

MOTION: To elect Peter French as Second Vice Chairman

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mrs. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0-1, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Duguay, Mrs. Gilmore, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

Abstentions: Mr. French

Mrs. Grandillo stated that the Mayor has re-appointed Mrs. Craine as the Commission Clerk in accordance to the provision in the City Charter. She then asked for a motion to confirm the appointment.

MOTION: To confirm the Mayor's appointment of Corinne Craine as the Clerk for the Planning Commission

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mrs. Grandillo seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Grandillo, Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mrs. Gilmore

Nays: None

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA & SUBMISSION OF SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

There were none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: To approve the public hearing minutes of November 18, 2015 (Aurora 43 South LLC), as submitted

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mr. French seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0-1, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mr. French, Mrs. Duguay, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

Abstentions: Mrs. Gilmore

MOTION: To approve the public hearing minutes of November 18, 2015 (Forest Ridge), as submitted

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mrs. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0-1, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

Abstentions: Mrs. Gilmore

MOTION: To approve the meeting minutes of November 18, 2015, as submitted

Mrs. Duguay moved; Mr. French seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0-1, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

Abstentions: Mrs. Gilmore

MOTION: To approve the public hearing minutes of December 2, 2015, as submitted

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mr. French seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0-1, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mr. French, Mrs. Duguay, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

Abstentions: Mrs. Gilmore

MOTION: To approve the meeting minutes of December 2, 2015, as submitted

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mrs. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0-1, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

Abstentions: Mrs. Gilmore

AGENDA ITEMS:

Hawkin Subdivision, East Mennonite Road – Revised Final Plat (1412033)

The project engineer, Chuck Szucs of Polaris Engineering & Surveying Inc., 34600 Chardon Road, Willoughby Hills, Ohio, was present for the discussion. The Hawkin subdivision consists of 13.4 acres located on the north side of East Mennonite Road. The subdivision will contain 28 cluster units with 8.5 acres of open space. The property is zoned R-4 and was granted a conditional zoning certificate for a residential conservation development (RCD) in 2006.

Mr. Szucs pointed out that the original plat had already been approved in 2007 and the only revision involved moving the entrance for site distance purposes. He said that the applicant is seeking approval tonight so the project can move forward to the pre-construction stage.

Mrs. Grandillo asked staff for an update. Mrs. Januska explained that the final plat, storm water management, and improvement plans were all originally reviewed and approved in 2007. Because engineering standards had changed since that time, the plans needed to be updated to make sure that they comply with current regulations. She said that the revised final plat is the same as the original except for the relocation of the entrance road. Mr. Czekaj said that the updated plans have been reviewed and approved.

Mr. Kennedy wanted to know the time line for this project. Mr. Szucs thought that clearing would start in February or March and home construction would begin in late summer.

Mr. French asked about sidewalks. Mr. Szucs said that sidewalks would be installed along East Mennonite Road, but they are not required within the subdivision.

Mrs. Duguay wanted to know whether the surrounding property owners have been notified of this new subdivision. Mrs. Januska explained that notifications are mailed out only for public hearings involving variance or conditional zoning requests. Regarding the Hawkin subdivision, notifications were mailed out when the applicant applied for the conditional zoning certificate in 2006 and the two setback variances in 2007.

Mrs. Grandillo asked for further questions or comments and there were none.

MOTION: To approve the revised final plat for the Hawkin Subdivision

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mr. French seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mr. French, Mrs. Duguay, Mrs. Gilmore, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

Four Wells Ltd., 1179 Bartlett Road – Minor Subdivision / Lot Split (1512047)

The property owner, Lou Telerico, 545 Bristol Drive, Aurora, Ohio, was present to answer questions. He is seeking approval of a minor subdivision for the property located at 1179 Bartlett Road, which is in an R-1 residential district.

Mr. Telerico is proposing a minor subdivision which would create a 4.0-acre parcel from an existing 46-acre parcel. He stated that the lot split meets all the code requirements.

Mrs. Grandillo asked the members for further questions and there were none.

MOTION: To approve the minor subdivision/lot split for Four Wells Ltd.

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mrs. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mrs. Gilmore, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

JND Properties LLC (Starbucks), 157 W. Garfield Road – Final Site Plan (1512046)

The applicant, Neil Weinberger of JND Properties LLC, 3333 Richmond Road, Beachwood, Ohio, was present to discuss the application. JND Properties is seeking final site plan approval for a Starbucks restaurant to be located at 157 W. Garfield Road. The property is zoned C-1 and was granted a conditional zoning certificate for a drive-thru operation in August 2015.

