

BLUE ASH PLANNING COMMISSION

March 5, 2015

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ITEM 1: MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Vice Chair Paul Collett called the regular meeting of the Blue Ash Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 5, 2015.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Collett, Jr., Mike Duncan, John Moores, and Jim Sumner

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Raymond Schafer

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Waltz, Assistant City Manager Kelly Harrington, Community Development Director Dan Johnson, Mayor Lee Czerwonka, Vice Mayor Tom Adamec, Council Member Stephanie Stoller, and interested citizens

ITEM 2: OPENING CEREMONY

Pledge of Allegiance

ITEM 3: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commission members waived the reading of the minutes.

DECISION: Jim Sumner moved, Mike Duncan seconded, to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 5, 2015 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ITEM 4: HEARINGS

a. Land Use Plan

Recommendation to City Council to adopt a new Land Use Plan

Dan Johnson noted that minor corrections were made to the Plan since the last meeting. He also noted that the only comments received by the City since the Plan was posted on the website were not the type of comments that were comprehensive in nature.

David Waltz summarized the plan process to date, describing the Plan as evolutionary changes from previous plans. The Summit Park area is the one district that would see the most change. He noted that the Plan, throughout the City, supports continuation of the “one-third” idea, but that the commercial, residential, and green areas would be less segregated in the future; it would be more integrated into mixed-use developments.

Paul Collett opened the public hearing to comments from the audience.

Patrick Quinn, 9512 West Avenue, commented that he is pleased with the Plan and that he thinks the Commission should be confident in approving it. He noted that he really enjoys the walkability, particularly of the area around Downtown Blue Ash.

Paul Collett closed the public hearing.

There was a brief discussion about changing the name from “Comprehensive Plan” to “Land Use Plan”. Dan Johnson explained that some people had expressed concern that the current document is not truly comprehensive.

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Jim Sumner expressed concern that the transportation element is necessary to ensure that the proposed land uses are feasible. He wondered whether the vision is viable if we have not analyzed whether the existing road network can handle the proposed growth. He noted specific concern with the Pfeiffer Road and I-71 interchange. Dan Johnson answered that Blue Ash does not need a traditional comprehensive plan that addresses parks, transportation, administration, etc. for it to be an effective plan. He noted that this Plan is being done within the context of a City that is almost fully developed and where those who have been involved are aware of the context in which land uses are being discussed.

David Waltz noted that the City has done transportation studies in the past and that those studies included assumptions that included significant growth. He confirmed that the existing network, particularly in Blue Ash North, is sufficient to handle the desires of this Land Use Plan. He also noted that the City is currently studying Pfeiffer Road because of the development of Summit Park.

Mike Duncan agreed that Reed Hartman has more than sufficient capacity and advised that the City Engineer could do a traffic analysis at any time it became necessary.

There was general discussion about clarifying within the Plan that the Plan is not the law, but that it may help inform future decision making when there is a lack of clarity in the law.

Jim Sumner raised several topics. He wondered if the Plan should more affirmatively restrict heavy-industrial. Dan Johnson explained that the zoning code and other performance standards would ultimately allow potential businesses to determine whether an operation would likely be in continual violation. The meaning of “light” vs. “heavy” industrial is not a clear and static description.

He suggested that a written “Transition” section should be added to every one of the districts in the Plan.

He said that he will have a discussion with City Council about apartments. He explained that he does not have the answer, but that he thinks this issue of rental vs. owner-occupied housing needs to be discussed so that the City does not continue to give developers mixed-messages as it has in recent times.

David Waltz noted that the discussion of owner-occupied vs. rental should not derail the consideration of the vision in this Plan. This plan talks about multi-family and mixed-use residential as land-uses and does not distinguish ownership type.

John Moores said that the residential considerations might also need to be discussed in relation to exactly what “mixed-use” means. The term is used throughout the Plan, but is not defined. David Waltz answered that a mixed-use in one district might be very different from a mixed-use in another. One may contain residential while another may not. One may be mixed within a building while another may mix uses within the development, but not within a single building.

Jim Sumner noted that the revised Plan did limit automotive uses as they had discussed previously. He suggested that the Crossgate, Old Blue Ash, and Old Blue Ash Core districts be renamed. Crossgate is a bowling alley and “old” sounds a bit derogatory. They suggested that Staff come up with good alternatives.

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He suggested that hotels be eliminated from the Crossgate district altogether. Mike Duncan agreed.

Jim Sumner suggested that Old Blue Ash include the “preserve and protect” vision that is consistent with the other neighborhoods. David noted that this area was called out in the planning exercises as different from the other neighborhoods. Mike Duncan suggested that the transition description should help clear up that the blending between Old Blue Ash and the Old Blue Ash Core should be just at the edge of existing downtown, not deep within the residential streets of Old Blue Ash.

Jim Sumner suggested that the Park Manor condominiums should be included in the Core area. He suggested that a picture of a bed and breakfast within the Core looked too much like a traditional hotel. He suggested changing the McConaughy Farm from agricultural to residential. He liked the primary and secondary uses listed in the residential areas.

Mike Duncan questioned if the Planning Commission needed to wait to make a recommendation based on this discussion or if the Commission should send it to Council and trust Staff to make changes prior to it be presented to City Council.

John Moores questioned whether Old Blue Ash and the Old Blue Ash Core should be one district. After discussion, the Commission generally agreed that they should stay separate.

DECISION: Mike Duncan moved, John Moores seconded, to recommend approval of the City of Blue Ash Land Use Plan with appropriate administrative changes as were recommended during the Planning Commission meeting. A roll call vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ITEM 5: MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mike Duncan encouraged folks to take advantage of free tax preparation services provided through the Senior Center.

ITEM 6: ADJOURNMENT

DECISION: There being no further business to be discussed, Mike Duncan moved, Jim Sumner seconded, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Paul Collett, Vice Chair

MINUTES RECORDED BY:

Dan Johnson