

Minutes of VERMILION MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION on August 5, 2020

7:00 pm ~ Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion.

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

In ATTENDANCE: *Bill DiFucci, Building Inspector, Chris Howard, City Engineer*

Call to Order:

Joe Williams, Chairman called the Wednesday, August 5, 2020 meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes:

J. Chapple MOVED. H. Strickler seconded to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2020 meeting. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

CORRESPONDENCE/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Matt Hasel, P.E., S.I., Owner of Adaptive Engineering Group, LLC, 260 South Main Street, Amherst, Ohio was before the Planning Commission to represent his client, Todd Sommer in discussing a proposed project consisting of storage units on Liberty Avenue across from Defense Soap and German's Villa. His client owns 35 acres of undeveloped land. He said before they get too far down into the design path of this project, they wanted to present the project to the Planning Commission and the City of Vermilion to gain feedback as the project has unique features as far as what is being proposed with the storage units.

He provided to the members a color copy of the conceptual site plan including pictures of the proposed storage units. In reviewing the site plan, he explained they are proposing to put shipping containers as a barrier with barb wire on top instead of putting a fence along the property on the east and west perimeters of the property. He said it serves as a dual purpose for barrier and storage areas. Additionally, they would like to cluster the shipping containers throughout the seven acres of developed area. The darker grey buildings with a 36' x 150' as a footprint are your standard overhead door storage units. There are larger storage condominiums that would be closest to the driveway on the east portion of the property. They provided examples of the storage condominiums and said there are some located in Sheffield on Route 301 which gives everyone a visual of what they are. Each unit in Sheffield has its own gas, electric, water, and plumbing, so each individual unit has its own separate utility on services. They are looking at the green/tan color scheme as shown in the pictures. He said they will need a rezone on the property as currently the first 250' of the parcel is the B-3 Highway Commercial District and the remaining depth of the parcel is the R-3 Suburban Residence District, so they would pursue a rezoning from 250' of frontage to 550' off the right of way, so a rezoning of the

additional 350' so they can construct this project. He said they would not want to go through the rezoning process if they got feedback from tonight that the proposed concept is not liked.

Todd Sommer explained that all the containers would be brand new and they are trying to come up with a project that has something that is different than any other storage facility. The containers can be modified to a 5' x 8', 5' x 10', 8' x 20', or an 8' x 40' with side doors on them that can open the whole side of the container, instead of having one man door. He is hoping there is a market for all the different types of configurations. This is a product that will be coming in from overseas as they don't know where they will be manufactured at this time. They are looking at the possibility of one or two phases of the project. They are uncertain if they will go with 75 or 100 percent of the project as shown tonight. Ultimately, what the members see is what will be completed. J. Chapple asked what Phase I would consist of. T. Sommer said Phase I will be the pole barns/condo's along with containers lining the perimeter, and then they will probably have eight or 10 of the cubicles done and the 8' x 20's and the 8' x 40's. It's a matter of how much time it takes, but they will lay the groundwork out and everything will be put in place for Phase II, but at this stage of the game they cannot predict. J. Chapple asked if the condominiums would be purchased. T. Sommer said the ones in Sheffield were purchased and it depends what the market is. He said right now the condominiums are not their primary. They are really looking at renting these units. The units will have about a 14' garage door, 15' W x 50' L. There is a possibility they will be putting restrooms in a few of them as there might be a demand for something like this. He said other storage facilities do not have this. He knows they will need restroom facilities at some point to service a full complex, which will probably be located near the front of the property. J. Williams said the commission would have a problem if they allowed somebody to live in one of these units. T. Sommer said no way, it will be in the lease! J. Williams asked what they were planning to store on the back of the property – vehicle storage? T. Sommer said every storage facility has some place for people to store cars, boats, and RV's – the back portion is what that will be designated for and it probably will be graveled and not paved. He said if this all pans out, he will probably come back as they may develop another two acres south of there to expand the facility if there is a demand for it. He said they own 35 acres and they are only looking at seven to eight acres now. J. Chapple asked if there would be an office complex and T. Sommer said there will, but it will not be a facility where people are on staff at all. It will mostly be done online.

H. Shirley asked if there will be a security process and T. Sommer said not yet, but this is something they will look into if everything is approved.

H. Strickler asked if barb wire fencing is permissible within the city limits as she didn't think it was and felt it would need to go before the Zoning Board. T. Sommer said if he does not have to put it up, he doesn't want to put it up because he knows how it looks. If they have adequate security cameras, then they will not need the barb wire.

J. Williams asked if the property to the east a housing development and T. Sommer concurred. J. Williams said he would not like a container wall backing up to his property. T. Sommer said there is 200' from the development, so there is a big barrier there and they won't even notice it's there as the area will remain natural. J. Hammerschmidt asked how tall the containers are on the proposed sides. T. Sommer said 8 ½' (one unit high). H. Strickler asked if they are permanent or moveable. T. Sommer said they will be permanently mounted as they will be on foundation. A 20' container weighs about 5,000 pounds and a 40' weighs about 10,000 pounds and this is without any equipment inside of it.

H. Strickler said as she drove the east side of town she noticed there are a lot of storage units at this end of town and part of planning commission is to have planned development, so is this what they want this side of the town to be. She isn't saying no that she doesn't want this, but sometimes they just Hodge podge things on that side of town, and it seems to be picking up with Defense Soap and all. She mentioned that 100 years ago if people would have had foresight, they would not have put the railroad tracks so close to the lake and they would have all this prime waterfront property. T. Sommer said there is two storage facilities now and they have owned this property for 40 years and they have tried to market it, and nothing has come to fruition. They tried to auction the property last year and they did not get one bid.

