the strongest class A office markets in the country.

Mr. Watson said there are other things that were interesting about why they chose this site. He said there are already established mixed use components in place. Often you will see mixed use trying to be done in suburban areas that end up being contrived. There is an effort to place play and live part to attract the work. In their proposal, the play and live are already established. There would be Class A and multi-family in place, you have dining and entertainment establishments that based on their sales per square foot show just how well received they are by the community. Personal services are also well received, such as hair salons at this location and for Kroger's this is one of their best performers in the market. He said there are some real key indicators as to whether this would be a good opportunity to re-purpose, and in their opinion, all the indicators say yes. Mr. Watson said most importantly, what they have learned in the past ten months is that you have an engaged community that is very interested and a robust planning process. He said he realized the process has just started, but the city planners have been working very hard, and he believes they have come up with a wonderful plan.

Mr. Watson said when people talk about the Shops at Worthington Place they call it the old Worthington Mall, and he did not feel that was a brand that would move forward. High North will be a two-phased development. The phase I office building includes a four-story parking garage at the base, and up to a five-story office building that would attract mostly Class A office tenants. Mr. Watson explained where the roof would be removed from the mall and turn the area into a two-way thoroughfare. This would provide for direct access into the parking garage for both shoppers and for Class A Office which would be located directly above. The other traffic improvement they feel is critical is the east west drive located just west of Kroger. The pedestrian way by Pies 'n Pints runs east and west, and they believe that should be a two-way vehicular traffic way. The pathway then leads to Corporate Drive which the town has plans to tie into Wilson Bridge Road. The east west thoroughfare also will lead you back to the traffic signal on Wilson Bridge Road which they feel is extremely critical in providing connectivity. Mr. Watson said they are very interested in how pedestrian move around the property.

Mr. Watson said they are working on a new brand for Worthington. As you enter Worthington from I-270 from High Street, all you see is the back end of Kroger. Part of their plan is to create a gateway feature in a hard perimeter that sets a design standard for the High North that continues into the downtown of Worthington. Without activity there would be no use for a hotel in Worthington, so they believe by bringing this type of development and creating a sense of place in a Class A Office building that it changes the narrative on the boutique hotel so they have that hotel as part of their plans. They also have plans for shops and an outdoor plaza.

Mr. Watson gave an overview of Phase I and Phase II. Mr. Watson said Phase II was a little more difficult to talk about because it is more of a long-term view. He said what they chose to do was plan the property as if there were no other issues with existing tenants or anyone that has lease hold interest. Mr. Watson said they would respect every lease that is in place and they had communicated that with the tenants prior to the meeting. The second office building has been identified and pushed forward closer to West Wilson Bridge Road. He said the effort is to create

a plaza, the magic to make the whole thing go. Mr. Watson said there were some very cool things about the first floor of the office building where they have recessed portions of the second floor. They have also created a patio area that could associated with a restaurant.

Mr. Coulter asked if there were any emails or callers and Mrs. Bitar said there were many people waiting on the telephone to speak. Mrs. Bitar swore in the people that were waiting to speak. Ms. Paulette Thomas, owns a shop in the mall near the fountain, Paulette's Palace and Productions. Ms. Thomas said business has been difficult for some of the shop owners. She said they were spoken to back in April about being repurposed, but they were spoken to in a negative manner and things have gone back and forth, and they were threatened which was very sad. She felt the project Mr. Watson described was beautiful. Ms. Thomas said her business has been very successful, and her business brings hundreds of people to the mall on the weekends. She said she helped bring 1200 people to the mall on Sparkle Night. Her business is the only one of its kind in the State of Ohio, and she hoped to be able to continue her business and bringing happiness and joy to the community. She said they currently do not have any security, management, or janitorial services, and her back-door slides open on a daily basis every night, and she has to go there every morning to close it back up. Ms. Thomas said a lot of the things she has brought to the attention have not been dealt with which is very sad. She said the fountain has always been a tradition, where kids always had their prom pictures taken, and now everything has been shut down at 5:00 p.m., which they were not told about, and her business hours were typically from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., so this has been very hard on her business and hard for the other businesses too. She said she wished she could say this has been handled correctly, but there have been mean things said to her. Ms. Thomas said as she listened to Mr. Watson tonight, she loved the plan, and the fact that Mr. Watson was very positive. She would like to be a part of the new plan. Ms. Thomas thanked everyone for their time and Mr. Watson for his proposal. Mr. Watson said he would personally meet with Ms. Thomas to address her concerns.

