

**Minutes of VERMILION MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
of December 1, 2021 @ 7:00 pm**

**PRESENT:** Heather Shirley, Joe Williams, Heidi Strickler, Jim Chapple. **Absent:** Jeff Hammerschmidt

**In ATTENDANCE:** Barb Brady, Council Representative; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Jim Forthofer, Mayor

**Call to Order:**

Joe Williams, Chairman called the Wednesday, December 1, 2021 meeting to order.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**H. Strickler MOVED.** H. Shirley seconded to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2021 meeting. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS (Chapple late arrival). **MOTION CARRIED.**

**Correspondence:**

J. Williams reported they received a lot of correspondence that will be entered into the official minutes. He understood a number of audience participants wished to speak later and asked them to keep their time to a couple of minutes and said it was not necessary to repeat the things they put in their letters if they sent one in. He said they received 32 letters of support for the rezoning on Baumhart and 10 letters in opposition to the rezoning.

**New Business:**

**Garcia Rentals, LLC – Property Location: 4450 Liberty Avenue – PP#:0100001103120  
(Approval of Final Site Plan)**

Fran Blanchard of 340 County Road 355, Leesburg, Alabama was present to represent Garcia Rentals as well as Auto Zone at 4450 Liberty Avenue. He said he spoke today with Chris Howard the City Engineer who addressed some comments about their detention and all of these comments will be addressed. He said they have the bio-clean they are planning on putting in and he got with Mr. Gabriel about the creek, so they are working on that. He said the planning members also received in their packet the photometric plan, and they spoke about what they are going to do with the landscaping plan. They will try to green it up and make it a lot better. He said this site really needs to have some light on it.

J. Williams asked if their company would be amenable to putting some flowers along Liberty Avenue. He said it might be good for them to contact Main Street who has a Bridge-to-Bridge program, and they would help in giving some advice on what would

work there. F. Blanchard said he would love to contact them as they look forward to being good neighbors, and this site needs some exuberance put into it. J. Williams asked if they could submit a new landscape plan. F. Blanchard said he will do this when he addresses the city engineer's comments. H. Shirley said this would be helpful and if possible could they provide it in color. F. Blanchard said it usually comes in the architectural stuff. H. Shirley asked him to submit this with the city engineer's information and she asked the engineer to provide it to the members. F. Blanchard asked if they were interested in flowers and shrubs and H. Shirley said yes.

J. Williams asked the city engineer that if the commission approves this application contingent upon Auto Zone answering his questions and addressing the landscaping, would this be amenable to him. C. Howard said absolutely and noted the comments are more detailed related.

John Gabriel of 285 Yorktown said he represents the Crystal Cove Association as Board President for the condos, and they have been working with Auto Zone on their stormwater and they have been really above board, and they are putting in filters and stuff that are not seen anywhere else in cities, so this should be the cleanest water hitting their ditch. He said they will take a blighted property that is an embarrassment in front of where they live, and they will improve it vastly. He said these folks have been bent over backwards kind.

**H. Strickler MOVED**, J. Williams seconded to approve the final site plan contingent upon addressing the city engineer's comments addressed in his correspondence dated December 1, 2021, and to include the landscaping plan as well. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

**Recommendation to City Council on Ordinance 2021-81:** AN ORDINANCE ENACTED PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 1266 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF VERMILION, REZONING LAND IN VERMILION, OHIO, AND CONTAINING AN AREA OF APPROXIMATELY 119.60 ACRES HAS A PORTION ZONED B-3 "HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT" (PPN 01-00-022-104-029 and 01-00-022-104-040) WHICH HAS BEEN REQUESTED TO BE REZONED I-1 "LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT" (PPN 01-00-021-000-032 and 01-00-022-104-045) LAND USE CLASSIFICATION AS FAVORABLY RECOMMENDED BY THE VERMILION MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION, AUTHORIZING THE CITY ENGINEER TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF VERMILION TO CONFORM HERewith AS SAID MAP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BY SECTION 1268.02 CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF VERMILION UPON THE EFFECTIVE DATE HEREOF.

**Recommendation to City Council on Ordinance 2021-82:** AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 1270.15 (2) (d) ENTITLED "I-1 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT" OF CHAPTER 1270 ENTITLED "DISTRICT REGULATIONS" OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF VERMILION.