Mr. Weinberger provided an overview. Starbucks is proposing to relocate their Aurora business to a new 1,770 square foot free-standing facility at the southwest corner of Routes 43 and 82. The site has parking for 17 vehicles in the front and a drive-thru lane to the rear of the building. There will be indoor seating for 34 customers and additional seating on the front patio. Mr. Weinberger noted that the preliminary site plan was approved in October and he is now submitting for final site plan approval.

Mr. French and Mr. Kennedy both had concerns that there were not enough parking spaces. Mr. Weinberger stated that although the site plan meets the code requirements for the number of parking spaces, he is currently in the process of seeking off-site parking for the employees. He said that Starbucks has no problem with off-site parking for employees because they already have this type of arrangement with some of their other properties. Since Starbucks would lease the spaces, Mr. Weinberger was confident that off-site spaces would be secured.

Mrs. Duguay thought that the expansion of the entrance/exit from two to three lanes was a big improvement. She said that this would improve traffic flow for vehicles exiting onto Route 43.

Mrs. Grandillo made positive comments about the entrance/exit expansion and the sidewalks.

Mrs. Gilmore liked the site design and how it would handle the traffic flow on this busy corner.

Mrs. Grandillo asked for further comments and there were none.

MOTION: To accept the final site plan for study

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mrs. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mrs. Gilmore, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

Forest Ridge of Aurora LLC, West Garfield Road – Request for Extension of Preliminary Plat Approval (1406012)

Forest Ridge of Aurora LLC, West Garfield Road – Wetland Setback Variances (1510029 – 1510035)

The project manager, Mark Kopcienski, Forest Ridge of Aurora LLC, 22720 Fairview Center Drive, Fairview Park, Ohio, and the project engineer, Jeremy Ousley, Neff & Associates, 6405 York Road, Parma Heights, Ohio, were present. The applicant is seeking several wetland setback variances and an extension of the preliminary plat approval. The property is located on West Garfield Road, adjacent to the Aurora Wetlands, and is zoned R-2. It was granted a conditional zoning certificate for a residential conservation development (RCD) in 2009.

Mr. Kopcienski provided an update on the project. Since their last meeting with the Commissioners, they had received and analyzed the information from Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP). He said that they worked closely with city staff and it was determined that three of the seven variance requests could be eliminated. Also, one of the remaining four variance requests was reduced substantially.

Mr. Ousley then presented an overview of each variance request. He explained that the storm water system was further analyzed and re-designed so there is no encroachment into the wetland setback areas shown as #1, #3, and #7 on the plan. Therefore, those three variance applications, 1510029, 1510031, and 1510035, are being withdrawn from consideration. He said that the variance requests for the areas shown as #2 and #6 are still necessary for keeping the roadway and lots above the flood plain and the variance request for #4 is necessary for a sanitary sewer connection to a sewer line that already exists in a wetland setback area. Mr. Ousley stated that the last variance request, #5, was greatly reduced and now the only encroachment would be for the outlet structure. He concluded by saying that all detention ponds and storm water facilities have been designed and calculated to meet city, state, and federal codes and Ohio EPA requirements.

Mr. Kopcienski stated that as a residential conservation development, Forest Ridge will have 100 acres of preserved open space of which 70 acres will be in a permanent conservation easement.

He pointed out that this project involves on-site mitigation, creation of new wetlands, and mitigation construction within wetland setbacks. Although this type of activity does not require riparian or wetland setback variances, he wanted the members to be fully aware of the site work involved for this development. Mr. Kopcienski then introduced Judith Mitchell from Davey Resource Group who would be overseeing the on-site mitigation.

Ms. Mitchell explained that the Forest Ridge property already contains high-quality wetlands and an additional 2.6 acres of wetlands will be created adjacent to the existing ones. Although the four encroachments being requested will result in 0.35 acre of buffer encroachment, she noted that 0.8 acre of existing encroachments will be removed. After removal of these existing encroachments, which consist of an existing gas well, tank batteries and an access road, there will be an overall decrease in encroachments. Ms. Mitchell pointed out that once construction is completed, all of the disturbed areas will be re-vegetated with native plantings.

Mrs. Grandillo wanted to know where the existing gas well is located. Mr. Kopcienski said that it is located on the west side of the property near the Aurora Kennel and the Aurora Wetlands.

