

Planning Commission
November 15, 2017
Minutes

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:30PM. The following members were present: Mr. David Miller, Mr. Jim Jackson, Mr. Pete McGory, Chairman Michael Zuilhof, Mr. Conor Whelan, Mr. Joe Galea and Mr. Wes Poole. Ms. Casey Sparks, Mr. Greg Voltz and Ms. Angela Byington represented the Planning Department; Mr. Trevor Hayberger represented the Law Department; Mr. Aaron Klein represented the Public Works Department and Debi Eversole, Clerk from the Community Development Department.

Mr. Galea moved to waive the reading of the March 22, 2017 meeting minutes and approve them as presented. Mr. McGory seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Mr. McGory moved to waive the reading of the September 20 meeting minutes and approve them as presented. Mr. Poole seconded the motion. Mr. Miller stated that there was a correction in the spelling of a name on page #2. With no further discussion, the motion carried with a unanimous vote noting said corrections.

Mr. Hayberger swore in staff and audience members that wished to offer testimony during the Public Hearing portion of the meeting.

Ms. Sparks presented that The City of Sandusky had submitted an application to rezone 2 parcels at **2513 Venice Road** and **1651 Tiffin Avenue** from Residential Multi-Family to General Business. Both parcels were rezoned from General Business to Residential Multi-Family in 2016, as a developer had proposed to use the properties as Senior Living. Since then, the developer has chosen not to purchase the property and to date there has been little to no interest in retail or commercial development within the area. Currently, there is interest for this site to be utilized for commercial use.

The city has completed extensive work by working with the Ohio Development Service Agency to demolish the former gas station and structures and remove the underground storage tanks to make this site developable.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for this area to be industrial uses, however staff believes that the property would be logically suited for business use, understanding the commercial development in the surrounding area.

The Bicentennial Vision plan calls for reclaiming and repurposing blighted land for industrial and commercial redevelopment. The property was cleared for future development, the proposed amendment would allow for this to occur.

Staff believes that the zoning of "GB" General Business will support the area and will assist in aesthetically improving a once blighted intersection within the city.

Site plan and off- street parking will be required prior to any development.

Mr. Jackson asked if this site is being proposed for medical marijuana sales. Ms. Sparks stated that the current developer interested would use the site for a medical marijuana dispensary. She added that City Commission had approved a purchase agreement for these parcels through the developer in the most recent Commission meeting. Mr. Jackson clarified that this would be for sales and not growing medical marijuana.

Chairman Zuilhof asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak in favor of the application.

Sharon Johnson, Fifth Street stated that this property is in a high profile area and a gateway into the City. She does not believe that this type of business should not be on a gateway corner. She stated that in her opinion, if Ohio legalizes marijuana, this operation will open up full-time. This is not the correct neighborhood for this type of business.

Kathryn Carter, 5309 Columbus Avenue stated that what she saw at the City Commission meeting was that the business would bring in 300 – 350 people per day. That is a lot of congestion for this area and she wondered what would happen when the customer leaves with their marijuana. There is no control for what happens when the people leave the building. She wondered how hard it would be to close down the operation if it becomes a problem in the area. She stated that this should be outside of town and not in this gateway to Sandusky. The business that this will bring will not support downtown Sandusky.

Mr. McGory stated that he understood that this was simply a rezoning of the parcels back to their original zoning. The purpose of the change in zoning in 2016 was for a particular project that did not end up happening. General Business or Commercial is appropriate for this area. This Commission is not responsible for determining what type of business goes in there.

Mr. Zuilhof stated that the location is best suited for General Business and had it been on the market as such, it may have been sold and running by now.

Mr. McGory moved to approve to rezone the properties back to General Business. Mr. Whelan seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved with a 6/1 vote. Chairman Zuilhof opposed.

Ms. Sparks introduced Michelle Johnson, with Environmental Design Group, who will be presenting the conceptual design for **The Landing Project**. Environmental Design Group is requesting approval of the conceptual design. Ms. Sparks added that Mr. Aaron Klein is also present from the City of Sandusky Public Works Department.

Ms. Johnson stated that the project started in early April of 2017 and the project is in collaboration with the City of Sandusky, Cedar Fair and Erie Metro Parks. The overall planning process included 6 stakeholder meetings, 7 stakeholder conference calls, 14 stakeholder interviews, client participation and several onsite visits.

