

Minutes of VERMILION MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION on September 2, 2020
7:00 pm - Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion.

PRESENT: Heather Shirley, Heidi Strickler, Jeff Hammerschmidt. Not Present: Jim Chapple, Joe Williams

In ATTENDANCE: Chris Howard, City Engineer; Barb Brady, Council Representative

Call to Order:

Heather Shirley called the Wednesday, September 2, 2020 meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes:

H. Strickler MOVED, J. Hammerschmidt seconded to approve the minutes of the August 5, 2020 meeting. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS:

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

Johnny Harris of 4567 Liberty Avenue explained he wants to install 11 additional parking spaces in the front of the property because of the lack of parking. It will be concrete, and they will also install a sidewalk and a new sign.

H. Strickler asked if he received the city engineer's correspondence about the items that need addressed. J. Harris said he dropped off corrected prints to the building department. He asked about the grass setback because he wants the setback on the grass to match the adjoining property because they will lose a lot of grass, so adjacent to the east of them it will be same as the car dealership. C. Howard said the code states that per B-3 zoning the front yard setback from the right of way must be an open and unobstructed buffer strip of twenty feet in depth. J. Harris said they will probably have this. C. Howard said he needs to review the revised plans to see what is proposed.

H. Shirley said the city engineer also commented in his letter that a minimum of one parking space needs to be provided for handicap. J. Harris said this change has been made.

H. Strickler MOVED; H. Shirley seconded to approve the new parking lot contingent upon the items being addressed in the City Engineer's correspondence dated August 3, 2020, which will need to be reviewed by the City Engineer for final approval. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS:

Great Lakes Startall II, LLC – PP#: 0100005104066 – 2815 Liberty (Approval of Site Plan)

Alex Etchell, 909 South Meadow Drive, Sandusky, Ohio, and David Prince, 5602 State Route 60, Wakeman, Ohio were present on behalf of their application for approval of the site plan. D. Prince said

he is proposing a Convenient Store and Gas Station on what he perceives is badly needed on the east end of town. He feels it will be good for the city and the people at this location as it seems business will be growing.

Mayor Forthofer said D. Prince has been cooperative in previous conversations relative to sidewalks and expressed his appreciation. In the process, they will end up with hard surface across the front which is a priority for Liberty Avenue with the continuation of sidewalks. D. Prince said it will be concrete across the front including ingress and egress of the driveway.

H. Strickler asked if he received a copy of the City Engineer's correspondence dated August 31, 2020 of items that need to be addressed. A. Etchell said yes, and they do not see any issues with any of the items. He said they will remove one pump, so they have only two instead of three on the east edge, so they do not have encroachment on the setback line. They will provide the dumpster and the stormwater calculations will be submitted. D. Prince said all the comments in the letter will be addressed and will reflect on the final prints.

H. Shirley said on the blueprints it shows a "Subway Station" and asked if this is the franchise or something different. D. Prince said there are mini franchises where they serve donuts, coffee, or a sandwich like Dunkin Donut per se. He said they are looking at some type of sandwich shop that would benefit everyone and he used Subway as an example on the prints. H. Shirley asked how many employees will be employed. D. Prince said two employees at a time, and he will be onsite in the maintenance shop which is totally separate from everything else. H. Shirley asked what the hours of operation will be. D. Prince said 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. as they will not be open 24 hours, so it will be two shifts.

C. Howard recommended to the commission members that if they approve the application this evening that it only be for preliminary approval as they need final site plan approval.

B. Holmes asked where the location of the store/gas station will be. Mayor Forthofer said it is between Vintage Lighting and the Vermilion Farm Market.

