

November 23, 2015

CM 2015-347

BEACHWOOD CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD AT BEACHWOOD CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 25325 FAIRMOUNT BOULEVARD, BEACHWOOD, OHIO HELD ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2015 AT 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Council Vice-President Mark I. Wachter.

ROLL CALL: Present: M.S. Horwitz, A. Isaacson, M.M. Jacobs, J. Pasch,
M.I. Wachter
Absent: None.
Not present: F.S. Goodman, M. Mintz
Also Present: Mayor Gorden, H. Jones, W. Griswold

1. Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.

Mr. Doult stated that after one year of work from the internal team and the team from the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission the draft of the Five Year Master Plan is ready for presentation.

Mr. Doult stated that the presentation will be given by James Sonnhalter who is the Manager of Planning Services for the County Planning Commission and Patrick Hewitt who is a Planner for the County.

Mr. Doult stated that questions were certainly welcome but Mr. Doult asked that they be held until the end of the presentation.

Mr. Doult stated that this presentation was the first step in the presentation process of the Draft.

Mr. Doult stated that the next step is a Community Open House that has yet to be scheduled.

Mr. Doult turned over the presentation to Mr. Sonnhalter.

Mayor Gorden stated that the team that Mr. Doult put together is second to none.

Mayor Gorden stated that there are several employees are part of the administration that was involved in the Master Plan.

Mayor Gorden stated that this was not done by Mr. Doult and himself alone.

Mayor Gorden stated that he was an active participant but he did not lead the group.

Mayor Gorden stated that he is very proud of what this group has assembled as far as information coming forward.

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Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mayor Gorden stated that this will help the City and the Elected Officials focus on what needs to be done in future years.

Mayor Gorden stated that this was a team effort by many people.

Mr. Sonnhalter stated thank you to everyone for coming out and Mr. Sonnhalter also introduced the Lead Planner, Patrick Hewitt.

Mr. Sonnhalter stated that tonight will be the presentation of the Master Plan and tonight the discussion will be the Plan document itself and how we have gotten to this point.

Mr. Sonnhalter stated that the process, the document itself, and the context, implementation, and what's next is what is being discussed tonight.

Mr. Sonnhalter starts the PowerPoint presentation with the "Process."

(PowerPoint Presentation is Available in the Law Department)

Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mr. Sonnhalter opens the meeting up to questions.

Mr. Wachter thanks Mr. Sonnhalter and Mr. Hewitt

Mr. Isaacson stated that early in the presentation, it was discussed about redeveloping Commerce Park and converting it to Mixed-Use.

Mr. Isaacson stated that he presumed that Mixed-Use was Commercial and Residential.

Mr. Hewitt stated that was correct.

Mr. Isaacson asked what impact the conversion would have on businesses over time.

Mr. Isaacson asked if places that go Mixed-Use tend towards residential over time with the businesses pushed out or do they tend to stay balanced.

Mr. Hewitt stated that it is relatively early in the idea of Mixed-Use and he does not have statistical information regarding historic trends.

Mr. Hewitt stated that if there was a concern when you are developing the Mixed-Use Zoning, you can outline what percent would be residential and what percent would be office or commercial.

Mr. Isaacson stated that he was more trying to understand the impact of the two in close proximity.

Mr. Isaacson asked what happens to areas that are zoned like that over time versus areas that are zoned all one or all the other.

Mr. Hewitt stated that Mixed-Use has become more attractive in some places.

Mr. Hewitt stated that Mixed-Use is being seen in cities around the country because not only residents but also businesses want to locate in close proximity to the other and that it can actually boost property values and boost desire for businesses and residents to move there.

Mr. Hewitt stated that this was because there was a desire to walk from one place to the other.

Mr. Hewitt stated that Mixed-Use may actually become a positive over time.

Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mr. Isaacson stated that another recommendation was to zone Richmond Road towards more Multi-Family.

Mr. Isaacson stated that there was one particular spot on Richmond Road and the residents are very much opposed to the zoning because of concerns about traffic flow and the impact on residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Isaacson stated that there are concerns about traffic flow and the impact on residential homes.

Mr. Isaacson stated that any home along Richmond Road is in very close proximity to homes that are off Richmond Road in residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Isaacson asked to be walked through how moving Richmond Road to Multi-Family would be beneficial to the City and wondered how the City could mitigate the risks.

Mr. Hewitt stated that one of the other actions that was not included in the presentation would be to protect and buffer existing single family homes from any multi-family homes that might be nearby.

Mr. Hewitt stated that one solution is making sure there was sufficient distance or sufficient vegetation, or other sorts of separation between any multi-family developments and any nearby single-family homes or neighborhoods.

Mr. Hewitt stated that Richmond Road is becoming a more appropriate place for multi-family since it is so wide.

Mr. Hewitt stated that when you are looking at specific development plans, that is when you need to make sure that the density isn't too high, that there are those buffers and ways of separating and mitigating any negative impacts of multi-family.

Mr. Isaacson stated that with any curb-cut there could be issues like back-ups.

Mr. Sonnhalter stated that traffic management was considered.