Joe Williams addressed the modifications to Ordinances 2021-81 and 2021-82. He explained Ordinance 2021-81 is basically modifying the land at Baumhart from its current zoning, so that the entire property (119.60 acres) is all zoned I-1 "Light Industrial District". He said part of it is zoned B-3 "Highway Commercial District", and this is the part that is being changed. The other part is already light industrial.

He explained Ordinance 2021-82 is to increase the height in I-1 from 45' to 65'. Additionally, there has been a recommendation that if they exceed the 45' in height – that they go with a side and rear setback of 200' from the current 100'. He said Planning Commission makes a recommendation only and then it goes back to City Council and then to the Zoning Board. G. Fisher clarified it will not go to the Zoning Board because Council is changing the height requirement in the I-1 district by ordinance.

B. Brady mentioned the 200' would be anywhere it touches residential. J. Williams said it will not be the railroad side or the freeway side, so basically it would be the rear on this particular property. B. Brady explained the B-3 "Highway Commercial District" is against Baumhart and the I-1 is already on the back of the property abutting the residential area and they are not changing that zoning. J. Williams said they are not changing the zoning that abuts residential – it is the front part of the property that is being rezoned.

Mayor Forthofer said it is not a secret that they are talking about paving the way for the concept of a large possible warehouse/distribution center. It is also no secret that four years ago he said this city needs a diversification of its tax base. He said the infrastructure is need of serious repair and they cannot fix it on their own with the current tax base. He has been a proponent for a long time of developing the city's business section in anticipation of broadening the tax base, but not at any cost. He said there certainly are businesses that he does not want here. People have even made the reference sometimes that the junk yard on Liberty Avenue at least pays taxes – but they can do without those taxes, but there are businesses they should think about welcoming to the city. These are businesses that are being developed by blue chip type companies who have a track record with communities. He believes they have that in this case and with the business they are proposing he thinks the city could do much worse if they don't develop this one, so he suggested that the Planning Commission see its way of passing the adjustment to the zoning in this area in anticipation of this concept being put further forward.

Cliff German of 2903 West Lake Road submitted and read the following statement:

Mr. Mayor, Vermilion City Council, Vermilion Planning commission and Vermilion residents ....Thank you for allowing me just two minutes to express my 100% positive support for the possibility of the addition, of a new, large, financially stable business in our community .... this company is proposing to build a one million square foot facility, bringing with it the possibilities of employing 1,000 people(not including the thousands of construction workers) with well paying, family sustaining wages, to add greatly to the growth of our and other surrounding communities. This will be accomplished thru payroll, township, city, county, construction, building and income taxes along with

critically needed school taxes. Concurrent with this project - the development of a company of this stature will also provide “satellite “ opportunities for other clean job enhancing companies, as well as existing businesses creating more opportunities for our community that is sorely needed.

When the Ford Motor Company made the decision to close the plant several years ago, Vermilion has struggled to regain a strategic and economic base to assist it in maintaining and building infrastructure along with community and maintenance issues. This project is a tremendous opportunity for our community PERIOD! This can be a huge win for our community along with surrounding communities and as MANY of you know, this opportunity does NOT come along very often. I believe we must pass legislation pending now to send a strong message to this and other businesses, that we are with you and that we will work long and hard towards the intelligent growth OF OUR COMMUNITY and to show ALL companies that Vermilion is a GREAT TOWN on a Great Lake. We must prove we are BUSINESS FRIENDLY and READY and, this is a community you want your family to grow up in with wonderful schools and businesses and that we have a disciplined, well policed community. But, this must be done with clear thought and advanced quickly. There is time pressure here!!!! It is critically important to show this company that this is a community they can depend on, and their employees will love and work for this community as we all do NOW.... AND.... their business will grow here.

Mr. Mayor, Vermilion City Council and Vermilion Planning Commission - This is your MOMENT IN TIME to Step up and to be a part of the positive, once in a lifetime opportunity to build our community and to give a huge shot in the arm to building and help to sustain areas of concern that have been for so long budgeted out due to increasing costs and no primary base of community or business growth.

Thank you Mr. Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission, and community members. I hope we as a community can take advantage of this outstanding opportunity for positive clean growth and to show this company and other well-run businesses, that Vermilion is user friendly and open for business. Thank you.

