PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
March 19, 2025 at 5:30 PM
Council Chambers

Chair: Jody Carney **Vice-Chair:** Diana McCoy
Members: Brad Swank, Ronald Price, Nick McCullough

Call to Order:

Mayor Carney called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Roll Call:

Present: R. Price, J. Carney, N. McCullough, B. Swank, D. McCoy.

Absent: None.

Approval of Minutes:

Planning and Zoning Commission Special Meeting – February 18, 2025
Mr. McCullough motioned to approve the February 18, 2025 Special Meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Price. Three yeas and one abstention from Ms. McCoy.

Motion to Appoint Nick McCullough to the Plain City Housing Council:

Mr. Price motioned to appoint Mr. McCullough to the Housing Council, seconded by Ms. McCoy. All in favor – motion passes 3-0.

Communication:

Planning and Zoning - Mr. Hutchinson stated there are four zoning code changes on the agenda tonight. There will likely be more changes at the April meeting.

BZA – Ms. McCoy stated there were two variance requests and one conditional use request at last week's BZA meeting (March 12, 2025). All three applications were approved. Mr. Hutchinson stated there will be a meeting in April.

Council – Mayor Carney stated that Council is potentially looking into moving the regularly scheduled meeting set for Monday, March 24, 2025 to a new date in order to have a full quorum.

The Mayor stated the Village is hiring a couple new positions. The first is a Facility Maintenance Supervisor. This position will help to maintain the various buildings that are owned by the Village. The second new position is a Communications Manager.

The Mayor stated Council recently passed legislation prohibiting the sale of marijuana within the Village limits.

Mr. Swank arrived at the meeting at 5:34pm.

Public Comment: None.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Public Hearing: RZ-25-1.

Mayor Carney opened the public hearing at 5:36pm.

Upon hearing no comments from the public, Mayor Carney closed the public hearing for Rezoning application RZ-25-1 at 5:36pm.

RZ-25-1: Rezoning of 89.21 +/- acres at 0 Cemetery Pike (Parcels #35-00016.000 and #02-00028.000) from Darby Township Agricultural "A1" to Planned Unit Development "PUD"; Applicant: Hillary Laffin with Fischer Homes.

PUD-25-1: Preliminary Development Plan: Noah Beachy Farms

Mr. Hutchinson explained that since the Rezoning and the Preliminary Plan are part of the same discussion, Fischer Homes will do their presentation and then the Planning Commission can vote on each agenda item separately.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that the site is approximately 89 acres south of SR-161 and off of Cemetery Pike. Previously, Fischer presented their Concept Plan in late 2023. Over the last year, the Village has had a lot of communication with Fischer Homes. The first portion of the annexation is complete, and the second part has recently been filed.

Hillary Laffin introduced herself; she is the Planning and Entitlements Manager with Grand Communities, the affiliated development company of Fischer Homes. Ms. Laffin started by providing an overview of the development. She stated that this is the first development Fischer Homes will be developing in the Village of Plain City. Fischer Homes is a Cincinnati-based company, founded by Henry Fischer in 1980. One of the main focuses of the company is creating the best new home solutions. Ms. Laffin stated they pride themselves on how their communities mature overtime.

Ms. Laffin stated the site itself contains two parcels for a total of roughly 89 acres; the top portion has already been annexed into the Village. They are working on the annexation process for the southern parcel. She stated the current zoning is [Darby Township] A1 Agricultural, and they are looking to rezone this to a PUD.

She explained some of the constraints on the property. There is a stream that runs to the far west of the property and there is also a pipeline easement that runs through the center of the property. Fischer Homes is interested in continuing to work with the Village on the extension of the Heritage Trail.

Ms. Laffin stated they presented before the Planning Commission and Village Council in 2023 and received some comments on the site. The developers have since eliminated the cut-through street that ran from State Route 161 to Cemetery Pike. They have also provided more curvature in the street layout as well as landscape buffers.

Ms. Laffin presented the updated site plan. Overall, they are proposing 243 home sites on 89 acres, creating a density of under 3 units per acre. Ms. Laffin explained each of the three different home collections within the development. Their goal is to be able to provide for every kind of home buyer.

The Starter product is their most affordable, with an average starting price of $450,000 dollars. The next tier of product is called the Designer product, averaging $610,000. The Masterpiece product will be located more so on the West side of the development, selling for approximately $750,000.

Ms. Laffin stated there will be an access off of State Route 161, with an additional access off of Cemetery Pike.

Ms. Laffin provided an overview of the lot sizes. Lots will vary between 55', 65', and 85' in width. Most of the lots are 120' to 125' in depth. The minimum lot areas will range from 6,000-10,000 sq. ft. depending on the product. The front setbacks are 25 feet across all home sites. Side yard setbacks are 7 feet with a total aggregate of 14 feet. Rear yard setbacks will be 20 feet.

