

**Planning Commission  
October 25, 2023  
Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Called to Order**

Chair McGory called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:00 pm. The following Commissioners were present: Commissioner Castile, Commissioner Jackson, Vice Chair Miller, Chair McGory, Commissioner Poggiali, Commissioner Whelan, and Commissioner Zuilhof. Arin Blair and Alec Ochs were present on behalf of the Community Development Department, Sarah Chiappone was present on behalf of the Law Department and Quinn Rambo was the acting clerk.

**Approval of Minutes from September 27, 2023**

Chair McGory introduced the first item on the agenda, which was the approval of the minutes from the September 27<sup>th</sup> Planning Meeting. Commissioner Poggiali made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Vice Chair Miller stated that in the meeting the state representative's name, mentioned at the previous meeting, was not documented in the minutes correctly. The last name was Ardt, not Hart as written in the minutes. Commissioner Poggiali amended his motion to approve the minutes as corrected. The amended motion was seconded by Commissioner Zuilhof. Chair McGory called for a vote to approve the minutes as corrected, and the motion passed unanimously.

**New Business**

**1231 First Street-**

**Cross View Bay Ltd. has submitted an application for a site plan at 1231 First Street to construct a storage building in a Commercial Zoning District.**

Chair McGory introduced the application and asked for the Staff report. Mr. Ochs explained the Cross View Bay, Ltd. parcel 57-01436.000 was approximately 8.53 acres. There were two buildings on this site, totaling 95,624 sq. ft. A large storage building that was 93,600 sq. ft. and a restroom / community building that was 2,024 sq. ft. The existing building coverage of the site was approximately 25.9 %. The new building coverage proposed would be 27.1%, which was 22.9% below the maximum allowable building coverage. The proposal would add 4,400 sq. ft. to the parcel. The building would be 27 feet tall and would be approximately 110' x 40'. The maximum height allowance was 40'. According to the requirements in Section 1149.04 of the Zoning Code, Measurement Standards (c) "Storage or warehousing may be waived with administrative approval and if not approved by the administration, the Planning Commission may approve the waiver". Staff noted that storage operations typically produce a minimal number of jobs or increase in customer traffic – therefore, should not be required to meet the code requirement for additional parking. Due to lack of demand, Staff recommended waiving any additional parking requirements, which would also waive any additional landscaping, but Staff recommended adding trees and some low-level landscaping. This was a permitted use for the site. Staff recommended the approval of the proposed site plan for 1231 First St. (parcel 57-

01436.000) with the following conditions, that all applicable permits are obtained through the Building Department, Engineering Department, Division of Planning, and any other applicable agency prior to construction. Chair McGory asked if there was anyone present to speak on behalf of the application. Mr. Todd Hart was present to represent the applicant and stated they were moving the building from the current site to the site at Cross View Bay. Chair McGory asked if the building was rack storage. Mr. Hart stated it was a rack storage building but would not be used in that manner at the new site because of staffing issues.

Commissioner Zuilhof made a motion to approve the application with Staff conditions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Poggiali. Chair MGory called for the vote and all Commissioners voted to approve the application, unanimously.

### **2130 Hayes Avenue-**

**Arie Swirsky with ThenDesign Architects, on behalf of the Sandusky Board of Education, has submitted an application for a site plan amendment at 2130 Hayes Avenue for a pool addition to the Sandusky High School.**

Chair McGory introduced the application for a site plan amendment and asked for the Staff report. Mr. Ochs stated the Sandusky Board of Education proposed a natatorium addition attached to the Sandusky High School building. The scope consisted of renovating the existing pool locker rooms, and adding a new entrance, bleacher area and storage room. The proposed plan will have a seating capacity of 290 bleacher seats. The facility would be used by students and the community. The hours of operation were not determined yet. The proposed natatorium was 2,695 square feet and would be placed on the east side of the building in the existing parking lot. The site was approximately 13.0677 acres. The total land coverage was 29%. Sandusky High School had 322 parking spaces + 30 easement /113 intermediate school spaces. The proposal would remove approximately 8 spaces. The total landscaped area was 350,147 square feet. The proposed height of the natatorium building was 26 feet. The previously approved project was updated due to budgetary reasons. The proposed addition was now 2,695 square feet, reduced from the originally approved 12,200 addition, because the project planned to renovate the existing pool site within the school building. The updated proposal enabled the project to contain a new entrance, bleachers, and storage area. The architect and applicants were confident that removing 8 parking spaces would not negatively impact parking demand for the proposed facility or school operations. No additional parking was required. No additional landscaping was required. All area standards were satisfied. All yard regulations were satisfied. This was a permitted use. Staff recommended the approval of the amended site plan at 2130 Hayes Ave with the following condition that all applicable permits were obtained through the Building Department, Engineering Department, Division of Planning, and any other applicable agency. Chair McGory asked if there were any questions for Staff. Commissioner Zuilhof asked if the existing building was just getting pushed back 20'. Mr. Ochs stated that was correct. Commissioner Zuilhof asked if there was a representative present to speak on behalf of the project. Mr. John Feick was present to speak on behalf of the amended site plan. Vice Chair Miller asked why the drastic change to the scope of the project.

Mr. Feick answered that the original project plan was \$3 million dollars over budget and the School District could not cover that increase. Vice Chair Miller asked how many lanes were going to be in the renovated pool. Mr. Feick stated that there would be 6 regulation size lanes. Commissioner Zuilhof stated that he had no issue with approving the site plan for appropriateness. Chair McGory stated that if this had been the original plan it would have been approved previously as well.

Commissioner Castile made a motion to approve the amended site plan with Staff conditions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Poggiali. Chair McGory called for the vote and all Commissioners voted to approve the application, unanimously.

### **920 West Osborne Street-**

#### **Recommendation to amend the zoning map for 920 West Osborne Street.**

Chair McGory introduced the application and asked for the Staff report. Ms. Blair stated the proposal was to initiate a change in the Zoning Map to rezone the former Osborne School building and surrounding parcel, at 920 Osborne Street, parcel no. 58-65001.000, from PF-Public Facilities to RMF – Residential Multi-Family. Ms. Blair added Sandusky was gifted with historic structures, but that comes with the challenge of how to ensure they were preserved and remained in use. Sandusky was also challenged with the need for housing units, with the greatest gap in availability recognized for individuals of modest income. According to the 2023 Firelands Region Housing Needs Assessment, Erie County had a gap of 1,637 rental units across all price points. On Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, Sandusky City Commission approved a purchase agreement for the city to purchase the former Osborne School. The Sandusky School Board authorized the sale of the building to the city at their meeting the week before. The intent of this purchase was to foster the rehabilitation of the historic Osborne School building through an adaptive reuse project to turn it into housing units and bring it up to modern accessibility standards while preserving the historic character. The agreement with the Sandusky City Schools was a collaboration for the benefit of the community. The Sandusky City Schools maintained the high quality and condition of the former Osborne School, yet they no longer had a use for the structure. This transaction removed an unused building from the school district inventory with the end-goal of it becoming a community asset through adaptive reuse as housing. The proposed goals of the Community Development Department for the future of the building included readaptation of the structure into at least 20 new housing units, engagement with the surrounding neighbors on the development plan for the project, rental rate restriction of some kind to ensure affordability to a specific demographic in need, such as senior housing, preservation of the structure according to the Sandusky Preservation Design Guidelines and U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Preservation, and preservation of the playground area to remain open to the surrounding neighborhood families. Accomplishment of this ambitious project would be a multi-step process. One critical piece was to establish the proper zoning district at the parcel to allow the desired uses. The Community Development Department recommended that the Planning Commission make a motion to amend the zoning map to change 920 Osborne Street, parcel no. 58-65001.000, from