Nick Demos of 2145 Arndt Road said he is one of the largest homeowners in this area – they have four acres, and the said property is going to be 1,000’ right down the side of his house. He heard something about a 200’ buffer zone and right on the other side of the buffer zone will be a road where trucks will be coming in and going around – right outside of their property. Hours of operation – are they going to be 8am – 5pm or is it going to be 6am – 6pm, or seven days a week -24 hours a day? If you have trucks running down the side of your house at 2am and backing up with 700 slots of parking lot, then this will be an inconvenience for them. He understood they can’t answer these questions today, but he would like to know what kind of buffer zone they plan on putting up between them and the trucks, and the noise and everything that is going to be involved. They understand that development is going to come to this area some day and he doesn’t know if it is going to be this one or not, but with the trucks and noise, they see it being a problem for them.

Thomas Palmer of 1680 Cooper Foster Park Road asked the Planning Commission to not suggest they pass this. He did not think it was ever dreamed by his Aunt that sold 60 acres to the development company 20 years ago, to ever have one big company dumped in this spot. He thinks it was planned as a development to gradually grow with good businesses like Defense Soap, but never this much at one time. As much as you guys don't want it downtown, he does not want it in his neighborhood either.

Marilyn Brill of 1745 Cooper Foster Park Road said she lives directly south of this development. She looks out her front window in her living room and looks at cornfields on both sides of Route 2. Three months ago, on September 1 they were here at this Planning meeting to hear about this proposed project that would change their Brownhelm community forever. It is now known as the "BIG" project by the Mayor of this small town on a Great Lake here in Vermilion. What have we accomplished in the past 90 days – several city council meetings packed with residents who don't want this big development? They don't want it in their back yards. One ordinance has been tabled a few weeks ago, and now they are talking about two new ordinances. So, back to the drawing board. She said her residents have watched out that front window as people walked those four parcels. They collected soil samples knee deep in drainage – drainage that is improper and not being cared for. They also watched the surveyors. They came and measured and calculated the size of each of those four parcels. All of this is rich farmland they will never see again if you allow this to happen – all 119 acres. This development is expected to use Baumhart Road as their only egress, so this is a lot of added traffic to this narrow country road. It is four lanes down by the old Ford plant – divided highway actually, but as you get closer to Route 2 – 600' past as you go south, it is back to a two-lane highway. Two-lanes all the way to the turnpike. You're going to add all these trucks to that two-lane road. All the people on Baumhart Road, Cooper Foster, Whittlesey, and North Ridge – how are they going to get out on those roads when you're allowing 700 trucks to be in this big development. They are going to need additional traffic lights out there – all for the safety and the health of the residents that live out there. They have five generations of Brills living on that property. Last of all, growth is coming, but not while the residents here tonight that have spoken at all those city council meetings – those residents have lived here and have paid their taxes, and watched growth happen, and now to have this happen this big. This is something for Midway Mall, not here in Vermilion.

Mike Haines of 250 Erie Road expressed to the commission and the Mayor, and all those represented here tonight that he is 100% in favor of moving forward with this measure. He thinks it would be an opportunity missed by the City by not going forward with it. Obviously, he has lived here all but three years of his life for almost 70 years, and he thinks this would be a grand opportunity to move this community into the future because he has heard the naysayers and he respectfully understands what they are saying, but they cannot move this community into the future by dwelling in the past.

Marsha Funk of 256 Ballast Court said she fully supported what was said by the Mayor and Cliff German. Any development whether you have a housing development or a commercial, you're always going to affect somebody, and she is sure some of these people went through great stress when Route 2 came through, but, would anybody want to see Route 2 disappear. It has been a godsend. The turnpike interchange was a big issue at the time, but she sees this as an opportunity that isn't going to come around again, and this company, whether it is the big "A" company or any other thing like it – these people put in fabulous facilities and fabulous infrastructure – they put in the traffic lights and they worry about their neighbors. They have excellent jobs. In fact, one of their close friends just within the six weeks moved to Florida to work for the big "A" company in a brand-new facility that just opened up within the two weeks and he is just so impressed with what they do with their employees. With 1,000 employees they are not going to see this opportunity again, and yes, there will be people affected by it, but there is always going to be somebody affected by development like this, so she hopes the Planning Commission would consider passing or supporting the increase for this I-1 district.