She began the presentation by stating that there is a park component to the project and a trail component to the project. The park component is what is currently being called The Landing Park, which is located on the old airport site. The rest of the study is for the entire trail system. Each component is part of The Sandusky Bay Pathway Update.

The Sports Force Park Wetland Delineation included documented and categorized wetlands and other wetlands that are known but not filed. The water reached record levels this year which was important in the elevations planning process. There was a wetland inventory and analysis and a habitat zone analysis performed. The stakeholders expressed concern with keeping the natural environment in the forefront.

The one on one stakeholder meetings resulted in the following factors:

- 75 / 25 split between active vs. passive use on the site
- BUT - overall land massing should be a majority of passive/natural areas
- Destination site
- Bicycles & pedestrians
- Active recreation on site but not organized sports

- Views of the bay area must
- Non-motorized boat access a must
- Desire for year-round activity
- The site needs to be public, with public access for residents and visitors (in that order)
- Viewing tower
- Canoe/kayak/paddle board launch
- Birding areas
- Children's play area
- Vendors/concessions
- Boat drop off close to the water
- Boardwalks
- Promenade
- Fishing pier and fishing areas
- Plenty of seating (and shade!)
- Trails and boardwalks

The first site visit showed the entire coastline inundated with phragmites that are 8-10 feet high. This means you can't see the lake. Part of the recommendation will be to ecologically restore most of this coastline. The purpose is to take advantage of the views and view-sheds.

The project will be phased based on stakeholder input and funding sources. For example, Federal funding through ODOT isn't available until 2023 – 2024. Therefore, the projects that will require ODOT funding will wait until the funding is available. The opportunities requiring ODNR funding will be available as soon as January 2018. All of the boardwalk structures that are being recommended are also recommending piers, piles or helical screws, which keeps the footprint of the impact will be very small.

Working with the stakeholders and client group, it was decided to meld all of the desired themes together to make the "Great Lakes Coastal Theme". This combines natural, whimsical and contemporary themes. The theme can evolve as you move through space. There is a lot of coastline, a lot of birding and a lot of industrial and milling heritage here. The theme can be flexible as you move through certain areas of the coastline.

Natural materials will be used such as wood and metals while trying to incorporate playfulness. The architecture can be a mixture of several different styles.

The majority of the parcels are owned by Cedar Fair, with other ownership consisting of Erie Metroparks and the City of Sandusky.

The stakeholders and clients discussed how intense the use of the land should be, specifically at the northern part of the runway. The land is dry at 60' width. An active recreation component should be used in this space. The Landing Park recommendation is a lighthouse birding tower where the 2nd story includes a staircase and is ADA accessible. There is also a fishing pier at the end of the boardwalk with a water taxi. It may be possible for a flat bottom boat or pontoon to access this area as well.

Going west outside of the Landing Park area, it is proposed to have a bridge connector over Castaway Bay. The existing land and channel will not be narrowed, but a bridge is proposed to connect the two pieces of

land. A smaller, non-motorized or Sea Ray will be able to get under the bridge but the water gets shallow so quickly that a larger boat is not recommended.

East of the area is the Sports Force Phase II development. The driveway to The Landing Park and Sports Force Phase II will be combined on Route 6. There will be one IN/OUT on Route 6 for both of the facilities to help with traffic.

There is an area just above the phragmites in the trees where a playful idea had been suggested. Instead of a boardwalk, it is proposed for an elevated canopy walk, above the trees. This is ADA and bike accessible. There is not much of a cost difference between a boardwalk and an elevated boardwalk.

Moving northeast, a proposed phrag tunnel boardwalk is planned. Since it is so difficult to remove and maintain phragmites, it is proposed to leave this portion of it and put a boardwalk through it leading to a viewing area of the bay.

The entire project is 132 acres. There needs to be a vertical reference. This is the lighthouse birding tower. There will be privately owned, low intensity use businesses such as a kayak and paddleboard launch, bar/restaurants to keep people there. This will accommodate adults and children alike. There are elevated and floating boardwalks proposed.

Mr. Miller asked how we will control the phragmites within the phrag tunnel as this is an invasive species. Ms. Johnson stated that general maintenance with a heavy weed whacker will be necessary.

Mr. Jackson stated that the parking along Cleveland Road could be a problem as he had seen parking on Cleveland Road during large events. Ms. Johnson stated that there were 137 proposed parking spaces with ADA accessible spaces. Phase II Sports Force does have a parking lot proposed.

Mr. Whelan asked what the cost breakdown was between the land owners. Ms. Johnson stated that the budget for the public side is a little over \$18 million; this includes the lighthouse, the boardwalks, all of the nodes, all of the improvements of the trail. This number is projected out to 2024. There is about \$6.5 million on the private development side (Cedar Fair) which includes retail establishments, the drives, etc.

Mr. Galea stated that there are a couple of engineering concerns regarding the Cleveland Rd area. One being that there is a bike path along Cleveland Rd and also that there is an entrance drive off of Route 6. The rendering does not show a turn lane or traffic control device at the entrance. Will the path along Route 6 be separated from the road or part of the road? And what is ODOT's stance on a traffic device at this entrance. He sees many potential issues on this subject. Ms. Johnson stated that bikes will enter through the Henninger Boardwalk and will not hit Route 6 until after the development. There is enough space within the right of way to shift all of the striping down. The assumption is that bike lanes or a center turning lane will be recommended within the Route 6 development.

Mr. Poole asked if the plan was to run a bicycle trail on one side of the road, for two way traffic. Ms. Johnson stated that there is a 5' buffer on one side, 10' trail and a 2' buffer on the other side. This is required if using ODOT dollars. He wondered if bicycles will be on the south side of Cleveland Road. Ms. Johnson stated that is not part of this plan. The only bike paths associated with this plan are on the north side of Cleveland Road. Mr. Poole stated that if one is on the south side of Cleveland Road, whether it be a pedestrian or bicyclist; there is no place to cross over to The Landing. Ms. Johnson stated that if there were a place that people are trying to cross, crossing signals or signs could be placed.

Mr. Miller referred to the Landing at Castaway Crossing and wondered if the purpose of having a crossing there is because of the railway. Ms. Johnson stated that yes; the railway is part of this property which is

owned by Cedar Fair. The proposal is to earth ramp it up to the bridge. There is plenty of room for kayak rental and launch.

Amy Moore with Erie Metro Parks stated that they typically manage the phragmites by burning it but that will have to change in the future. She added that you basically never get rid of it, you can only manage it.

Duff Milkie with Cedar Fair stated that it has been a great process working with the city and Erie Metro Parks. The presentation shows the conservation aspect of the project along with the development. When Cedar Fair purchased the airport, they worked with Metro Parks and will develop the front portion and donate the park land back to them. The two conditions were that the park be active so that people could boat, bike, run etc. and that it would connect the existing Metro Parks assets and City's assets so that the entire community could utilize it. In order for Cedar Fair to build out their property as a resort, they need a healthy and vibrant community.

Chairman Zuilhof stated his concern is that the project is missing the opportunity to rejoin a fragment of what is really an amazing contiguous waterfront ecology stretching the length of that segment of the bay. There are some sensitive and some not so sensitive segments there. He stated that he does appreciate that the proposal at the end of the runway is less intense than originally envisioned, he would still prefer to see it backed off a little bit and take that opportunity to connect – reconnect rather than add to the division and the fragmentation of what he thinks is an amazing long contiguous and therefore rare piece of environment. In saying that, they are still adding to or certainly doing something that is in harmony with the metro park mission which is in part is environmental conservation. He would rather not see the development so close to the water because of the fragmentation it causes but he is in support of the plan.

Mr. Whelan questioned if the old railway connector was an existing right of way and is available. Ms. Johnson stated that there may need to be some property acquisition. There are easements where there is nothing in its obstruction.

John Mears, Central Avenue wondered if the bridge will be high enough for a good sized boat to get in to the Castaway Bay and restaurant side of the bay. Ms. Johnson said depending on the fly bridge, she felt that a 30' – 32' Carver could get under there at normal water levels. Typically, Sea Rays travel on this side of the bay. Most Sea Rays that don't have the fly bridge could get back there but the wind activity in this area empties out the bay very quickly. Her opinion is that it is too shallow for bigger boats.

Sharon Johnson asked for clarification regarding the bikes on Cleveland Road. She lives close so she likes to get on her bike and ride down Causeway Drive down Cleveland Road to the park. How wide will the road be and how wide will the bike path be. Will there be a turning lane into the park? Aaron Klein stated that the City is working with the County, who had acquired funding from ODOT for an analysis of Cleveland Road from Sycamore Line to the Corporation limit. The analysis will dictate where we can put bike lanes, where we can widen the roadway and different things like that. The conceptual plan just shows that it can fit and may be changed per ODOT's requirements. The Cedar Fair Engineers are working with ODOT concerning Phase II of the Sports Force complex. There will be an extensive planning study of what Cleveland Road should be so that it is pedestrian friendly with the current traffic.