J. Hammerschmidt MOVED, H. Strickler seconded to approve the Preliminary Site Plan contingent upon addressing the comments in the City Engineer's correspondence dated August 31, 2020, and the applicant coming back to the Planning Commission for Final Site Plan approval. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

Adaptive Engineering Group (Todd Sommer; Owner of Property); PP#0100004116001 (Rezoning from R-3 to B-3)

Matt Hasel, 260 S. Main, Suite 218, Amherst, Ohio (Adaptive Engineering Group); Todd Sommer, 5443 Park Drive, Vermilion, Ohio and Neil Akers of 14807 Kneisel Road, Vermilion, Ohio were present on behalf of the proposed Rezoning of 8.837 acres from R-3 "Suburban Residence District" to B-3 "Highway Commercial District".

M. Hasel said they are seeking a partial rezone to the undeveloped piece of property across from Defense Soap and German's Villa. Currently, the setback line changes from B-3 to R-3, located 250' of the right of way. They are seeking an increase of 500' to make it 750' off the right of way for the purpose of building

a storage facility, which was previously presented during open discussion at the August 5, 2020 Planning Commission meeting.

H. Shirley said the Planning Commission and City has received letters and phone calls regarding opposition of the project. Specifically, they have received written email communication from Meg & Shawn Coon, Barbara Staszak, and Denny and Elaine Carlin. She chose not to read the communication into the record due to the length of the letters, but they are attached hereto and incorporated herein as part of the official record of proceedings. The minutes will be sent to the Vermilion Photojournal and will be posted on the City of Vermilion website at cityofvermilion.com. T. Sommer asked where these residents reside. H. Shirley noted that the Carlin's live in Whispering Shores, and believed the Coon's reside on Hazelwood, and was uncertain to the residency of B. Staszak. M. Hasel asked what the general opposition to the project is in summary. H. Shirley said one of the primary concerns is with the shipping containers and being on the perimeter around the property, and the aesthetics of them. Currently understanding that the neighbors that live there have beautiful woods with wildlife to look at. They want to protect as much as they can in this area between the proposed project and the neighbors living on Hazelwood.

T. Sommer asked if the Planning Commission has seen what the shipping containers look like. H. Shirley responded yes. T. Sommer said the shipping containers are brand new and the uniqueness of the shipping containers is the diversification of what they will be looking like. He shared additional pictures of the containers with the Commission. The storage facility will have side doors – doors that will open wide, garage doors, etc. He does not see any offense to the shipping containers and the whole project will be a first-class operation. He also left a 50' buffer for the people on Hazelwood as they will not disturb the vegetation, so they will still have the rights of the woods. They will be on the west side of the property up against the Liberty Office building. There is one family that is behind the Liberty Office building and they did not seem to object to what they are proposing. H. Shirley said when he talks about a 50' buffer to the Hazelwood residents, does he mean 50' of existing trees that you have not cut down? T. Sommer responded yes and that he does not plan to. He conveyed they cleaned out 75 – 100' of the frontage only just because of exposure. Most of the cutting down will be on the west side of the property. M. Hasel said when they get off the right of way doesn't this increase to about 200'. He said he wanted to clear up some of the open area, maybe the first 100' and leave the 50' buffer, but then as it goes further to the south that buffer would be increased. H. Shirley said it would be 50' at minimum. M. Hasel said 50' minimum – that's just clearing, it's not like they are going to be putting the shipping containers all the way. He just wants to open the front up so that the business can be viewed along Liberty Avenue. T. Sommer said all the containers will be brand new and painted the same color – the whole concept of the project is going to be a green and tan color. If anybody is familiar with the Firelands Electric building, this is the color he decided to choose for this complex. H. Shirley asked if the condo's will also be in the color scheme. T. Sommer said yes.

J. Hammerschmidt asked if the shipping containers will be US made. T. Sommer said it will have to go out for bid, so they are premature until they get final approval.

Resident Homer Taft of 3972 Edgewater Drive, Vermilion, Ohio stated he is an Attorney At Law; principally in Real Estate Law, and has spent 75 years of his entire life in the real estate business because his father was a Real Estate Broker. He came before the Planning Commission with some regret, but to speak for words of caution about this rezoning request and this proposal. He hoped there would be a better consideration of the use of the property. He attempted to talk with T. Sommer about this today.

