

City of Columbus
Regular Planning Commission Joint Meeting
May 7, 2014

The May 7, 2014 regular meeting of the Planning Commission for the City of Columbus was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Garth Sternberg at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Mark Daly, Pam Wolowski, Jesse Preiner, and Jody Krebs; joint with City Council Members Bill Krebs, Jeff Duraine, Jessie Messina, Denny Peterson and Mayor Dave Povolny; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, Planner Dean Johnson, and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were Business Retention & Expansion Task Force member Tracie Wilson of Running Aces Harness Park (RAHP); Perry Wagamon, Frank Wagamon, Steve Wagamon, and Pat Preiner.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Preiner to approve the Agenda as presented. Second by Commissioner Krebs. Motion carried.

APPROVAL - REGULAR PC MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2014

Motion by Commissioner Krebs to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2014 regular Planning Commission joint meeting as written. Second by Wolowski. Motion carried.

COLUMBUS BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION (BR&E) PROJECT ACTION PLAN DISCUSSION

Mursko introduced Tracie Wilson. She is the Chief Financial Officer for RAHP, and serves on the City's Economic Development Authority and as a Task Force member for the BR&E.

Based on the BR&E research data and discussion by PC and CC members, a number of items were identified for action. These items were discussed further to identify more specifics.

- Reevaluate land use concepts and zoning categories on Lake Drive.

Planner Johnson identified some questions to ask, including: What do you want where residential property abuts commercial property, no matter where that occurs? Right now, our buffer is 35 feet from residential property. Is that sufficient? What kinds of businesses are able to come in along Lake Drive, considering there is no sewer and water hook-up? Questions arise along Lake Drive about houses for sale. People want to live there, but have their business too. In that district, you can't do that – you either have a business or a house. The PC will look at evaluating land uses along Lake Drive, and buffering and screening in the boundary between commercial and residential uses. This is a priority to be addressed in 2014.

- Appoint a business community liaison.

This will be considered by the CC sometime in the next 2-3 years.

- Consider hiring city-wide marketing consultant.
- Work with landowners & realtors: joint marketing of business properties.

- Create a Columbus community identity plan.

These three items were combined and common budgeting will be looked at for these three actions, with further consideration to take place this year by the EDA, CC and staff.

- Examine Tax Increment Financing (TIF) feasibility and other incentives.

The EDA has adopted the criteria but the City has never been through the process. Are we willing to take the next step and hire a consultant so we have all the necessary paperwork that outlines the criteria, and create a process checklist? Then we can make the whole package available on the website. The CC wants to get more information on this for 2014. Mursko said she will talk to Julie Eddington to find out what it would take, including cost, to implement this.

- Continue ColumBiz/alternate format.

The 2014 cost for ColumBiz was around \$1800. The CC directed the EDA and staff to hold the 2015 event with a different format to lower costs and maximize participation and productivity.

- Update zoning and development checklist.

This is a 2014 priority to be implemented by City staff.

- Compile and maintain business listing (web).

City businesses would have the option of being included on the business list on the website. They will give the information they want provided on the website, and keep the City updated with any changes. Including links to the businesses is legal, but the City can't control it. That is a policy decision. This is a 2014 priority to be implemented by City staff.

- Coordinate with agencies on interchange update.

This is a 2014 priority.

The importance of adding rooftops to business retention and expansion was discussed. If no changes are made city-wide in the 5-acre minimum, there is a potential for 500 more homes. With some higher density pockets, that number could be closer to 1000. What's the ideal number? One consideration raised by Johnson is the cost of services. Rural housing is the most expensive portion of your tax dollar spent. You don't get nearly as much from it as you get back, compared to farmland or commercial/industrial property. Higher densities may stimulate development and add rooftops. The CC directed the PC to look at different housing densities in different areas of the City, identifying possibilities and outlining their reasoning.

WEBSITE SUGGESTIONS

Mursko had asked for input on what PC and CC members would like to see on the City website. Council member Duraine would like to see the business promotional video linked on the City's home page. It is now on the EDA page.

Mayor Povolny would like to see a blog, FAQs, and on-line chat. He thinks the City's home page is drab, needs more style. He also feels we need a presence on Facebook and Twitter. His top priorities would be a blog and FAQs. Mursko said Microsoft SharePoint and IPADs for Council members are still being considered. Povolny asked Tracie Wilson about the presence RAHP has

on the web. Wilson said RAHP has bloggers and is on Facebook and Twitter. They don't have on-line chat. She said it's very time consuming to manage and must be managed to do it right.

PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SCHEDULE – BR&E GOAL LIST

The CC, in earlier discussion, directed the PC to look at land uses and buffering concepts along Lake Drive, and residential densities throughout the City.

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Frank Wagamon distributed approximations of lot depth needed for various businesses in surrounding communities, to show what he believes would fit on a 19-acre parcel with the depth of the commercial property next to Waldoch Sports.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mursko reported that a special election for Forest Lake Area Schools will take place on Tuesday, May 20th.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORT

KREBS COMMENT

Commissioner Krebs contacted the President of Sathre-Bergquist, Inc., a Wayzata company of engineers/surveyors/designers/planners. He gave her a free consultation. He thinks the City needs to look at its marketing.

Krebs also said the PC already has a draft in its Brainstorming packet related to looking at higher density housing areas.

WOLOWSKI COMMENT

Wolowski said that in looking at other websites, she saw some that invite people to submit pictures of the city, or interesting stories about the city or its features. She thought this interactive possibility should be considered for Columbus.

ATTENDANCE - NEXT CC MEETING

Commissioner Krebs is scheduled to attend the City Council meeting on May 14, 2014.

Motion by Commissioner Krebs to adjourn. Second by Sternberg. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary