

**Planning Commission  
February 24th, 2021  
Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting called to order:**

Chairman Dennis Murray called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. The meeting took place virtually via Microsoft Teams. The following members were present: Pete McGory, Mike Zuilhof, Jim Jackson, Conor Whelan, and David Miller. Greg Voltz and Thomas Horsman represented the Planning Department and Brendan Heil represented the Law Department.

**Approval of minutes from the January 27, 2021 meeting:**

Mr. McGory made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted and Mr. Miller seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.

**Swearing in of audience and staff that will offer testimony on the adjudication hearing:**

Mr. Murray swore in those wishing to do so.

**Adjudication Hearing:**

- 1. *Fritz Mueller, on behalf of Corsos Perennials and St. Paul's Church, has requested to rezone 2211 Mills St (Parcels 58-68010.000, 58-68014.000, 58-68015.000) from "PF" Public Facilities to "CS" Commercial Services.***

Mr. Voltz stated that staff examined the City's Bicentennial Vision Comprehensive Plan as it relates to this area and believe that this rezoning could offer great potential towards developing human capital, entrepreneurship, and diversity. Therefore, in the staff report, staff recommended approval. He then stated that since the staff report has been written and notices have been mailed out to surrounding property owners, staff have received some concerns from neighboring residents. After listening to those concerns, staff believe more public outreach should occur, including an open house that is COVID safe, for the neighborhood to come ask questions and look at the proposed enhancements to the property before the March Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Voltz then read the two comments he received regarding the application. Dan Levell, of 2106 Mills St, asked "Do the workers that would live there receive background checks?, Should neighboring property owners expect partying, carrying on, and coming and going at all times of the day?, If they have automobiles, will there be excessive traffic back and forth, even in the parking lot?, The church didn't allow residents to use the parking lot. Will Corso's have a problem if the individuals in the neighborhood use the parking lot for parties?, How will transient workers effect property values?, Where will the migrant workers work?, How many students will be at the site and how long will they stay, a semester, two semesters?, Will the students be able to have alcohol on site?" Daryl E. Murphy I, stated "On behalf of some of the residents of Mills Street, and my uncle who lives next door to these parcels, we object to any change of zoning at this time. Although we know Sandusky is a welcoming city, there is concern of safety with transient migrant workers. The number of workers who would be housed in these facilities is unknown but could be problematic. As these workers would have no real ties to our area, what would prevent them from committing some offenses and leaving the city? Who then would be liable for damages, is Corso's accepting this responsibility? We are deeply troubled in the conclusion/recommendation the city planner/staff recommends of the proposed amendment. The taxpaying city residents of Mills Street are opposed to this proposal. If this was a public forum we could pack the room with dissenters to this proposal. We are asking the Planning Commission to object at this time to this zoning change. Mr. Jackson stated that some of the residents in the area called him with some questions that he did not have the answer to and those questions included: How many residents are going to be housed there?, Is the dormitory going to be co-ed? Mr. Zuilhof stated that he thought it would be helpful to clarify a couple of things. First, is that rezoning approval would not be sufficient enough in allowing the proposed use of the applicants. The applicant would also need to apply for a conditional use permit, which would need to be approved by the Planning Commission, and that may answer a lot of questions. Second, is that a zoning change will allow for a use for anything within that zoning category. He stated that if this was an application for a Planned Unit Development, everyone would know exactly what the outcome would be, instead of just rezoning and allowing all uses within that zoning category. Mr. Miller asked if the trail garden would be an outdoor thing and if there are any limitations on the amount of