He doesn't think that this represents the highest and best use of the property, and he doesn't think it is consistent with the surrounding uses; specifically there is a relatively populated residential area to the east and an office area and other businesses to the west, and they're sticking storage units in the middle of it. He does not think the entrance to the city which is the principle entrance to the city from the east needs more storage units. He also understands that storage units are not a permitted primary use on the property under the current zoning, so they could be granted as a conditional use. Truthfully, he has not had time to read the ordinance on the subject zoning. He is not sure a conditional use can be granted without a primary use. He knows an accessory use cannot, but he is not sure which it is. This is not his point and as a real estate guy he is also a property rights guy, so it pains him to come before the Commission and speak against an owner's wishes for their property. However, zoning at the same time is something that is to protect the value of the entire community and he lives in the community now, and many other people do as well. He doesn't think this is the place to add this particular use and he would hope that with some further consideration – he will be a lawyer and will reserve his right to change his mind someday, but until a full opportunity to explore every conceivable use under current zoning or other things – he thinks there is many better uses for this particular property which shares a view of the lake, which is across from German's and Defense Soap, which is an area that is changing into a much better area. Mr. Cassell and others have been building quite a few homes on Sunnyside and Liberty. The area has changed a lot and he does not think changing the use of this property to this use is the wise thing to do. He also has considerable concern about the use of storage containers and the fence. They may be new now, but they are not built to last like buildings are and he is not sure this would be a wise thing either. He said zoning this back 550' along other people's property with other uses that you are not rezoning, doesn't seem to him to be a wise decision. He said he would hope at the present time, Planning Commission would not do this and continue the discussion on whether something else couldn't be found better; not to say the owners don't have rights to use their land, but he thinks there are other options.

T. Sommer said he did have a discussion with Homer Taft today and he told him that they have owned this property for well over 40 years. Probably most of the time there has been always been a 'For Sale' sign on the property. It was not until last year that he put the property up for auction to see if there was any market. He received no bids; never one offer on the property in the 40 years he had it listed. He commented that he is not getting any younger and the options are to donate the land to the Lorain County Metro Parks – this is his next step to talk to them about the property. This is his last resort, but he disagrees with H. Taft. He said the way the containers are painted and produced today probably have a 30 to 40-year lifespan with minimal maintenance to the buildings. These shipping containers get shipped back and forth from countries year after year and they go through a lot of abuse on ships. They are just bringing them from one country over into the states and it will be one trip and that is it, and they will have a permanent home. He referred to the pictures stating that he provided the uniqueness of the diversification of the containers they are trying to give to customers. It is not one long narrow channel, but options. The side door will open and expose all their wares. He said what you see with Defense Soap and their landscape architecture is something they will accomplish across from them in terms to their frontage. He is not putting any containers in the front – they will leave this open, and in turn the containers are only going down the east and west side. Then they will be intermittent throughout the project by the drawing that M. Hasel has put together. This is not something that has been thought of lightly and he would not have been going this far if he did not do a research study. He had a gentleman out of Atlanta, Georgia do their study. He remarked that the used storage facility on Route 60 went bankrupt and closed their doors, and this became a complete disarray. He does not vision this facility to be in that appearance. It will definitely be a first-class facility and he would not be part of anything if it were not first-class.