John Gabriel of 285 Yorktown thanked the Planning Commission for serving in a volunteer position in nights like tonight with a full audience because it can be very difficult, and he appreciates it. He said he sat where they are sitting when they proposed cellphone towers (all three of them) and each time the audience filled up with people who said it would ruin their way of life – that will destroy our neighborhood. He said people have a right to defend their back yards, they certainly do, and he appreciates that, but he has also been on the other side of the coin where if they did not move forward, what would their town have been like without cellphone reception. The mayor had to fight this year to get it to a somewhat normalcy in the middle of town. He said this is not a rare opportunity and they owe it to the young people of the town to really give it deep consideration. There are not a lot of jobs in this town – this town has huge infrastructure problems – water and sewer lines that are outdated and a sewer plant that is crumbling, and service jobs are not going to pay for those things. You have employees of the city that are leaving because they are underpaid – they are asking for raises, and something has to give in that department. He does not know how they fix it with service jobs and fast-food restaurants, and pizza places. They have had one Defense Soap and he really can't name beyond that – restaurants. He asked the Planning Commission to give this the most serious consideration they could give a project because this is homerun kind of ball, and he thinks it deserves every consideration.

Bob Ridsen of 435 Thomas Alva Drive said he is completely for this because it will increase the tax base measurably. They all are looking for not more taxes, but to have more money to spend for the various projects – the water, the sewers, the roads, and everything else, and this type of business will impact the city tremendously. If they have 1,000 employees, just think what that will do for the city's income tax, and they just need to pursue this in the most powerful way they can, so that they have an opportunity for the young people down the road – employment, chances to go to a better school because there will be more money for teachers and everything else. He asked the members to please put forth all the effort they can to get this in here. He said he drove all over the country in the last two

weeks and he has seen several of these buildings being built and it is spectacular how they develop an area. He said yes, they see trucks and everything else coming in and out, but it is not as bad as you think it is, so let's proceed with this and make it happen. Thank you.

Larry Drouhard of 5125 Liberty Avenue thanked the members for volunteering their time in doing what they do. He is happy to hear all of the support for this project and he felt like the pros were outweighing the cons, and as other folks have said he truly respects the folks that live by the proposed project and understands their issues. But, growing up here they see the progress they could have that other places do have, and the places people go to get a better job, and he thought being able to employ up to 1,000 people or even if it is 500 – it's just an amazing potential for the community. The location being between Baumhart Road, the railroad, and Route 2 – where else is a better place to build something like this. He couldn't think of any. He truly appreciated what Mr. Gabriel and Mr. Risdien said and that there is just so many good things that could happen here and he really hopes that Planning Commission, City Council, and the administration, which he knows are all really trying to make this happen for everybody because there is just so much good that could come from a little progress, and no progress comes without issues, but when you have 1,000 families and the entire community that could be directly affected that sometimes it is just unfortunate to be nearby that, but just like the cellphone towers it will benefit everybody.

Bob Leimbach of 1425 Claus Road said this project is in his back yard. In the 1800s, there was a tornado that tore down a path through Brownhelm and it took a lot of trees out and the settlers in this area turned it into a road because the trees were cleared out and they named it Windfall Road. In the 1900s, it was renamed Baumhart Road. They feel this could be a windfall again if they allow it to be. He thought they were missing it on opportunities because it really was not planned. There is no infrastructure over there. He handed out an article to the Planning Commission regarding tax subsidies and how big companies take advantage of local governments. He said TIF's are a big concern of his. You take money that is supposed to go to the schools and use it for building infrastructure for a company, which if it is the one they are thinking it is, it is owned by a guy that can fly around in space – if he can afford to do that, then he probably can afford to put in sewers too. He believes in education and progress, but he believes too in industries that support a community. They all pay far too many taxes – they pay property taxes and those of them out in ward five pay city taxes and they get nothing for it. They do not get their roads plowed very often or any ditches cleaned out. They do not get mowing done – if any roads get paved they are probably done by the township. This piece of property is a treasure, and he thinks they should treat it as such. They have a lot to offer, and he thinks they ought to make a better deal than what they are making.