Mr. Sonnhalter stated that even though more units would be added, the number of driveways would be reduced.

Mr. Isaacson stated that tax abatement was mentioned as a consideration to improve the housing stock.

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Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mr. Isaacson stated that clearly, that would impact the schools.

Mr. Isaacson stated that the schools are one of the main reasons that young families move into Beachwood.

Mr. Isaacson asked how to strike a balance between the schools and the tax abatement.

Mr. Hewitt stated that when looking at a Community Reinvestment Area, you can limit the amount of tax abatement.

Mr. Hewitt stated that you can make sure to allow schools to continue to get the taxes that would come from any new residential development.

Mr. Hewitt stated that Mixed-Use tends to attract families that don't have children so they would be providing an addition to the taxes towards the school while not actually adding a burden on that school.

Mr. Isaacson stated that it was also mentioned that the zoning code needed to be looked at because there are barriers to infill development.

Mr. Isaacson asked what barriers are there?

Mr. Hewitt stated that reviewing of the zoning code would be advised to ensure that there were no barriers.

Mr. Hewitt stated that things such as set-backs, floor area ratios, can stop development especially with infill development.

Mr. Hewitt stated that if your zoning code was made after a neighborhood was designed it might make it difficult for someone to fit a home on a small parcel based on the zoning code regulations.

Mr. Isaacson asked how Council can identify barriers if they exist.

Mr. Hewitt stated that this can be achieved through a review process.

Mr. Isaacson stated that he would be interested in understanding what sort of skills would be needed to be brought to the table for a review like that.

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Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mr. Isaacson stated that it was also suggested that part of the Chagrin Highlands should be turned into a park.

Mr. Isaacson stated that was valuable land and that it comes with decent incentives on one hand and a lot of strings attached on the other.

Mr. Isaacson stated that he was interested in understanding why that sort of decision was made.

Mr. Hewitt stated that there was no specific idea about a park and there were two recommendations.

Mr. Hewitt stated that the first was to create a new detailed area in Chagrin Highlands to revisit how it could be redeveloped and that this redevelopment could include more park space.

Mr. Hewitt stated that the City of Beachwood is already implementing stream buffers throughout that area. By using stream buffers and setting the buildings back, the area can become a park area that follows the streams throughout the district.

Mr. Hewitt stated that Stream Buffers and setting the buildings back, that area can become linear parks that follow the streams throughout the district.

Mr. Isaacson stated that it was recommended to go on a "road diet" along both Richmond and Chagrin, which means narrowing down the lanes and repurposing that for sidewalks or bicycles.

Mr. Hewitt stated that was correct.

Mr. Isaacson stated that Richmond and Chagrin is one of, if not the busiest, intersections in the County.

Mr. Hewitt stated that lanes are often built wider than they necessarily need to be.

Mr. Hewitt stated that by reducing a lane by a foot or two you may now have room for a bike lane, but that would take engineering which the County did not look at.

Mr. Isaacson asked if Chagrin and Richmond belonged to the City.

Mr. Smerigan stated that they are city streets and the City has authority over them.

Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mr. Jacobs stated that he was concerned with the Richmond Road aspect.

Mr. Jacobs stated that he would like to know what other cities in the area the County has done this type of plan with.

Mr. Sonnhalter stated that the County is currently working with Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

Mr. Jacobs asked how the Cedar Road area should be changed.

Mr. Hewitt stated that from Green Road to the historic district, there are a number of homes on small lots and this could be an area for denser housing in the future.

Mr. Jacobs stated that he would like to know what is meant by walkable neighborhoods.

Mr. Hewitt stated that walkability could mean a wide variety of things.

Mr. Hewitt stated that this could mean making sure that your streets are slow.

Mr. Hewitt also stated that this could mean crosswalks, making sure houses have front doors and a front porch.

Mr. Hewitt stated that these things could contribute to walkability.

Mr. Horwitz stated that he was very impressed with the five year master plan and that it should be used as a blue print for the next four to five years.

Mr. Horwitz stated that there were things that impressed him tremendously.

Mr. Horwitz stated that he was very appreciative of the examples given from other cities and other agencies.

Mr. Horwitz stated that it was his hope that the City starts using the master plan.

Mr. Pasch stated that he had a few questions and a few comments.

Mr. Pasch stated that he fears that a few houses would essentially be built very close to the street.

Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mr. Pasch asked how it would be suggested to manage those conundrums.

Mr. Hewitt stated that restrictions could be placed in order to control those situations.

Mr. Pasch stated that he would like to know how to form a town center and where would the City do that.

Mr. Hewitt stated that a public open space or a public park could be a town center.

Mr. Hewitt stated that this would not be a town center where you would be walking to shops and restaurants but more of a gathering space.

Mr. Hewitt stated that the area in and around City Hall and the Aquatic Center would be a place to add additional green space.

Mr. Pasch stated his thanks for all of the work that was put in.

Mr. Pasch stated that he was extraordinarily surprised.

Mr. Wachter stated that the first question he had was how this community vision was formed.

Mr. Hewitt stated that originally, the County drafted some of the vision statements on current conditions and past experiences with other communities.