acreage is allowed for that. Mr. McGory stated that while he understands the resident's concerns and the fear of the unknown, he thinks it could turn out to be a good situation for everybody. Fritz Mueller, CFO for Corso's, Gus Corso, one of the owners of Corso's, and Chad Corso, president of Corso's introduced themselves for the record. Gus then stated that a trial garden would be an area where they would grow plants they receive from all across the county, in order to see if they hold up over a period of a year or so in the area. The interns would take care of the trial garden and have weekly reports on those. Chad stated that they are hoping to fit 160 people into the church. He said the buildings would not be co-ed. The company they use to hire people is called Manzana, and that company does the background checks, through an H-2A program, through the government. There would be no alcohol allowed on the site. There would be three buses and a van on site that would take the workers where they need to go as well as take them to social activities. There are also supervisors for the workers that stay on site with them and drive the buses. They want to have a soccer field set up for them next to the church for them to use. Fritz stated that this would be the third year that they will have worked with the Manzana group and it has always been a good experience, they have not had any issues. They are a disciplined group that work 5-6 days a week. He said that they normally have 8 students, but are looking to double that. He said that they have not yet discussed on whether or not they are going to apply the same rules with the interns that Manzana has with the workers regarding alcohol. However, they have also not had any problems with the interns they have previously had over the years. Mr. Zuilhof stated that he will be abstaining from this vote. He said that while he does not believe he has a conflict, it could appear to others that he does, so he would not be voting on this agenda item. Mr. McGory made a motion to table this application until the March 24th Planning Commission meeting and Mr. Miller seconded the motion. All voting members were in favor of the motion, except for Mr. Zuilhof, who abstained from the vote.

#### **New Business:**

##### ***1. Presentation on Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area.***

Mr. Horsman stated that a DORA is a specific area where alcoholic beverages may be sold by licensed liquor establishments for outdoor consumption within a defined area. DORA was a top recommendation from the Downtown Master Plan as it would give some flexibility for outdoor events/outdoor seating areas and would allow bars/restaurants to serve more people amid the COVID restrictions. He said that there is nearly 60 cities in Ohio that have a DORA and there has been positive feedback from those cities. An application will need to be submitted to the City Commission to approve. The City must recertify the DORA every five years. City Commission could also modify or dissolve it at any time. Mr. Zuilhof stated that the area for the DORA seems inappropriately large to him and in areas that are not technically considered downtown. He also stated that as a downtown resident, there is already a lot of disruptions that occur around 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, and that is without allowing people to walk around with an alcoholic drink. Mr. Horsman explained that the City does have the authority to set whatever hours they would like to allow for the DORA to take place. Mr. Jackson stated that if there is going to be festivals and events in Washington Park, it would make sense to him to allow the DORA to extend to area. Mr. McGory said that he does not think there would be a difference in how people behave by allowing them to drink alcohol outside versus just inside. The laws are still going to be the same. Mr. Whelan stated that he thinks the proposed area boundary makes sense to him and that he thinks the area should include as many establishments as possible that want to participate in order to be as inclusive as possible. He asked what the liquor license cost through the state is and what kind of control the state gets by having the DORA as opposed to just allowing open container and if that is even a possibility. Mr. Horsman stated that this would be the only way a municipality could overcome the open container laws. There is no additional cost to the liquor permit holders if they want to be a part of the DORA. Mr. Whelan then asked how much area is in staff's proposed boundary. Mr. Voltz stated that the proposed area includes roughly 138 acres, but that includes the water area as well. Part of the reason staff came to the proposed boundary was due to bars/restaurants that said they wanted to be included as well as staff thought people may want to take a beverage while walking along the shoreline. Mr. Horsman stated that additionally, the proposed boundary is in line with the Downtown Business District and Entertainment District boundaries. Mr. Miller stated that he likes the proposed area and the thought of getting a drink from Dockside and enjoying the green space and shoreline nearby as well as possibly getting a drink down towards the other end of the street and taking it to Shoreline Park. He said that he also does not think this would cause any additional disturbances.

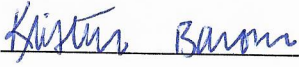
**Meeting Adjourned:**

Mr. McGory made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Miller seconded. The meeting ended at 6:21pm.

**Next Meeting:**

March 24, 2021 at 5:00pm

**Approved:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kristen Barone", written over a horizontal line.

Kristen Barone, Clerk

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Murray", written over a horizontal line.

Dennis Murray, Chairman