Resident Brian Holmes of 685 Morris Drive, Vermilion, Ohio, and Ward Five Council Representative said he is all for growth on the east side of town, especially in wards four and five. He grew up in Vermilion and this has always been a desolate end of town. Unfortunately, what got him into council was the eyesore as you come down Baumhart and Liberty – “Welcome to Vermilion” and you see junk cars. He is not saying this facility will look like that, but this aggravated him, and it was in place before he came onto council. Now that he is on council the folks in Ward Five elected him to speak on their behalf and that is why he is present. He has received several phone calls to say they do not want this in their back yard. They are concerned of folks making these condo storage units a home and people will be in there 24-hours all night making a place to live. They are concerned about people using these units for illegal activity and people breaking in. He understands their concerns as he is also a Sheriff Deputy with Lorain County and they do run into incidents at storage units that are open 24 hours that are secured. People find their way in and break into these units; things have happened in these units and he has personally seen people living in these units. They are concerned about the overall ecological – what is going to happen to the property. “Again, it is your property – do as you wish.” However, you must think about what is going to happen on the outside of your property. Yes, you abut up to residential and a business upfront, and you also abut up to the metro parks. He said he had worked for the metro parks for 15 years so if T. Sommer needs any contacts, he can provide him with one. He said he was going to suggest this if this option did not go forward – he was going to suggest that maybe he contact the Lorain County Metro Parks and discuss this with them. He said the concern is how this will fit in the corridor as they continue east through town. Is this what they want to see – do they want to see another storage unit. He said the people love Defense Soap and German’s Villa has been a staple there. They are excited about having the gas station and what the condo’s have done on the north side of Liberty. But they are concerned how this is going to look. His other concerns go back to environmental – Metro parks sought out this property because it has a lot in there that is beneficial that you do not find anywhere else in Lorain County. He knows this is a wooded wetland area. Therefore, has this property been checked for wetland; is this a wetland area? Are they going to be concreting or paving over the wetlands? Has the Army Corp of Engineers been in to do a survey? These are things he would like to know before any decision is made. He has seen the property and it is wet. Even prior to them logging it out, it was wet. Again, he would like to see growth in the east side of town, but he is speaking on behalf of the people in his ward, along with his concerns as well.

T. Sommer said they started cutting the property down around 10 days ago and dust came up on his shoes everywhere he walked. He said they went through the process to get an EPA permit. M. Hasel said this was for the fence around the perimeter as part of the clearing out operation. T. Sommer said this will not be a third-class place of business. It will be first class. He lives in Vermilion and has for over 35 years and his brother lives in Vermilion. He along with his brother will manage the business and security cameras will be high definition. As for living there he stated there is NO application whatsoever that they will permit anybody to live in any of the products that they are generating. Everything will be for storage only. The threat of somebody living in one is always a threat, but he will tell everyone that the security will be of the upmost on everything. The locks on the containers cannot be cut with a bolt cutter, so the security will definitely be state of the art. He does not permit any type of riffraff whatsoever and they were not planning on thinking that they would have this type of riffraff because the property will be completely enclosed except for the front. The front will not be enclosed but open. He does not want the thought of a fence with barb wire being in the front of the property just because of the way it will look. He wants it to look like Defense Soap built in the front of their property. He said he is not doing this project lightly as it is a very expensive project and they will do it right.

H. Shirley said because they own 35 acres and they are only developing around seven, what is the vision for the remainder of the property. T. Sommer said the back side because of the Lorain Metro Parks – it possibly may go to them. This is his thought. The property to the east has no plans whatsoever. It stays a wooded area. They are only looking at the seven acres on the frontage.

J. Hammerschmidt asked what the plans were for maintenance of the shipping containers and the aesthetics of them. T. Sommer spoke with regard to the paint on the containers and explained they go through a lot of salt water being shipped, and the containers you may see on a semi-truck coming from a port may look ratty because they have been around for 10 or more years. However, if something needs to be painted it will be painted. He is not looking at this being a black eye in his thought process. He expects everything to be properly maintained on a religious basis.