Ms. Laffin stated the site will provide just over 30% open space, which exceeds the required 25% in a PUD. Open space amenities are planned throughout the site, including a 5-foot paved community path that will run through the open space. She stated they are continuing to work with the Village on the location of the Heritage Trail extension. She also stated they are thinking of providing a pavilion area and playground for the members of the community.

Ms. Laffin provided some visual examples of each home collection. The Maple Street collection, which is the starter product, ranges from about 1,400-3,000 sq. ft. in floor area. The Designer product is slightly larger, ranging from 1,700-3,300 sq. ft. The Masterpiece product is geared toward the more mature homebuyer – someone that may be looking for more space.

Ms. McCoy asked what the square footage of the Masterpiece products are. Ms. Laffin stated 2,800 sq. ft. and up. In every collection, there are standard floorplans. Homebuyers can work with Fischer Homes to customize their flooring, appliances, light fixtures, countertops, etc.

Ms. Laffin stated they reviewed the engineering comments provided by Mannik and Smith Group. She outlined the deviations from the code which Fischer is requesting.

The first request is a deviation from Section 1181.06(d)(1), which requires a Final Development Plan to be filed no later than 24 months after the date of approval of the Preliminary Plan and zoning change. Ms. Laffin stated they are asking for an extended timeline of 60 months (5 years). They are requesting this deviation as it relates to the current state of sanitary sewer; sewer is not readily available at this site.

The second request is to eliminate a connection to the northern property stub, a deviation from Section 1125.03.1(b) which requires connections to be provided to adjoining properties for future access. Ms. Laffin stated it is her understanding that this northern property was a potential expansion to the adjacent concrete plant. They would prefer not to have a road stub leading towards a potential industrial development.

The third request is to deviate from Section 1125.03.1(f)(2) and allow blocks within the development to be longer than 1,200 feet. This specifically relates to roads B and C.

The Commission spent some time discussing the requested deviations.

Mr. VanTilburg explained why blocks are limited to 1,200 feet; he stated it is in the code to provide more safety. Longer roads with less intersections tend to create a chance for drivers to go faster down roadways. Mr. VanTilburg suggested that Fischer adds some traffic calming measures.

Mr. McCullough asked what kind of traffic calming may be provided. Ms. Laffin stated there may be an opportunity for traffic calming where the pipeline easement crosses the streets – there is potential for bump outs to provide traffic calming.

Mr. McCullough suggested providing a speed table, which is somewhat longer than a traditional speed bump.

Mr. Swank inquired about landscape buffering along the northern property line running east to west. Ms. Laffin stated that the landscaping is not represented on this plan, but there will need to be internal buffering – mounding, landscaping, or fencing - especially adjacent to the concrete plant.

Mr. Swank asked about the proposed side yard setbacks. Mr. Hutchinson stated the 7 ft. setbacks that Fischer is proposing would meet code. Essentially, there could be no less than 14 ft. distance between each home. Ms. Laffin stated that on some lots, there would be side setbacks greater than 7 ft. due to the widths of the lots and products.

Mr. Swank confirmed with Mr. Hutchinson that detention ponds and basins with walking paths/amenities around them do count towards the open space calculations.

Mr. McCullough asked how much customization is offered for the Starter and Design collections. Ms. Laffin stated that for each product line, there are roughly 10-12 floor plans and roughly 5 elevations for each floor plan. Fischer will not allow certain floorplans and elevations adjacent to and across the street.

Mayor Carney asked if most elevations will incorporate stone into the front of the home. Ms. Laffin stated buyers will have the option for stone, but it will not be forced upon them. Stone facades will be at the cost of the buyer.

Mr. Swank inquired as to the amenities that would be provided. Ms. Laffin stated the developers would like to incorporate a playground and a picnic shelter. They also want to create seating options along the pathways.

Mr. Hutchinson stated to the site's west is a large open space with a looped trail, which should provide a nice amenity.

Mayor Carney motioned to provide a recommendation of approval for rezoning application RZ-25-1, seconded by Mr. Swank. All in favor – motion passes 5-0.

Mayor Carney motioned to provide a recommendation of approval for Preliminary Development Plan application PUD-25-1, seconded by Mr. McCullough. All in favor – motion passes 5-0.

Public Hearing for ZC-25-2.

Mayor Carney opened the public hearing for ZC-25-2 at 6:16pm. Upon hearing no comments from the public, the public hearing was closed at 6:16pm.

ZC-25-2: Zoning Code Amendment, Chapter 1135.04 (Fees) of Part Eleven of the Planning and Zoning Code.

Mr. Hutchinson explained that the current fee structure has not been updated in quite some time. The proposed code change is to remove the fee schedule from the zoning code and to replace it with a fee schedule to be implemented and adopted by Village Council. It is difficult when individual fees need changing because this warrants a code change every time. Council will be able to review and set the fee schedule with this change.