Mr. Ron Sears, 500 Park Overlook Dr., Worthington, Ohio. Mr. Sears said he had a procedural question. He said it was his understanding in the development of the Wilson Bridge Road Corridor that there would be no buildings that were taller than five or six stories. He asked how three ten story buildings would fit in with the Wilson Bridge Road Corridor plan. Mr. Brown said the 2011 Wilson Bridge Corridor Study recommended five to six stories in height, that was the proposal City Council adopted in 2011, but the applicant has the right to ask for more stories. Mr. Sears asked if there were any other ten story buildings in Worthington and Mr. Brown said the largest building in Worthington was the apartment building on West Wilson Bridge Road at five to six stories. There are ten story buildings nearby across the freeway in the Crosswoods area. Mr. Brown explained with the PUD, the developer has the right to ask for the height they would like to see. The PUD allows for the flexibility to deviate the height and setbacks standards. Mrs. Bitar said if the developer asked to rezone to the Wilson Bridge Corridor District they could ask for a variance to go higher in building height. Whether PUD or straight rezoning the developer could get a higher building height if that is what the Commission and City Council feel is appropriate. Mr. Sears asked for different views of elevations to get a better perspective of the building heights.

Mr. Tom Burns, 1006 Kilbourne Dr., Worthington, Ohio. Mr. Burns said he wanted to express his strong support for the proposal that was presented. Mr. Burns said he has lived in Worthington for about five or six years, and this was the first time he was excited about future development.

He said he liked the presentation about Phase I and II, especially Phase II because he felt Worthington has been missing the Live, Work and Play concept.

Mrs. Bitar read through a couple of emails that were sent in.

We received an email from Heather Monroe of 135 Greenglade Ave. Does this plan incorporate the building that was Dalt's? Is it too early in the process to ask that the development would be styled to reflect Worthington's unique legacy? The current proposal doesn't align with Worthington styling. As was mentioned earlier in this meeting, preserving our architectural character is important to our community.

Mr. Michael Ball emailed that this this is a very exciting project. It will provide great energy to Worthington. Now is the time to make this kind of investment in our community. This is the kind of development that we need here in Worthington to help us be competitive in the Central Ohio marketplace.

Ms. Adena S. Moore at 160 W. Wilson Bridge Rd. #425 stated I'm a tenant in the Heights at Worthington Place. I appreciated the mention of pedestrian use of the site - I look forward to improved pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow on the site and would appreciate on-going inclusion of people already living on the site in the development process.

Mr. Matt Gregory said he wanted to echo the comments of Mr. Burns. He felt this is a refreshing development and something that is long overdue for the community. Mr. Gregory said he is a commercial realtor and he has had clients pass Worthington by because they did not have the office product available that they were looking for. He felt the developer did a good job with the architecture and felt it would blend in with the city. Mr. Gregory said in the post Covid world there will be a greater demand for Class A office space to recruit people back to the office. He said he also appreciated the developer reached out to many of the community organizations and to speak with them and embrace what those communities are looking for.

Mr. Brown said he wanted to make additional comments to some of Mr. Sears questions. He said with the applicant going through the rezoning process to the PUD, it does outline everything that will be required and needed before Planning Commission can approve something that would go on to City Council, so it is definitely a lengthy more detailed document. Mr. Brown said regarding the PUD, any modification or change requires additional review. He said the elevation views Mr. Sears referenced will be needed from staff's standpoint, Board and Commission members, and the community to get a better idea of what the area will look like. Mr. Brown said they have heard repeatedly that Worthington already has vacant office space, but the spaces that are currently available, are mostly Class B and C office space. Rent rates are much lower, but the city wide vacancy rate is about 9 to 10 percent and if you throw the Anthem site in there, which is about 200,000 square feet of office space, that rate would jump to about 12 percent.

Mr. Reis said the City of Worthington needs to look to the future in terms of how we are going to survive as costs increase for the services they have been blessed so well with over the years, and those costs are going to continue to increase. The revenue that the City would receive from this development and future employment would help those services continue. He said as far as the

height and the architecture of the buildings, that will be all worked out. Mr. Reis said he knows Worthington is very interested in pedestrian walkways and bikeways and green space and he felt that Mr. Watson has addressed that but there still needs to be more detail. He felt this proposal is something for the community to embrace, and he hoped everyone in the city realizes the importance of this project. Mr. Reis said he applauded Mr. Watson for coming from Dallas, Texas, and wanting to build something in the City of Worthington, and Worthington is very fortunate to have this opportunity and make it happen. He said he is looking forward to working with Mr. Watson and the rest of his team.

Mrs. Holcombe said this proposal is very exciting and she agreed with Mr. Reis, that there is a lot of detail that will need to be worked out, but the City of Worthington needs something like this. She said the proposal is futuristic and that is what the city needs. The city does need more revenue so they can continue to provide services. Mrs. Holcombe said she was also excited about working with Mr. Watson and his team.