J. Hammerschmidt asked about the fence side of the neighbor's rear property. T. Sommer said there is no fence. J. Hammerschmidt said he is talking about the container side. T. Sommer said they will leave a 30' area from where they will be by keeping it mowed, so they have at least capability of going around the property with no problem, so there will be a perimeter of mowed area that they will keep on the east and west side, so they will not have vegetation growing up the side of the containers. Everything will be maintained, same as up front. Even where they cleared the property to the east it will be a green area, which they will also mow and maintain. J. Hammerschmidt asked if there would be a sidewalk as well. T. Sommer said it all depends as they have not even talked about a sidewalk. H. Strickler said it would be a requirement.

J. Hammerschmidt asked if he would consider the opportunity to reorganize the containers from the one side to the middle in between the two building types. He thinks it would make it more tolerable for everybody to not be so much in your face. T. Sommer said they are not in your face because you are not going to have any containers exposed to the north and the south. Everything you see there on the east side – you are still going to have a barrier of woods that goes all the way back. J. Hammerschmidt said he is talking about the west side. T. Sommer said the west side he doesn't have an issue as they have the Liberty Avenue Office building and one person that lives on the back side, and after talking with him he didn't have an objection to this. If he must put Arborvitae or trees up, he will definitely consider it. J. Hammerschmidt said the other problem on the aesthetic side is to reduce the amount of side containers back a couple 100', so therefore it is a little more conducive to the corridor look. T. Sommer said the only trouble is now you are putting up a fence and this is what he has been trying to eliminate is the appearance of a fence. He does not like the idea. He has a fence on the very back side; the south side, but this is the only area he is anticipating putting a fence. J. Hammerschmidt asked if he was going to have a gate. T. Sommer said yes in the front. J. Hammerschmidt said this would be a nice introduction if you continue down 100' or 200' feet, so that when people drive down Liberty Avenue going from the east or west, they will not see containers first thing. They will see a nice entrance with a building right after it and then as you drive past, you will see further back the starting of containers. This is the same thing with the idea of reorganizing it to put containers in the middle between the two different building types, so therefore, when they drive down they will see a nicer looking building than a container. Containers sometimes look shabby and they have a perceived thought. T. Sommer said they will not look this way in his perception. He described and noted that the condo building is 100' x 300' and in turn, if he has to eliminate or reconfigure the east wall he will look at this, but he is allowing 60' of clearance to get into each condo unit, which is very generous when backing in a motor home, boat, or whatever. He said they will have some sort of a setback from the property of where the containers will be placed, but it is not his first

choice. He thinks the drawing they came up was very well laid out. J. Hammerschmidt said it is a nice presentation, but he is just trying to justify changing something as he lives here and cares about this corridor, and he is a very aesthetic person and knows how he would do it – he isn't saying he is right and T. Sommer is wrong, but he is just saying he thinks he knows how he could make it a little more nicer looking and more tolerable. T. Sommer said still he wants them to put a fence in on the east side and he really does not like fences. J. Hammerschmidt said there are people here that really don't like containers, so a fence is a little more tolerable especially if they do it in a nice fashion and especially into an entrance into a property when you're spending to belong there. He would much rather drive into a nice entrance than feeling like he is in a shipyard.

Mayor Forthofer said they all know how he feels about the eastern corridor. It is one of the reasons why he is here – to have that developed into something commercial, light industrial, vibrant and personnel business along this corridor. He said they have some traction in this direction. He said, "Would I prefer to see a distributorship on this property of Mr. Sommer's, of course I would. But, as everyone has said, it is Mr. Sommer's property and he is choosing to use it for storage." To this end, Mr. Sommer has assured that he will make the front have curb appeal. In fact, he arranged a meeting with Mr. Sommer and the owners of Defense Soap where he got the name of the landscaper, and he will consider using them to landscape his property to give him that curb appeal. However, as an elected official he has to pass along what his constituents have told him as he has had a lot – dozens of phone and personal contacts all with the concern of the shipping containers in the back. He said he mentioned this to Mr. Sommer last week and he would be remiss if he did not pass this along. He too senses a concern on the part of population regarding these shipping containers. He would like to see some other use and he is sure Mr. Sommer would have loved somebody to have bought his land and use it for some vibrant purpose, but this is where they are and he thinks the rubbing point seems to be the shipping containers and their use.