Kathryn Carter wondered if there will be a shed that could store a gator for emergencies. Ms. Johnson stated that the load rating for the development trails is required by ODOT to handle emergency vehicles.

Mr. Galea moved that the application for recommendation to the City Commission for the conceptual design for the Landing Project be approved by this Commission. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved with unanimous vote.

Ms. Sparks stated that there were several individuals present for the Landmarks Commission meeting, which is scheduled to immediately follow the Planning Commission meeting and requested to change the order to hear the Landmarks item next. The Chairman asked if there were any objections to the change in the schedule. Mr. Poole stated that he would like to vote on it.

Mr. McGory moved to recess the Planning Commission meeting and begin the Landmarks Commission meeting. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 4/3 vote. Chairman Zuilhof, Mr. Galea and Mr. Poole voted no. The Planning Commission meeting recessed at 5:45PM.

The Planning Commission meeting resumed at 7:10PM. The final item on the agenda is an application from City Architecture for approval of the conceptual design plan for **Shoreline Drive**.

Alex Pesta with City Architecture began to present a conceptual design for the Shoreline Drive corridor. He stated that the entire process ran parallel with the Jackson Street Pier project which has been approved by City Commission. The community input sessions were to gain information on both projects. The following items were important in the community input sessions.

- IMPROVED WALKABILITY AND BIKEABILITY
- LIGHTING
- PARKING FOR BUSINESSES
- DESIGN A STREET FOR PEOPLE
- IT SHOULD NOT FEEL LIKE A BACK DOOR
- DIRECTIONAL AND WAYFINDING SIGNAGE
- REPAVE STREETS
- ACTIVE STOREFRONTS AND RESTAURANTS
- BURIED UTILITIES
- NO CARS / NO PARKING

What was also discovered during these sessions was that there is an opportunity to create a waterfront promenade that supports vehicle, pedestrian and cycling traffic. Shoreline Drive currently feels like a back door to Sandusky. This is the chance to take advantage of the waterfront as an asset.

The Shoreline Drive travels from Lawrence Street on the west to Franklin Street on the east. It also includes 2 parking areas on Jackson Street and Wayne Street. There is enough space to retain the vehicular traffic and add new elements to elevate the value of the drive and increase operations and increase serviceability to the businesses.

There were different options to how parking could be retained, how it could be reconfigured, whether it belonged on the north side or south side, whether there should be angled parking or parallel parking. There were 3 options that came out of the community meeting. Currently, there are about 186 parking spaces in the study area between Lawrence and Franklin Streets.

Option 1 was a Shared Path which shows the existing 12' sidewalk to be retained on the north side. The changing of angled back in parking will add to the sidewalk space on the south side.

Option 2 was a Separated Trail which can be thought of as a continuation of the Sandusky Bayfront Connector. It is separated and buffered and can be marked as multimodal meaning it is appropriate for pedestrians or cyclists or both. This option would also feature angled back in parking.

Option 3 was a Hybrid Parking idea. This option came after a conversation asking if there could be a separated trail and expanded sidewalk. This option proposes angled back in parking east of Wayne and west of Jackson Streets. Between Jackson and Wayne Streets there would be parallel parking spaces. This allows 13.5' of sidewalk to be added within those 2 blocks to support additional space for the businesses that are there.

When the 3 options were presented to the community, the Hybrid Parking was greatly preferred. When analyzing the option, the net parking would be a loss of 6 parking spaces to add the sidewalk space. The Hybrid Parking is what is being recommended for approval.

A case study on the value of trails shows that a dedicated defined trail system will add value to the community. For every \$1 of trail investment, the economic impact has been estimated to return \$13.72. Mr. Pesta stated that this study was in Indianapolis.

Mr. Poole stated that if the designated area was to be filled with people, he would rather see bicycle path separated. He suggested not making it permanent in case changes needed to be made. Once it is concrete it's too late to make changes. Mr. Pesta agreed that there needs to be a buffer between pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic. He plans to work with the Engineering department to determine what that will be.

Chairman Zuilhof stated that he liked the design that maximizes the width of the south sidewalk.

Ms. Byington stated that part of this plan is already part of the Sandusky Bay Pathway plan which included the widened sidewalk. The city is under contract to update the citywide Sandusky Bay Pathway and during that process, the exact materials, amenities, branding and look of the pathway will be determined. Chairman Zuilhof added that this is a conceptual plan and that the details may be worked out later.