the PF – Public Facilities zoning district to RMF – Residential Multi-Family zoning district. Commissioner Zuilhof stated that he felt the Chesapeake was very successful and there have been other projects that the City has sold, and nothing happens, but sees the potential this project has in developing residential units. Commissioner Jackson asked if the City would lose its control once a private corporation takes over the project. Ms. Blair stated that the City would require detailed documentation on what the project was in order for the city to ensure the project outcome. Commissioner Whelan asked why there was not public notice for this recommendation. Ms. Blair stated that a public hearing was not required by code but there would be a public hearing conducted at the City Commission. Commissioner Whelan stated he liked the idea of it becoming housing but was not comfortable with it going forward without a public hearing or a proposed plan being presented. Chair McGory stated that the site was not going to be a school again and that residential whether high end or low end would be preferable. Commissioner Castile stated that she heard everyone was in favor of the site being used for housing and reminded the Commission that a site plan would have to come before them for approval before any construction could be implemented. Commissioner Jackson stated that he heard from citizens that current rentals available were too expensive for the public and that was his biggest concern. Commissioner Whelan asked if there was an answer to why the zoning needed to be changed before there was a plan presented. Ms. Blair stated to help shepherd the project was why getting the property zoned correctly was critical. The rezoning would lend stability to the project goals since the current zoning does not allow housing. Commissioner Zuilhof added that it was difficult to acquire funding when the zoning was inconsistent with the project. Commissioner Whelan stated he was in favor of the project but the sale of property and zoning change between public entities should require more public hearings, not less. Commissioner Poggiali asked if this would slow the process down if the Planning Commission voted not to recommend the zoning change. Ms. Blair stated that Staff had not established a specific timeline with a developer. Commissioner Poggiali stated there would be a public hearing and engagement with neighboring property owners, there would be checks and balances, and the Law Department would ensure that nobody would acquire the property until the City knew what plan would be implemented.

Commissioner Zuilhof made a motion to recommend rezoning the property purchased by the City to Multi-family Residential. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Poggiali. Chair McGory asked if there was any further discussion. Vice Chair Miller stated he was aware of other similar projects that were very successful. Chair McGory stated that this property was headed in the direction of residential. Commissioner Zuilhof referenced the success of the Sycamore Line School conversion. Commissioner Castile stated that the concerns of the Commissioners were legitimate, but it sounded as if everyone agreed that a residential use was the best option, there would be checks and balances to work through concerns about the project and moving forward with the recommendation was the best course. Chair MGory called for the vote and resulted in 6-1 vote in favor of the motion, with Commissioner Whelan with a vote of nay.

Chair McGory stated that the next item for discussion was an update from the Law Department regarding abandoned boats and introduced Ms. Chiappone to present her findings to the Commission. Ms. Chiappone stated that she researched the Ohio Revised Code, Sandusky Codified Ordinances, and other municipalities about abandoned boats. She continued that she shared her findings with Ms. Blair and Mr. Ochs. The three of them would be meeting with the new law director, Mr. Hastings, to present her findings and develop a strategy. Commissioner Zuilhof asked if the Commission would receive an update in November. Ms. Chiappone stated there would be an update. Chair McGory asked if she discovered anything in her research that would support a municipality having the authority to address abandoned boats. Ms. Chiappone stated yes there was authority for municipal control but to what extent the City would want to address the issue would be a discussion with the new law director. Ms. Chiappone stated that Mr. Hastings worked with several municipalities, and she looked forward to what insight could be provided on the best way to move forward.

**Adjournment**

Chair McGory asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Zuilhof made a motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Whelan. The meeting adjourned at 5:47 pm.

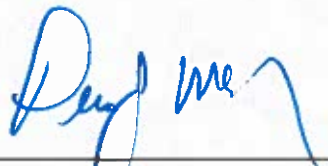
**Next Meeting:**

November 22, 2023, at 5:00pm.

**Approved:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chair/ Vice Chair