

CITY OF COLUMBUS
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
12.04.19

The December 4th, 2019 regular meeting of the Planning Commission for the City of Columbus was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair Ron Hanegraaf at the City Hall. Present were Commission members: Kris King, Pam Wolowski, Barb Bobick, and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko; City Planner Dean Johnson; and Recording Secretary Rochelle Busch.

Also, in attendance were Mayor Jesse Preiner; City Council Member Janet Hegland, Denny Peterson and Shelly Logren; John Young, Sean Coatney, Trent and Catherine Nickelson, and Michael Dolan.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Krebs to approve agenda as written. Second by King. Motion carried unanimously.

LAND USE vs ZONING WORKSHOP

This meeting will be used as a work session for the Planning Commission. City Planner Dean Johnson put together materials that cover the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Chronology from the 1990's to Present. Mursko put together worksheets for the Planning Commission to use for their next meeting and we will have a concept plan presented by Horticultural Services.

Johnson described that the Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year projection and is updated every 10 years. He stated that when a concept proposal or application comes in front of the Planning Commission they should look to zoning first.

Trent and Catherine Nickelson from Horticulture Services delivered a presentation on the future of their company and the possibility of moving their business to Columbus.

Horticultural Services is a landscape and snow removal maintenance company servicing townhomes and commercial properties. They are currently on the pursuit to find a permanent location that's easy access to their clients in Woodbury and convenient for their employees. Trent and Catherine live in Scandia. They are hoping to hire local employees. The building site would need to house all vehicles and trailers/equipment, as well as parking for all employees. The property would also need to have space to hold temporary material such as mulch, compost and plants in three-sided storage. They also would need a fuel system for filling vehicles before they go out for the day. They would like to find a location with room to grow. The building would be precast concrete wall panels and approximately 10,000 sq. ft. The building would be behind a berm with plantings of shrubs and plants. Trent stated they would potentially use a holding pond dig out that is forecasted to be on the property, to build the berm instead of hauling in more earth. The office hours would likely be 8-4pm. Maintenance employees would potentially arrive at 7/7:30. In the event of snow fall, they would be there in the early morning to get out for snow removal. King asked if fencing would be on the property. Catherine noted that vehicles would be behind a gate, and most of the property would be fenced, but the office would be accessible from Freeway Dr. Hanegraaf

asked how long have they have been in the business, to which Catherine replied her father started business in 1989. Trent and Catherine have since purchased the business in 2014. Hanegraaf asked if they would be hauling snow to the property, in which the Nickelson's stated they do not haul the snow, only push it back. Hanegraaf asked if clients would visit the office site. Catherine specified not typically. Mursko inquired what about this site made them decide on Columbus. Catherine detailed the space and accessibility to the freeway was a big part of the decision. She also noted that she wants to make a nice place where the employees had a space to be and feel like home.

Mayor Preiner handed out an outline to the Commission members regarding their decision-making process and how that plays into the overall decisions made in planning and zoning of Columbus, and how it will shape the future. He stated that the obligation of the Council and Planning Commission to the taxpayers is to (taken directly from the handout produced by Preiner):

- Plan for businesses that will produce a strong tax base in order to offset the increasing costs of maintaining our City.
- Plan for Businesses that will be an attribute to our city- User-friendly, non-polluting, and non-damaging to our roads and neighborhoods.
- Provide design standards that will support the Columbus brand. (Do we want a freeway corridor that looks “Blaine-ish” with piles of rubble, junkyards, and dup trucks, OR do we want our City to have a welcoming and prosperous face to everyone who comes to and passes through Columbus on I35.)

He went on to mention Johnson and Mursko have completed this process twice before. He believes that if the groups work together, they can set a path for a thriving business community. He also stated that Columbus has limited amount of commercial real estate along the Freeway Corridor and Lake Dr.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ZONING CHRONOLOGY

Planner Johnson reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning changes that have taken place from the 1990's to present.

MEETING FORMAT WORK SESSION 12.18.19

Mursko distributed worksheet packet to work through the concept plan of from Horticulture Services. Mursko noted that she would like the Commission Members to take the packet home and work through each bullet point. She would like the Commission members to take the information given in the presentations by Planner Johnson, and Horticultural Services to complete the packet. On December 18th Commission members would be asked if they would give the recommendation to the Council, why it fits the land-use plan, and if it fit in the district. Mursko would like the members to review both sides to best understand why some applicants would argue their business fits into a area over another. Krebs noted if it doesn't fit into the zoning, they could have the possibility of creating new zoning district to accommodate different applicants.

At the December 18th meeting the Planning Commission will spend time on Horticulture Services, and the outcome of the worksheets. Planner Johnson will go over standards that are currently missing, and some that may deserve a second look.

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Hanegraaf who do I see about plowing the second part of the park. Mursko park board made that decision. Go to the council to get it added.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORT

Nothing to report.

ATTENDANCE - NEXT CC MEETING

Hanegraaf is scheduled to attend the City Council meeting on December 11th, 2019.

Motion by Krebs to adjourn. Second by King. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Rochelle Busch, Recording Secretary