Mr. Pesta continued stating that from the west, there is opportunity to formalize parking but it is not critical as there is no development. He recommended repaving the street leaving the south side flexible for future development. The areas between Jackson and Wayne Streets are where the higher concentration of parking is recommended. There are areas designated for enclosed centralized dumpsters. This will free up some parking spaces. Moving to the east, there are designated enclosed trash areas and the formalized parking will be at Wayne Street. Two-way traffic will be maintained. One way traffic is not recommended.

Kathryn Carter, 5309 Columbus Avenue stated that she is unclear why there needed to be a 10' walking lane and bike lane with a 2' ramp that people will be driving over. She suggested making the sidewalk 12' wide with a blue stripe designated for the bicycles. She also felt that the sidewalk on the south side is unnecessary because a lot of the businesses are not restaurants and will not utilize the space anyway.

Mr. Whelan asked Mr. Pesta to explain the need for the curb as opposed to painted lines. He is concerned about point of entry for bicycles and stated that they may have to ride on the street until they get to an entry to the path. Mr. Pesta stated that the width of the lanes is 11' which will slow traffic. The curb is a safety feature so that a car and bicycle will not interact. There will be multiple entryways for bicycles to yield into the path. Since the area is condensed, getting on at either end should be sufficient; however, there will be breaks in the curb for entry.

Chairman Zuilhof questioned if the bike path is the only discussion or is the entire streetscape and getting rid of power lines included in the conceptual design. He stated that the Bayfront Corridor Committee made a recommendation of putting conduit in under the road to get rid of the low voltage poles.

Bonnie Teeuwen, Osborn Engineering stated that during this process, they looked at putting some of the utilities underground and they will get pricing etc. Chairman Zuilhof stated that it was recommended by the

Bayfront Corridor Committee that if the streets were going to be repaved, to try to bury what they could, understanding that it is necessary for the higher poles and wires to remain. His point being that if the street was going to be dug up during this project, do it then instead of digging it up later. Ms. Teeuwen stated that this project included much more than parking and bicycle lanes. The project is an infrastructure project which included the utilities that the Bayfront Corridor recommended along with water lines and sanitary sewer lines. Since there are existing railroad tracks in the roadway, it will not be possible to mill of a few inches and refill. Her suggestion was that if the roadway is going to be removed to replace any water or sewer lines to remove what is left of the tracks at that time.

Mr. Whelan asked about the timeline and cost of the project and whether the TIF money would be used for the project. Ms. Byington stated that if approval is made at City Commission, the project would coincide with the Jackson Street Pier project which is planned to begin in the fall of 2018. She added that a large portion of the project would be paid through the Public Works Department for the water and street repairs. Mr. Klein had left the meeting and was not available to confirm. A portion of the project could be eligible for the TIF funds but she had not heard if that was part of the budget at this time.

Chairman Zuilhof stated that the Planning Commission was being asked to vote to recommend the preliminary engineering and conceptual plan to City Commission, all may be subject to change, but the recommendation would be for the conceptual plan as presented. Mr. Miller moved to recommend as stated by Chairman Zuilhof. The motion was seconded which opened up discussion.

Mr. Poole asked what the Planning Commission was voting to recommend. Mr. Pesta stated that what was presented by him and Ms. Teeuwen regarding utilities, a continuous separated bike path, and the "Hybrid" option of the conceptual plan which included the parallel parking configuration between Jackson and Wayne Streets and west of Jackson Street and east of Wayne Street would be angled, back in parking.

Mr. Poole added that from Wayne Street to Mylander Plaza, the plan suggested a 23' sidewalk behind an insurance company, attorney, bakery and Leaking Boot. He felt that that on that area of street, you would want to be on the water side. There is nothing on the south side to see. Mr. Pesta stated that there will be a 6' sidewalk maintained on the north side and a 10' separated bicycle trail on the north side, right now there is 12' of pavement that is being shared between pedestrians and cyclists on that space. The reason for narrowing the north side is to separate the bicycle traffic. Mr. Poole stated that the decision should come down to where people want to walk. He felt that people are not going to want to walk along the south side.

With no further discussion, the motion carried with a 5/2 vote; Mr. Whelan and Mr. Poole voting no.

Ms. Byington stated the next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 4:30PM.

Chairman Zuilhof adjourned the meeting at 8:00PM.

APPROVED:

Debi Eversole, Clerk



Michael Zuilhof, Chairman