Denver Schaffer of 1122 Jackson Street said he works in this industry directly – he works for a company called Laser Ship, so he has a unique perspective on this probably than most people do. He said they just bought a company out west and they will be the fourth largest carrier in the country behind Amazon, behind the Postal Service, behind UPS, and behind FedEx it will be number five. This is a very good opportunity for Vermilion. This is

a booming industry, and it is growing all over the country. His company alone is growing astronomically. It's clean and it provides good jobs. They have a company that provides shares, bonuses, stock options, and things like that. A lot of the people sitting in the audience he was sure they were Ford workers or E&L workers. A lot of people were benefitted to having a good job and to retire from and to get a pension from. Us Gen Xers, really do not have this opportunity unless you're a service worker, a military person, or something else like that. You do not have an opportunity to retire. His retirement age is 70 years old, and he is 42. It is just an opportunity they owe their young people, and he thinks it is a great opportunity to grow this community for a tax base and for job opportunities, and to keep your young talent home to work for a fortune 500 company – not just a fortune 500 company, but if it is Amazon, then you're talking about the biggest company in the world right now. They are growing, so those 1,000 jobs or 500 jobs could be 1,500 jobs or 2,000 jobs 10 years from now – you don't know. They could buy up some more property just down the road and develop that as well. He said he wrote an email to Gwen, and he just thinks it is a homerun and a good opportunity for this town. Our infrastructure needs it, and we need it really bad. They have crumbling roads and crumbling infrastructure, and everybody is right – you're not going to support it on pizza shops or without landing a big-time company like Ford did for this community. He said his Uncle retired from Ford and his daughter's grandfather was a teamster in a car hauler directly related with Ford, and his stepfather same thing – car hauler. Many people that grew up in this community and many people that had these opportunities here were all from a fortune 500 company at that time, and they have been stuck in a rut ever since. This community has lost people. He said he was born here and grew up in northeast Ohio and left to go to Kent State and then lived in Cleveland, but he chose to raise his daughter out here because it is a wonderful town, so people need to realize how special this place is, but also realize that without getting a big-time job provider, people are going to leave the area. It has been happening for decades now. The schools are smaller, and the graduating classes are smaller, and he just thinks this is a homerun and he would encourage Council to consider it. He understands what everybody is saying and if it was in his back yard he would be a little bummed out too, but he thinks in a lot of situations this is not a distribution center but more of a fulfillment center, and a lot of those will be sprinter vehicles. It is not like you're going to have 700 tractor trailers going up and down through there every day. This is just not how it works.

Milo Hildebrandt of 2480 Brownhelm Station Road said he hears a lot of people talk about the benefits of this, but he thinks they are really looking at a lot of false stuff. If it is a big company, then at the end of the day they only care about profit, and there is a lot of issues with this property that he does not think anybody here is taking into consideration. He said with 119 acres and one inch of rain it is over three million gallons of water that is going to come into some ditch that has not been cleaned since he has lived there in 1985. He has had to go down the ditch line with a chainsaw to clean them out because it is backed all the way up to Brownhelm Station Road next to his neighbor that has now passed. With this, they will have semi's in there, trucks in there, and oil coming off these vehicles in the parking lot that is going to go into this retaining pond. He works for Norfolk and Southern and he knows how they are – he is sure council knows how it is to

deal with the railroad. If this is a large fortune 500 company, then they are going to have the same attitude as the railroad does when it comes to working with the city. Once they get what they want in this council, which is to get this zoned to where they do not have to come in here and answer to nobody – they are going to do what they want, and it doesn't matter what anybody in here says to them – this is the same thing that happened to the cellphone tower that is right out there by his house. They ramrodded that through, and they did not get any abatement for the height, and they were supposed to be connected to the road, but when they found out the old Brownhelm Station Road was abandoned, they just kind of put in their blacktop. He has asked for five years or 10 years now – he has complained about them backing in there and dumping. They just recently dumped a large dump truck of shingles there. He has asked the city to put pressure on this company to put a gate up there to keep people from dumping out there – they are not going to do it – they tell you to pound salt, just like the company he works for. So, if this does go through and if you live in that neighborhood, and he knows a lot of people in this area want this and that is great, but he doesn't hear anybody that lives right there going Yay! They are all throw their garbage out and there isn't a person in this room that wants to live by a dump. They need to have this stuff, but you're going to have light pollution over there and you're going to have noise pollution with tractor trailers, and if you do not think you're going to have other issues, then just go to a truck stop one time and go where the truckers park and look at all the urine bottles and everything else they throw out in the parking lot because this does happen. These are things that he doesn't think people want to talk about. When Ford was in business, you could go out on his back deck in the middle of the night and there were lights 24/7. If you don't think you're going to have light pollution from this large facility... He doesn't think people are really looking at this. Yes, they need the jobs and yes they need that, but what's the cost and what is the cost to the residents that live in that area. If they're not careful of what freedoms they give to this corporation or whoever is doing it – once they get the zoning they want, they will do what they want and it will not matter what the city says because all they have to do is be able to defend themselves in a court of law, and they will have the lawyers and stuff to do it. It's what the railroad does.