Mr. Wachter asked if certain things from the survey were thrown out because of poor planning.

Mr. Sonnhalter stated that poor planning was not included in the master plan.

Mr. Sonnhalter stated that this plan was not a direct response to the survey.

Mr. Wachter stated that Cedar Highlands and Cedar-Green is being recommended to have a residential component.

Mr. Hewitt stated that from the Van Aiken district all the way to Richmond Road had the possibility of additional mixed use development.

Mr. Wachter asked if mixed-use was also being suggested for the Chagrin Highlands.

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Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mr. Hewitt stated that the mixed-use was focused along the exterior roads of Chagrin Highlands.

Mr. Wachter stated that there is a comment that the zoning map “doesn’t equate to the districts outlined in the code.”

Mr. Wachter stated that he would like to know the discrepancies.

Mr. Hewitt stated that the zoning map uses verbiage that is slightly different than the districts outlined in the code.

Mr. Hewitt stated that he believed it describes uses versus districts.

Mr. Hewitt stated that it was just a way of stating that the code could be streamlined making it more effective and easier to read.

Mr. Wachter stated that when speaking of streamlining, the process was the concern.

Mr. Hewitt stated that if you can update the zoning code to provide flexibility, then it allows the process easier if a developer doesn’t have to go through a long process.

Mr. Wachter stated that he would like some explanation regarding the zoning overlay with particular respect to walkability.

Mr. Hewitt stated that an overlay doesn’t change any of the underlying uses.

Mr. Hewitt stated that in a mixed-use district, you may be allowed to build both commercial and residential.

Mr. Hewitt stated that certain requirements would need to be had for set-backs, etc.

Mr. Hewitt stated that an overlay can expand certain requirements. For instance, in a walkable overlay the requirements would be more focused on the pedestrian.

Mr. Hewitt stated that mixed-use could have several options including apartment buildings and town houses.

Mr. Wachter asked if attached single-family included townhouses.

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Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mr. Hewitt stated that was correct.

Mr. Wachter asked if it is suggested that either mixed-use or single family would be appropriate along Richmond Road.

Mr. Hewitt stated that was correct.

Mr. Wachter stated that it was recommended to provide wireless city wide but wondered if that would really be a city function.

Mr. Hewitt stated that it is a possibility and that there were other communities doing it and that it can be used to attract businesses as well as residents.

Mr. Hewitt stated that it can be used to attract businesses as well as residents.

Mr. Hewitt stated that the wireless could be a city utility or the excess capacity could be sold to a non-profit or for-profit operator and let them handle city-wide wireless or city-wide broadband.

Mr. Wachter stated that it was suggested to focus on office attraction rather than retail and wondered if that was just a reaction to a survey.

Mr. Hewitt stated that it was suggested for two reasons. First, it was a reaction to the survey. Second, being that retail doesn't provide high paying jobs that offices do.

Mr. Hewitt stated that first it was a reaction to the survey.

Mr. Hewitt stated that the second being that retail doesn't provide high paying jobs that offices do.

Mr. Wachter stated he would like an example of a non-profit community improvement corporation.

Mr. Hewitt stated that they may also be known as a community development corporation.

Mr. Hewitt stated that the City of Cleveland and Shaker Heights have the corporations.

Mayor Gorden stated that one of the items mentioned was city lighting.

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Presentation by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (Cont'd)

Mayor Gorden stated that a number of years ago, the City of Beachwood engaged in a project to look at some type of lighting for various sections of the community.

Mayor Gorden stated that he would like to know how the city-wide lighting became a topic.

Mayor Gorden stated that many residents and the community were not in favor of some type of additional lighting because it was felt that Beachwood was more of a rural community

Mr. Hewitt stated that there was a question on the survey that asked how important it was to have street lighting and that 73.4 percent of people were in favor of street lighting.

Mayor Gorden asked if that came from an overall sampling of the community or was it just one section.

Mr. Hewitt stated that it was an overall sampling of the community and that there were certain places where street lighting was more important than others.

Mr. Wachter stated that he believed there was ninety five percent accuracy on the survey because of the number of returns.

Mr. Hewitt stated that it was ninety-five percent confidence level that it was within five percentage points.

Mr. Wachter stated his thanks for the presentation and for all of the work.

Mr. Doult stated that he would like an explanation on how the town hall meeting was going to be.

Mr. Hewitt stated that there will be several large boards with goals and visions listed on them.

Mr. Hewitt stated that there will also be a series of maps so that people can go around and read them and ask questions.

Mr. Hewitt stated that there will be representatives from the County and residents will be able to tell the County what they believe is the highest priority.

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ADJOURNMENT

Moved by A. Isaacson, seconded by J. Pasch, at 9:00 P.M. to adjourn the Committee of the Whole Meeting to the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

ROLL CALL	Yes:	M.S. Horwitz, A. Isaacson, M.M. Jacobs, J. Pasch, M.I. Wachter
	Abstain:	None.
	No:	None.
	Not Voting:	None.
		MOTION ADOPTED

Approved:

Merle S. Gorden, Mayor

Whitney Crook, Assistant Clerk of Council