H. Shirley asked if they have done a market study to see what the need might be. T. Sommer said there is a need as they did do a study. M. Hasel said the other two storage facilities do not have the storage condo type of facilities on their site. They are just the more traditional storage units. J. Chapple thought the guy next to the Post Office was supposed to do storage condos.

J. Hammerschmidt asked what is on the west side of the property. T. Sommer said there is a two-story Liberty Avenue office building. M. Hasel said on the west side all the adjoining properties are zoned B-3, and as you get down to the south portion, you are getting into adjoining Metro Park properties.

B. DiFucci noted that storage is not a permitted use and they have two existing, so they would have to make application to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a permitted use. He said the buffering will come into play; not so much on the east side because they have 250' from the right of way, but there will be buffering that needs to be addressed where it abuts the R-3 in the lower left corner. He said they will need to check the buffering code as they have 50' to the container, 19' at the east green mark, so they need to make sure the section of fencing and the last container meets the buffering.

H. Strickler asked if they need to rezone the back part of the property if it is R-3. B. DiFucci said yes as they will either need to build the buffering into where the B-3 would abut the R-3, so this area is defined as buffering or rezone that rear section of B-3.

J. Williams believed the next step would be to go before the Zoning Board to get approval on the permitted use. Once they do, it would then come back to Planning. B. DiFucci said the variance is only good for six months, so they would need to time all this up so everything gets to Zoning Board for approval, and the plans to resubmit back to Planning for their approvals. M. Hasel said to confirm they are looking at the moving of the B-3/R-3 line on the property from 250' to 550', which would be a permanent rezoning. And, then they are looking at the permitted use with an approval good for six months. He said he searched the entire ordinance for storage, and it didn't populate anything, so does this mean they have to get Zoning Board approval. B. DiFucci said the B-3 allows them to make application to the Zoning Board for a use that is similar, but not all zoning districts give you this option going to BZA first. Other zoning districts are by via hardship legislation back to Planning Commission to use their property for something other than what it's intended. B-3 specifically makes mention of going to the BZA for a similar or like use. M. Hasel asked if there is anything in the code that disallows the use of these shipping containers on the property. B. DiFucci said not in the zoning code, but the building code has a section on industrialized units and these would go out for commercial plan review and he would have to dig into the industrialized units code section because they don't get a lot of them, so he would need to familiarize himself with these before they get too far down this path. He will then send them out for commercial plan review. He said these containers are coming from overseas and the welds are not to U.S. standards (either materials/craftmanship), but there is a specific industrialized unit code section in the Ohio code.

M. Hasel asked the city engineer if he was aware of any drainage issues in this vicinity. C. Howard said no as long as they provide storm water management. They must watch their lot coverage – it's like 25% of the lot. M. Hasel asked if this is paved area or unit. C. Howard said it is the unit and they need to take the square footage of the units for the portion they're developing.

G. Fisher asked M. Hasel how soon they would want to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals so she can give him the deadline dates for the upcoming agendas. T. Sommer said they need to get a survey of the property and they need to clean the brush and the trees. He is hoping for Planning's blessing to go to the next step to start cleaning the site, so drawings can be prepared for drainage, etc. H. Strickler confirmed if he was looking for a nod tonight. T. Sommer said if there is an objection, he would like to hear it, but if there is no objection then they will know they can proceed to the next step. H. Strickler said even if they give their nod, the Zoning Board could say no. She asked if this would need to go before City Council. G. Fisher explained the Planning Commission needs to make a recommendation to City Council for the rezoning of the property. A public hearing will be scheduled and then Council must approve legislation for the rezoning. C. Howard recommended they proceed with the submittal for rezoning first because this will be the hardest part. G. Fisher said Planning needs to make this recommendation to City Council. C. Howard recommended they come back next month to request the rezoning. G. Fisher said the next Planning Commission meeting is September 2.

OLD BUSINESS:

Michael Lich (Old Prague Restaurant) – 5586 Liberty Avenue – Approval of Site Plan

Pursuant to no representation on this matter for the last two months the following motion was made:

J. Chapple MOVED; H. Shirley seconded to permanently table this application. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Coal & Ice (Final Site Plan) – Extension Review

The Planning Commission is in receipt of the final site plan, and the City Engineer has reviewed the submittal and has no objection in recommending Plan Approval as submitted.

J. Chapple MOVED; H. Shirley seconded to approve the final site plan as submitted. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Gerhardt Beursken – 2525 North Ridge Road (Lot Split/Lot Combination)

On behalf of the City of Vermilion, the City Engineer reviewed the Revised Lot Split and Consolidation and recommended approval.

H. Shirley MOVED; J. Chapple seconded to approve the Lot Split/Lot Combination as revised. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

NEW BUSINESS:

Johnny Harris – Property Location: 4565 Liberty Avenue (New Parking Lot)

No representation appeared before the Commission.

H. Strickler MOVED; H. Shirley seconded to table this matter until next month. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Perritt Homes LLC – Robert Perritt – Property Location: Vermilion Road (north of 2635 Vermilion Road – PP#: 01-00-046-000-038 & 039 (Lot Combination)

Bob Perritt from Perritt Homes said he owns two parcels of land on Vermilion Road on the east side just north of Mill Hollow and they want to combine the two 1 ½ acre lots to a three-acre lot. They were buildable lots when he purchased them from the owner and they just want to make it one parcel. H. Strickler noted the City Engineer recommended approval as well.

H. Strickler MOVED, J. Chapple seconded to approve this application as submitted. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Adjournment:

J. Williams adjourned the meeting after no further discussion came before the commission.

Next Meeting:

A Work Session has been scheduled for Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. with the regular meeting immediately following.