H. Strickler said they are here tonight just for the rezoning of the property; they are not here for the land use. She said they only have three members present and feels they will have an uphill battle just because of the outcry but hearing this seems more palatable. She noted that Mr. Sommer has tried selling this property for 40 years and they need to decide whether they are going to rezone the property and recommend it to City Council and then City Council will decide what they will do. If approved, then the preliminary site plan will come back to the Planning Commission and this is when they can talk about the use. She said they held a work session before the regular meeting, and they did talk about the eastern corridor and what they want. They do not want four or five different storage containers on this side of town. They would like to see something else. However, tonight they are voting on whether they will be making a recommendation to City Council for the rezoning. She said these conversations will continue or they will die.

C. Howard advised Mr. Sommer that only three planning members were present tonight, and he will need all three members to say yes before it gets passed onto council. Therefore, it is his option if he wants to consider waiting until there is five members present. He does have the right to appeal to Council if Planning Commission says no. He just wants to give Mr. Sommer all his options on whether he wants to proceed this evening on the rezoning. Mr. Sommer said they can postpone the rezoning.

Homer Taft said he is confused about a couple things and wanted to ask additional questions. He said he read in the paper that these were not going to be condos, as Mr. Sommer has consistently referred to having condos there, and if there are condos then the owners of the condos he would assume would decide what happens to some extent. The greater point of confusion that he has is that this is a rezoning. He

does not have any wish to task burdens on Mr. Sommer's intentions as he is sure that with him being a long-time resident of the community that he intends to do well if he can. However, none of these things are in this rezoning and you are still dealing with a rezoning that this is not a primary permitted use. It is a conditional use even then. He does not think this is the best way to approach this in the first instance. So, if there is going to be limitations, they cannot build on 50' then it should be in some special zoning thing, or if there are other setback requirements, then this ought to be determined. This is a zoning and planning issue, and not a land use later issue, so they are talking rezoning here and this is not the appropriate rezoning.

T. Sommer asked the board to table the rezoning request until they have a full quorum of members, understanding there would be no guarantee there will be a quorum next month. H. Shirley said this is always the risk.

G. Fisher said the next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for October 7 at 7pm.

T. Sommer said they may come up with another plan in the meantime knowing they are just dealing with the rezoning issue and not the layout to this point.

H. Shirley adjourned the meeting upon no further conversation.

H. Shirley immediately reopened the meeting to proceed with voting on the matter of Adaptive Engineering Group and T. Sommer's request of rezoning and making a recommendation to City Council as such.

H. Strickler MOVED, J. Hammerschmidt seconded to recommend to the Vermilion City Council the rezoning of 8.837 acres from R-3 "Suburban Residence District" to B-3 "Highway Commercial District". Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

G. Fisher explained the next step would be for her to schedule a Public Hearing by placing notice in the Vermilion Photojournal and notifying all residents within 300' of the proposed rezoning of the Public Hearing date. There will be three readings on the rezoning ordinance, with the third reading being on the night of the Public Hearing upon hearing all comments from the public. *Clerk's Note: The Public Hearing will be scheduled on Monday, October 26, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio, with a Regular City Council meeting immediately following. Notice will be published in the Vermilion Photojournal on Thursday, September 10, 2020.*

T. Sommer said in the meantime they will look at reconfiguring their plan on the location of the shipping containers as suggested.