Mr. Schuster said he was thrilled to see something like this come to Worthington, especially where it will be located, at one of the entrances to the City. He felt this would be a wonderful entrance to Worthington, and he is also excited to work with Mr. Watson and his team.

Mr. Foust said he was thinking outside the box a little bit and said they keep trying to blend the look to Worthington's New England heritage, but as the developments and buildings get bigger that is more difficult to do. He said he wasn't sure if maybe this area should be removed from the Architectural Review District, or maybe think of this area as a clean slate with a new type of development that is not typical with what they do in the historic district and in exchange for that maybe they work with City Council and some of the city groups to see at the other extreme if they can come up with some ideas as to how to better polish the historic district.

Mr. Hofmann said while this area of Worthington may have been vibrant in the 1980's, those ideas do not work anymore, and he felt the developers are headed on the right road. He felt there was work to be done with some of the shaping and thinking, but he appreciated the overall look ahead. He said he liked Phase I and thought they had some really good ideas. Mr. Hofmann said he felt their work at the pedestrian and street level was very important and he encouraged discussions with Kroger to enliven the entire area.

Ms. Hinz said she wanted to echo the comments of the other Board members. She felt the project was long overdue and Worthington needed a gateway with connectivity. Ms. Hinz said she liked Mr. Foust's comments that this area is different, and this would be a good spot to be bold. She also thanked Mr. Watson for coming from Dallas, Texas, to help Worthington.

Mr. Coulter agreed this is exactly the right location for Worthington. He said this location is the biggest gateway to the city and highly visible from people going east and west on Interstate 270, and north and south on High Street. Mr. Coulter said if you look at the traffic counts that is a whole lot of people. The more exciting they can make the building and facility, in Phase I and Phase II, this would be a great import for the city. He said they realize they are not going to see a ten-story colonial building. In reference to Mr. Foust's comments, this is the time to do something

different. He said these are exciting times moving ahead but reminded everyone this is a process that would take time, and there would be many opportunities for people to give their input.

Mr. Myers said for the past twenty years that he has been looking at the mall, he has always looked at the property as something different and it always had its own set of standards. When someone would come forward with a sign package, they did not look at it the same way they do downtown in the historic district. He felt it was consistent with what Mr. Foust said, and that the Board and Commission does treat this area differently and it is time to try something out of the box. Mr. Myers said since he will have to make a final vote, he would like the Board to answer two questions that he has been presented with. He said this location has been a traffic nightmare forever, and he knows that the city is working hard on that right now, but that would be one of the principle arguments against development and the second one is the height. Mr. Myers said he had heard concerns from several people about the height, and he wanted to have some solid justification for the height so that he has some support to argument why the building would be ten stories, whether its because of a high value principle and the tenants demand that or because of whatever reason. He said he hoped the Board gets a firm record of how traffic will be resolved and a justification for the height and wants to make certain the current tenants have been afforded opportunities. Mr. Coulter asked Mr. Watson for a sense of timing. Mr. Watson said construction could possibly begin next summer. Mr. Coulter encouraged Mr. Watson to keep the lines of communication open with city staff, the Boards and Commission, and the citizen groups.

Mr. Brown said he wanted to build on to Council member Mr. Myers comments related to the PUD. He said the PUD text outlines the requirements and one of the requirements is the traffic study. The applicant is underway with their traffic study. Mr. Brown said the two key city initiatives that have also been going on, before they even received this proposal, was moving Corporate Hill Drive to Old Wilson Bridge Road so there would be a new front door to the office buildings and that would also help the western side of the mall. He said with the possibility of the building built on the north site that would also allow for a new front door for traffic patterns to be able to evolve. That has been going on for the past several months. The second thing the city has been doing with the traffic consultant is looking at the continued efforts to improve traffic in the area and the Corridor, but also with pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Mr. Coulter said a lot of this information would be available on the city's website. Mr. Brown said there is a link on the city's webpage called, "Notify Me," for people to sign up to receive updated information.

The applicant requested to table the application for the redevelopment. Mr. Reis moved to table the application, and Mrs. Holcombe seconded the motion. All Board members voted, "Aye," and the application was tabled.

The applicant requested to table the application for the PUD. Mr. Reis moved to table the application, and Mrs. Holcombe seconded the motion. All Board members voted, "Aye," and the application was tabled.

D. Other

There was no other business to discuss.

E. Adjournment

Mr. Reis moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Foust seconded the motion. All members voted, “Aye,” and the meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.