Mr. Hutchinson stated there is still time to finalize the draft fee schedule. Currently, development fees are expected to increase, while permit fees on the property owners' end (fence permits, shed permits, other types of zoning permits) will see decreases. Mr. Hutchinson stated he will provide this draft schedule to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Price motioned to provide a recommendation of approval for Zoning Code application ZC-25-2, seconded by Mr. Swank. All in favor – motion passes 5-0.

Public Hearing for ZC-25-3.

Mayor Carney opened the public hearing for ZC-25-3 at 6:19pm. Upon hearing no comments from the public, the public hearing was closed at 6:19pm.

ZC-25-3: Zoning Code Amendment, Chapter 1199 (Signs) of Part Eleven of the Planning and Zoning Code.

Mr. Hutchinson stated this is an entirely new sign code replacing the existing sign code. It was brought before the Planning Commission in early 2024. Mr. Hutchinson had previously recommended to table approval of the new sign code last year, as there

were some surrounding municipalities with newer codes that Mr. Hutchinson wanted time to review.

Mr. Hutchinson stated the current sign code is very dated, and it is not zoning district-specific. He stated the current code does not have many standards for temporary signage, and this sign code update is long overdue.

Mr. Price motioned to provide a recommendation of approval for Zoning Code application ZC-25-3, seconded by Ms. McCoy. All in favor – motion passes 5-0.

Public Hearing for ZC-25-4.

Mayor Carney opened the public hearing for ZC-25-4 at 6:22pm. Upon hearing no comments from the public, the public hearing was closed at 6:23pm.

ZC-25-4: Zoning Code Amendment, Chapter 1163 (B2 Community Business District) of Part Eleven of the Planning and Zoning Code.

Mr. Hutchinson stated this is not the only zoning district that will be seeing updates to the uses. Other district code updates will be coming in the future. He stated the B2 Zoning District is the largest commercial district in the Village; this is where most commercial activity takes places.

The current B2 code uses the SIC [Standard Industrial Classification] Code system, which is outdated. This code has a lot of services and business types that simply do not exist anymore. Mr. Hutchinson stated that this can limit a lot of new uses that aren't listed in the current code.

Mr. Hutchinson provided an example: recently at the last Board of Zoning Appeals meeting, the BZA heard a Conditional Use application for a Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Academy business planning to operate within the B2 district. The business – because the Village uses the SIC Code – was considered to fall under the classification "7999 - Amusement and Recreation Service," which is listed as a Conditional Use, instead of being outright permitted.

Mr. Hutchinson explained the purpose of the code update is to remove the SIC numbering and to simplify the uses so that they are easier to categorize.

Ms. McCoy asked if this code update would help to eliminate some of the BZA involvement/hearings for Conditional Uses. Mr. Hutchinson stated yes. Mr. Powers stated that there are some conditional uses listed in the proposed code update.

Mr. Hutchinson explained that part of the code update is to provide the Zoning Administrator with the ability to determine if a use is similar or compatible with the other uses, if it is not explicitly listed in the code.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that this code update would also place additional conditions on smoke and vape shops. The Village cannot prevent these uses from operating in the Village, but the Village can place certain regulations. Mr. Hutchinson is proposing setting a minimum distance of 1,000 feet between any smoke/vape shop from the lot line of a residential-zoned parcel, from the lot line of any school, and from the lot line of another smoke/vape shop use.

Mayor Carney asked if the sentence requiring smoke/vape shops to be located a minimum 1,000 feet from "any school" could be changed to "any school owned property". Mr. Hutchinson stated he could make this change. If the Commission makes a motion to approve, Mr. Hutchinson explained to include that as a condition of approval.

Mayor Carney motioned to provide a recommendation of approval for Zoning Code application ZC-25-4, on the condition that Section 1163.04(h)(2) be amended to state "any school owned property", seconded by Mr. McCullough. All in favor – motion passes 5-0.

Public Hearing for ZC-25-5.

Mayor Carney opened the public hearing for ZC-25-5 at 6:30pm. Upon hearing no comments from the public, the public hearing was closed at 6:30pm.

ZC-25-5: Zoning Code Amendment, Removal of Chapter 1183.04 (Medical Marijuana Cultivators, Processors and Retail Dispensaries) of Part Eleven of the Planning and Zoning Code.

Mr. Hutchinson stated this was a Council-driven code update. Council recently prohibited marijuana sales and dispensaries, and so this section in the Zoning Code needs to be removed.

Ms. McCoy inquired what the difference is between a dispensary and a smoke/vape shop. Mr. Hutchinson stated a dispensary sells marijuana, and a smoke/vape shop cannot sell this. Mr. McCullough stated it has to do with the difference between CBD and THC products.

Mayor Carney stated Council initially had a moratorium in place for marijuana dispensaries. It was added back onto a Council agenda and a vote to prohibit them was passed.

Mayor Carney motioned to provide a recommendation of approval for Zoning Code application ZC-25-5, seconded by Ms. McCoy. All in favor – motion passes 5-0.

Discussion Items: None.

Adjourn

Mayor Carney motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. McCullough. Meeting adjourned at 6:32pm.