H. Shirley adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting:

*The next meeting has been scheduled for October 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
at the Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio*

Gwen Fisher

From: I <chappjw@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 29, 2020 1:41 PM
To: Gwen Fisher; Jim Forthofer; heather.shirley70@yahoo.com; virginie@rival.fr; williams1395@gmail.com; Bill DiFucci; Tony Valerius
Subject: Fwd: new storage facility on Liberty

Thought you guys might be interested in this email that I got today
Jim Chapple

-----Original Message-----

From: quietisland11@roadrunner.com
To: 'chappjw@aol.com' <chappjw@aol.com>
Sent: Sat, Aug 29, 2020 12:44 pm
Subject: new storage facility on Liberty

Jim, My husband and I am both concerned about the new storage facility being proposed for Liberty. We question the need. The use of storage containers though is our greatest concern since they invite graffiti and will definitely rust. With no-one on the premise we are concerned about maintenance. The mayor has started to reclaim the east corridor and has shown positive results. Thankfully the Ford Plant lot is being emptied and we have the opportunity to really build positively and not take steps backward. Thanks for listening, Denny and Elaine Carlin 440-963-7319

Gwen Fisher

From: Jim Forthofer
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 10:46 AM
To: Gwen Fisher
Cc: Barb; Joe Williams; Barb Brady; Brian Holmes
Subject: FW: Vermilion Planning Commission

Gwen:
Please enter this resident's correspondence into the record for Planning Commission tomorrow.
Thank you.
-JF

-----Original Message-----

From: Barb <barb.staszak@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 10:27 AM
To: Jim Forthofer <JimForthofer@vermilion.net>
Subject: Vermilion Planning Commission

Dear Mayor Forthofer,

Please forward this letter to be read at the Planning Commission meeting On Sept. 2. Also, please let me know that you received this letter.

Thank you,
Barbara Staszak

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> To the Vermilion Planning Commission:

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> We are writing to express our strong opposition regarding the zoning change for the Sommers property east of Hazelwood Ave. It is currently zoned as residential. Many years ago Sommers tried to change the zoning of that same property to build a trailer park. The city refused to change the zoning. Then, several years ago he brought in an Amish logging company, decimating the woods, making it look like a war zone.

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> Obviously, our principal objection is that the proposed zoning changes will reduce property values in our and surrounding neighborhoods. But we also strongly object to the stark, ugliness of his container proposal that would be in our backyards. We appreciate he wants to make money from his property but do not believe it is in the best interest of our neighborhood, the neighborhood west of his property, or the city of Vermilion to allow this change of zoning. As you are aware, Ken Cassell also owns/owned acreage around these same neighborhoods. He kept within the residential zoning and has improved the land with nice homes which help enhance the beauty of Vermilion. He has even donated some nearby land to the Metroparks!

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> Please keep in mind when you are making your decision that Vermilion is more than just it's downtown. Many visitors arrive from the east. You are aware of the salvage yard off of Baumhart Rd and know that the city is trying to change that eyesore. Please don't allow another eyesore closer to downtown or in our backyards. There have been so many positive changes to the east side of Vermilion recently such as Vintage Lighting and the beautifully landscaped Defense Soap business. Also, German Villa is right across the road from the proposed ugly storage container business. Can you

imagine visitors going there for lunch, families holding wedding receptions there and having that ugly backdrop across the road? It is our strong opinion that you reject this business proposal for the betterment of our community.

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> Thank you for the consideration of this letter, Frank and Barbara

> Staszak

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Gwen Fisher

From: Jim Forthofer
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 3:26 PM
To: Coon, Meg; Brian Holmes; Steve Herron; jgabriel@vermilion.net; Barb Brady
Cc: Gwen Fisher; Joe Williams; Jim Chapple
Subject: RE: beautiful wooded lot to be turned into an ugly crime ridden cargo shipping container junk yard-is this what we want for the East end of the City? I think not!

Ms. Coon:

Thank you for voicing your concerns regarding this matter.

The property you mention will come before the Planning Commission at their regular September meeting. I am asking Boards and Commissions Clerk Gwen Fisher to notify you of the date of this meeting. You are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting in person or by written correspondence.

As a neighbor, your opinion about this property is of value to the Commission.