Elaine Reisdorf of 2225 Claus Road said she has lived out there for 36 years and she brought up some points that she hasn't heard. When Ford was there they could not exit from Cooper Foster onto Baumhart safely. So, she goes to North Ridge Road and goes on her way to her work. She believed that as soon as the southwest corner at Oak Point Road – the big farm that is there is sold and that is developed, they are going to be out at Baumhart Road immediately. She wished they could have a cornfield out there, but if the way it is zoned now with commercial business – Speedway or a truck stop, or various things could come in there and you couldn't stop them. It is zoned for that. She wished it could be a cornfield, but she would rather have Carvana with the property they developed – with the light and the new roads turning – they look like good corporate citizens. It is going to be developed and she would rather have a warehouse, then gas and fast food.

Mark Musial of 5230 Portage Drive said he is extremely in support of this matter going forward. He said they are relatively new to Vermilion – they have been here about six

years. He said he grew up and was raised in North Olmsted and when his folks moved to that city when he was kid it was a population of about 4,000 or 5,000 people and now it is over 30,000. He said when he and his wife first moved to Olmsted Falls it was a city of about 7,000 or 8,000 people, and it's not much more than that because they have no room to grow. When he was there he was a member of the strategic planning committee, and their biggest problem was that they had about 150 acres that they could develop to help increase their tax base and 50 of these acres were wetlands and they couldn't do anything with them. They learned that the tax revenue that you generate off industrial type property is the highest tax revenue you will get. Far better than business and far better than service, certainly much more than what you're going to generate off of homes, farms, and the lake. Growth is coming! After they moved from Olmsted Falls they lived in Avon Lake for 20 years. When they first moved there it was a city of about 7,000 and today it is 27,000. Growth is going to come, and you have got to manage it. You have an opportunity now to get this kind of property that will generate the highest tax revenue you can get for our city, and we need that.

Wendy Hildebrandt of 2480 Brownhelm Station Road said she has heard several things tonight and concerns and has lived out there for quite a while, and yeah, she remembers times when her husband had to plow their road with the four-wheeler. She has told her job countless times, "Hey if it snows and I tell you I cannot get out of my driveway and can't get there, it's because my road hasn't been plowed. Except it". She said everybody who is for it seems to not live there and she keeps hearing that progress is inevitable, which they all know to some degree it is, but have they looked at the fact that if they're putting it out there, that maybe a large portion of the tax revenue they receive from this company should go to that area where it is located, so maybe for once in 26 years her road can be paved. Sunnyside base will not be falling, and you won't go six inches off the road and fall into a ditch. There will be plows and it will be upkept. Something to think about. Also, she heard everyone refer to the youth, but she has not heard anyone say how they know what the youth want. She just left Kent State as faculty in August, so she has worked the last five or six years with the youth and yes they are very concerned about jobs. She worked at a Kent State location in Twinsburg, which has this big "A" warehouse, and she has had several students that have worked there, and nobody has planned to stay, which tells her they are looking for something better and this is not a job they think can sustain their families. So, she thought these were things they need to keep in their minds and be aware of. A lot of times, something seems really great, and they want to jump on it because they think it will provide benefits, and someone made the comment that it may not be a benefit to everybody, but just because some people are affected, doesn't mean they should go through with it. She has a mask and puts it on because she is vaccinated, but according to studies she can still carry and transmit Covid. She wears a mask to prevent that from happening to other people, so it may not affect her personally, but she is doing what is right for the other people in her community, and she hopes everybody has that thought in mind.