Mr. French asked whether there will be any monitoring of the site once the development is completed. Mr. Kopcienski stated that they will monitor those encroachment areas for two full growing seasons to make sure that invasive species are not affecting the new vegetation. Additionally, a third party will be responsible to make sure that there are no violations of the conservation easement agreement. Mr. Czekaj said that CRWP can also help us monitor the site.

Mrs. Duguay wanted to know whether the homeowner association documents will require residents to stay out of these protected wetland areas. Mr. Kopcienski said that the documents will include that information. Also, signs will be installed so that those areas are clearly identified as protected wetlands.

Mr. Kennedy asked about the time line for the project. Mr. Kopcienski said that they would like to start construction this spring.

Mrs. Grandillo asked for further comments or questions and there were none.

MOTION: To remove application nos. 1510029, 1510031, and 1510035, from the agenda per the applicant's request for withdrawal

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mrs. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mrs. Gilmore, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

MOTION: To grant a wetland setback variance of 24 feet for application no. 1510030 with the conditions that the setback is clearly identified at the site with signs and the impacted areas will be re-vegetated

Mrs. Duguay moved; Mr. French seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mrs. Gilmore, Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

MOTION: To grant a wetland setback variance of 55 feet for application no. 1510032 with the conditions that the setback is clearly identified at the site with signs and the impacted areas will be re-vegetated

Mr. French moved; Mrs. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.
Yeas: Mr. French, Mrs. Duguay, Mrs. Gilmore, Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Grandillo
Nays: None

MOTION: To grant a wetland setback variance of 63 feet for application no. 1510033 with the conditions that the setback is clearly identified at the site with signs and the impacted areas will be re-vegetated

Mrs. Duguay moved; Mr. French seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.
Yeas: Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mrs. Gilmore, Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Grandillo
Nays: None

MOTION: To grant a wetland setback variance of 26 feet for application no. 1510034 with the conditions that the setback is clearly identified at the site with signs and the impacted areas will be re-vegetated

Mr. Kennedy moved; Mr. French seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.
Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mr. French, Mrs. Duguay, Mrs. Gilmore, Mrs. Grandillo
Nays: None

MOTION: To extend the preliminary plat approval for Forest Ridge of Aurora for twelve months

Mr. French moved; Mrs. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.
Yeas: Mr. French, Mrs. Duguay, Mrs. Gilmore, Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Grandillo
Nays: None

MISCELLANEOUS:

The members had a brief discussion about changing the Planning Commission meetings to an earlier start time. They all agreed that the new meeting time will be 6:30 p.m. instead 7:00 p.m. beginning with the January 20th Planning Commission meeting.

Mrs. Januska provided an update on some pending items. She said that the Aurora 43 South and the Hawthorn wetland setback variance requests are still in the process of being analyzed by CRWP. Once the CRWP analysis is completed, then the variance requests will be back on the agenda.

Mr. Czekaj wanted the members to be aware of the different ways in which developers apply for wetland setback variances. The first option is for the developer to start with the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA and then they receive permits to fill certain wetlands. The developer then will apply to the city for wetland setback variances. With this option, the city has no jurisdiction once the Corps/EPA gives them permission to fill wetlands.

The second option is for the developer to come to the city first and see if we would grant those variances before they apply for their permit with the Army Corps. If the city grants those variances, then more wetlands would be preserved. Mr. Czekaj noted that the Aurora 43 South developer used the second option which is more beneficial for the city.

Mr. Czekaj explained that the Hawthorn developer used the first option and started working with the Army Corps on Phase 5 before applying to the city. Phase 5 was carefully designed to minimize wetland impacts and they actually have a “no impact” letter from the Army Corps. He pointed out that the Hawthorn variance requests only affect the wetland setback areas which is necessary for gaining space for grading, for a retention pond and for recreational space.

There was a brief discussion about the Hawthorn flooding that occurred in July. Mr. Czekaj noted that the Phase 5 storm water management system was designed to work independently from any of the existing systems in Hawthorn. He said that the flooding problems should be kept separate because those issues are unrelated to the wetland variance applications. These variances will not affect any of the existing homes because the Phase 5 storm water system is independent.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Kennedy moved to adjourn at 8:06 p.m.; Mrs. Duguay seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Duguay, Mr. French, Mrs. Gilmore, Mrs. Grandillo

Nays: None

Kathi Grandillo, Chairman

Corinne Craine, Clerk