Remember, the Planning Commission is made up of unpaid residents like you who work for the best interest of the community.

Your input is important.

Sincerely,

Jim Forthofer

Mayor, City of Vermilion

5511 Liberty Avenue
Vermilion, Ohio
440/204-2400



From: Coon, Meg <meg.coon@nordson.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 10:49 AM

To: Brian Holmes <bholmes@vermilion.net>; Steve Herron <sherron@vermilion.net>; jgabriel@vermilion.net; Barb Brady <bbrady@vermilion.net>; Jim.Forthofer <JimForthofer@vermilion.net>

Subject: beautiful wooded lot to be turned into an ugly crime ridden cargo shipping container junk yard-is this what we want for the East end of the City? I think not!

Dear Vermilion City Mayor, Council members, and the City Planning & Zoning Board :

I bought my house on Hazelwood almost 20 years ago because our property borders a large wooded lot. It gives us the illusion of having a natural wildlife refuge. It has brought us many years of happiness and enjoyment. It's beautiful and brings numerous wildlife to our back door. We see daily: owls, bats, deer, raccoons, squirrels, and many species of birds including spring egrets who nest in in the ponds on the lot. I know that others on our street enjoy this view which has been a selling point for many of the houses on the west side of the street.

I recently learned the landowner of the wooded lot wants to make this a large storage unit facility. These woods would become storage for RV's and cars, and around the perimeter the shipping cargo containers would line the property. This

view would be appalling! I did not buy my house to live beside a view of ugly cargo containers or a junk yard! This existing wildlife refuge would be replaced with crime: people cutting through our yards to break into the storage units and possibly squatters hanging out there.

Also, drainage would be a huge issue. In the spring, there are many small ponds in that woods. With the storage units there, where is that water going to flow? Many backyards on our street already flood and with these retention ponds gone, additional flooding is going to happen. Just ask the city engineer how many times his office is called out to clean out the ditches on Hazelwood now!

Additionally, what extra payroll taxes will the city receive from this type of business since the owner has said he will not employ any on-site employees?

This particular land- owner has never shown respect for the city or his neighbors. Twice, he has done work on his land without getting city work permits. He timbered the large trees out for profit about 5 to 10 years ago without a permit. The following year, the Vermilion Fire Department were called out several times to put out fires which started from left-over sawdust mounds left by him. One wonders if he was charged for the Fire Department's services? One also wonders if city permission was obtained for a work permit when he cleared the large timbers from the land thereby destroying the habitat of protected animals (eagles, bats, egrets, owls). Federal Wild-life Management personnel told us they would have not allowed this destruction had an environmental study been completed.

This land owner recently cleared another portion of the lot - the brush and small trees (without a city work permit) at the front of the property - and already my neighbors and I can tell the difference in the loss of the sound barrier. We dread what we will hear when the sound barrier is completely gone. For those of us who live on the south end of Hazelwood, this past weekend we could now hear people talking to each other while sitting at the red light on Liberty. We could hear an announcer at German's Villa on his loud speaker addressing the crowd at the recent car show. We could even hear boat propellers from the lake. We were never able to hear this before this new round of lot clearing occurred.

I and my neighbors feel this type of business should be located next to other businesses not residential houses! Please do not re-zone this area. How would you like to have your backyard scenery to be shipping containers and a junk yard! Doesn't Vermilion already have enough storage unit facilities!? A better use of this property would be if the land owner would donate the property to the Metroparks which is located directly behind his 35 acres. Let's save this little piece of nature paradise!! The Hazelwood home owners, wildlife (protected egrets, bats, turkey vultures, and owls) will praise you! Please do not allow this wildlife refuge to be eradicated. Please Vote no on this proposed business project and for rezoning this property.

View now: (do you spot the turkey vulture)



Future view:



Thank you for reading my concerns,

Saddened Hazelwood homeowner,

Meg and Shawn Coon