**Planning Commission Member Remarks:**

Heidi Strickler said they have heard from a lot of people, and they can't help being on the Facebook pages and hearing everybody's opinion, so like everyone else on the Commission she is sure they took it seriously. She said to be honest she supports this. She has been a part of government for 18 years – she was on city council for eight years and remembers Main Street Vermilion starting as Historic Vermilion and remembers the Vision Vermilion in 1998, and the plan has always been to start in the downtown and then work your way out. It has always been that Baumhart Road would be the financial base. She said she had Gwen ask the mayor yesterday about the school money and a lot of the school money will go to Firelands Schools, and they do have people in the city limits that go to Firelands School, so there is some benefit to Brownhelm Township. She is sympathetic to the residents and one of the things the Planning Commission can do because this is just changing the zoning, but they will have to come back to Planning with a site plan. They can make sure the buffers are tall enough and it looks good. There are things they are not giving up control on because they have to approve the site plan, and she will be make sure that it is protected, but she does think this is a good thing for the city to move forward with and she is supporting it. She thinks they can protect the residents that live out there as well, and in the 18 years she has been involved, this is the most emails or anything she has received on any issue ever.

Jim Chapple asked if they would consider both ordinances at the same time or would the recommendations be separate. G. Fisher said they should be separate. J. Chapple said he concurs with Heidi as there are some things they want to consider when they come back with the final site plan for them to look at, but he is in support of this also.

Heather Shirley said this is not a property that is zoned residential. This is zoned commercial, so it is going to have something on it. It will have some sort of business or industry and they have been very careful as a Planning Commission over the last couple of years as to what they look for in a business. Tonight, is an example – the company that was before them prior are down to the nitty gritty on exactly what type of trees they are planting, and what types of plants they want them to have, and where they want those plants to be, and what type of landscaping plan, so this is just an example. They will definitely look at a site plan for this business and it will be very detailed oriented. Whether it is this business or another business, it is going to be a business on this property, and she thinks everybody is going to have to understand this at some point in time. It could be something worse – it could be a truck stop. It's a perfect location for a truck stop. She knows there have been other companies that have looked at this property, so they need to consider what is the best type of business for the entire community of Vermilion, and then as a Planning Commission it is their responsibility to really be very detailed oriented with their site plan and to ensure they can protect the residents who live in this area as much as possible, and yet still be faithful to the entire community of Vermilion.

Joe Williams relayed how sympathetic he was because he moved to Vermilion about nine years ago and before that he lived 37 years in Solon. When he moved into Solon it was a small town. Actually, where the high school currently is located is where cows grazed. As

he got older, he moved into a new development that had woods surrounding it, which soon became an industrial park and it became the city's sewer treatment on the south side, and it had a major affect on him personally because there was an abandoned railroad that ran through the backside of their development. When he chose his lot and built his house he wanted to be on that railroad because it gave a buffer from the development that was on the other side of the railroad. Well, about 1990 something, Lowes and Home Depot built big warehouses in the industrial park and the railroad became active. First it was one train a week that carried a couple of cars, and by the time he moved to Vermilion in 2013, it was four trains a day carrying hundreds of cars. The train derailed in his back yard and closed their development because there was only one way in and out for a week while they reset the cars back on the track. This was disturbing, but that industry that came into Solon, so changed Solon, that they became one of the best high schools in the nation. They have great roads, and they can repair everything. If something goes wrong on your property, they are out there to fix it because they have money. So, in spite of all that happened, he wouldn't have changed it. When he moved he was reluctant, but he is very happy to live in this beautiful city. He said sometimes their minds play with them to think things are going to be worse than what they really will be, and he knows sometimes they have to think about it, and as Heather said, "Of all the things that could go there, this may not be so bad. He said most of this traffic will probably jump right on Route 2, so being so close this affect will be lessened. He thinks the Ford plant probably was even worse back in the day. He said he is in favor of this legislation.

**J. Chapple MOVED**, H. Shirley seconded to recommend to Vermilion City Council the passage of Ordinance 2021-81. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

**J. Chapple MOVED**, H. Strickler seconded to recommend to Vermilion City Council the passage of Ordinance 2021-82 and to include the amendment of the side and rear yard setbacks from residential zoned property to be 200' for building heights exceeding 45'. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

J. Williams asked the clerk what the next steps would be. G. Fisher explained that a Public Hearing on these two ordinances has been scheduled for December 13, 2021 at 6pm at the Vermilion Municipal Court Complex, 687 Decatur Street, and then the third reading of both ordinances will be on the Special Council meeting following the Public Hearing and Committee meetings. If Council adopts the ordinances, then the preliminary and final site plans will come before Planning Commission for review.

**Adjournment:**

J. Williams adjourned the meeting upon no further business .

*The next meeting has been scheduled for January 5, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.  
Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street.*

*Transcribed by Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk.*