

REVISED MINUTES OF MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 18, 2024

Members Present: Wilson, Capka, Allen, DeMarco, Bishop

Presence Noted: Ray Reich, Building Commissioner
Kathryn Kerber, Director of Planning and Community Development
Kate Straub, Planning and Zoning Coordinator

Council Members Present: Jeanne Gallagher, Ward 3
Christina Morris, At-Large Council Member
Dave Furry, At-Large and Council President
Tom Hunt, Ward 1
Michael O'Boyle, Ward 2

Chairman Bishop called to order the January 18, 2024 meeting of the Rocky River Planning Commission at 6:00 P.M. in City Council Chambers of Rocky River City Hall.

Mr. Bishop asked if there are any corrections to the Planning Commission meeting minutes of December 19, 2023. Mr. DeMarco moved to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Allen seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

1. CITY OF ROCKY RIVER SENIOR CENTER – 21014 Hilliard Blvd. – PUBLIC HEARING - PRELIMINARY REVIEW – Senior Center Additions. Mr. Timothy Wagner and Mr. Don Rerko of Makovich & Pusti Architects, Inc., came forward to present the project. Also present is Rocky River Facilities Director, Michael Balla.

Project overview: Additions to the front of the existing building for a lecture hall to seat approximately 96 people and to the back for a fitness center/dance studio and new restrooms. A lot consolidation of two city-owned properties is required for this project. The exterior of the additions will tie in with the existing building.

Mr. Bishop thanked the applicants for a thorough pre-preliminary review last month and it looks like they addressed everything the Commission requested on the site plan. He asked how their pre-preliminary review went with the Design Board. Mr. Wagner said that the Design Board had some comments about some of the materials they are planning to use and how they are applying them to the front elevation and asked them to also look at the entrance.

Mr. DeMarco asked what the context was regarding the comments Design Board made about the entrance. Mr. Wagner said they would like to see the tall piece be revised to relate to the entrance more, which is in line with Mr. DeMarco's comments at the last meeting. Mr. DeMarco said that if they are going to focus on signage at a later date, they should come back to this Planning Commission with that sign package. He suggested that they provide some sort of

definition or score marks on the EIFS material on the back of the building because it looks like one big piece of stone as it is being presented now.

Mr. Allen said that the square footage calculations all make sense to him now and thanked them for updating the site plan.

Mr. Capka said his questions surrounded parking and he appreciates the update that the City is satisfied with the parking as it is being provided.

Mr. Wilson has no further comments.

Mr. Bishop moved to open the public hearing. Mr. Capka seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

Ms. Kathryn Boyd, 1948 Wagar Rd., came forward to express the following concerns: She is the neighbor adjacent to the property. She loves the design but she is concerned with the amount of water that fills the back of the property into the community garden. There is a wetland existing back there and she is hoping there is proper drainage for the storm water and questioned whether they need certain permits because this is now considered a wetland. There is a lack of landscaping on the back, which she feels is important. She added that there are plants and trees that can grow in the shade. She quoted the Master Plan and the fact that we have plans to make trails for people to walk along on this property. She asked that they address lighting back there along with the landscaping to encourage seniors to walk the paths. She said the Code requires screening for the parking and it hasn't been addressed at this point, so she hopes that will be addressed per Section 1185.11. Mr. Bishop asked Ms. Boyd if she can see the Senior Center building from her house. Ms. Boyd responded that her view of the Senior Center building is currently blocked by the big greenhouse and she feels she probably will see it once it is expanded back. She also sees the Senior Center bus that is always parked in that lot and it would be great if they would plant some screening materials for that.

There being no other members of the public wishing to comment, Mr. Bishop moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Capka seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

The applicants addressed the neighbor's concerns by saying they are not building into the wetland so they have no EPA requirements for that. The drainage of the property will be enhanced by the roof system and the storm water will be handled that way. They can look at the screening of the property, but a main concern is that it is a Senior Center and it is suggested not to put bushes in that would allow people to hide behind. They can look at some smaller plantings. The trees within 5' to 10' of the building footprint will be removed. He said that

there is a path back there now and there will be a sidewalk going around the building, so they could connect to the path. Mr. Bishop pointed out that the site plan shows the existing wetlands and confirmed that they are quite a distance from the addition. Regarding lighting behind the building, there will be lighting above the exits, which is required by Code, and it would not be pitch black back there. They operate after dark maybe once or twice a year. They are not touching the parking lot so the screening does not relate to this project. It was mentioned that there is no other place to park the Senior Center bus. Mr. Balla said that they can take a look at that and see what can be done. They have engineered the storm water management and/or catch basins on the site, but the construction documents are not complete yet. That should address the concerns about standing water.

Mr. Allen agreed with adding some landscaping in the back of the building and asked them to return with it for the final approval.

Mr. DeMarco moved to grant preliminary approval to The City of Rocky River Senior Center, 21014 Hilliard Blvd., to construct two additions, subject to the commentary in the meeting minutes regarding items they should address based on concerns the neighbor expressed. Mr. Allen seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays
Passed

3. ORDINANCE 80-23 – PUBLIC HEARING – An Ordinance amending various sections of Rocky River Codified Ordinances Chapter 1163 Entitled “Office Building District Regulations,” as further described in Exhibit “A”.

Mr. Bishop said he would like to incorporate the City Council meeting minutes of October 23, 2023, November 6, December 4, 2023 and December 11, 2023 regarding Ordinance 80-23 (attached). He would also like to incorporate the Planning Commission meeting minutes of August 15, 2023 and November 14, 2023 regarding Ordinance 80-23 (attached). He said he would like to clarify that this discussion will only be about Ordinance 80-23, which covers the entire City as it relates to requirements within Office Building zoning districts. There will be no discussion regarding any zoning changes or any projects anywhere in the City. There is a rezoning that was put before Council which has been put on hold. That zoning request will go through the entire process on its own. They are really talking tonight about Office zoning in the entire City on properties that are currently zoned Office. This is not about changing any zoning classifications of any properties.

Mr. Bishop said he would also like to address social media. He has heard about or seen quite a bit on social media and he thinks that 70% of the information at a bare minimum is inaccurate. He will be trying to clarify some of those inaccuracies tonight so that everybody has an understanding of where we started and where we are today. He would like to go on record to say that he was misquoted by an individual at a City Council meeting on December 11, 2023. The minutes of the Planning Commission November 14, 2023 meeting reflect his exact words and he