

Minutes of the Planning Commission Special Meeting

May 22, 2019

5:30 P.M.

Mayor Gallagher called the meeting to order.

PRESENT: Katie Gallagher, Mayor
Ron VanKirk, Council Representative
Jim Oper
Steven Coyle
Sue Grodek

ABSENT:

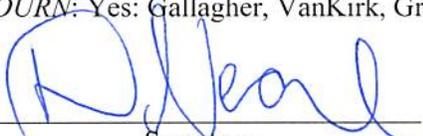
This is a continuation for the request from Swensons Drive-in for preliminary site plan approval for a drive-in restaurant at 4660 Ridge Road PP# 43307004 Docket 5-2019-2 and the request from Swensons Drive-in for a Similar Conditional Use for a drive-in restaurant at 4660 Ridge Road PP# 43307004 Docket 5-2019-2b. Commissioner Kulcsar explained that this meeting is to determine a Similar to Conditional Use. If the Similar Use is approved, we will have the Conditional Use review at the next meeting. He stated we can also discuss the preliminary site plans. Commissioner Kulcsar then read an email from Councilperson Pucci dated 5/22/19 and resident Diane Russell dated 5/22/2019. Mayor Gallagher asked the Commission if they are ok taking a vote for Similar Use to a Conditional Use for a drive-thru. A **Motion** by Gallagher second VanKirk to **approve this is a Similar to drive-thru Conditional Use. Vote Resulted: Yes: Gallagher, Van Kirk, Oper, Grodek, Coyle.**

Mayor Gallagher gave a brief synopsis on the previous meeting. She then went over the revised site plans. She stated that there were concerns from residents about the traffic study. She stated that she has been on the Planning Commission since 2012 and has only seen one other traffic study submitted. The one she had seen in the past was for Sheetz. The one Sheetz was required to do needed to be more comprehensive because it was a completely new construction site and they were also requesting a new traffic light. She asked Drew Laurent from Carpenter Marty Transportation to go over the study. Laurent stated this was a typical intel development traffic assessment study he did. The first step is using the national data to run what the existing condition is now and compare it against what is planned to be developed. So the data listed in this study is based upon the national data used for this type of study. New developments cannot be expected to improve existing issues on a roadway, which is the cities' responsibility. Laurent stated this was not a full traffic study because that is generally not required for redevelopment of an existing area. He also pulled an accident history for the Ridge and Glencoe area for the last three years and there has only been one accident in the immediate area in three years. That accident was because of an intoxicated driver. He did a spot observation of this area prior to the meeting this evening. He did see a lot of cars queuing on Ridge road and feels that was because of a light timing issue to the south, not a development issue. He stated retail strip centers are the highest traffic generators. VanKirk stated he does not question the data in the study, but compared to what is there now and what potential could be there that the numbers don't seem to add up. He then stated the bulk of this plaza is empty and he doesn't know how Carpenter Marty Transportation can state the traffic impact would be minimal or less than what is there now. Laurent replied if they did a full impact study on this they would first subtract out the existing trips from the retail center add in the estimated trips from the new development, in this case, would be negative or net zero. Laurent then stated when he was there today it was 80% full maybe 6-8 empty spots. He stated it was not easy to make a left from Glencoe on to Ridge but he does not feel the new development would increase the existing problem. Mayor Gallagher asked what would be the process for a full impact study. Laurent replied that there is a common misconception that every traffic study includes counting cars. He stated the scope of the study would be based upon the development need.

There was a discussion on different types and ways traffic studies can be completed. Mayor Gallagher stated that some concerns we need to discuss are the traffic and the potential of different types of restaurant going into this location. If a sit-down restaurant would come in this location the Commission would not be able to set conditions upon them. She asked the Commission if they had any question about the traffic study. Oper stated he was concerned about cars queuing on Glencoe. Commissioner Kulcsar stated that there would be the same problem coming out on the Ridge Road exit also. VanKirk stated this is not a Swensons problem, it is an existing condition problem. He also stated if we do have another restaurant go in, we would have zero control of that restaurant or business and feels it could be worse. He stated we all know Ridge Road traffic is a problem since Ridge Park Square had been built. He stated the question in his mind is Swensons going to make this issue worse, is it going to stay the same or is it going to better; how do we know which one of these things it is going to be? Grodek added that she has concerns about a restaurant we don't get much say in going into this location. Even though the building size would be smaller she stated. Grodek then asked how you compare the traffic in anticipation; you cannot compare it based on building size. If anyone goes to Dina's you know what the traffic is like for that sit-down restaurant. If we had a restaurant like that go into this plaza we all know the traffic would be significantly worse and there would be more parking on the street because that is what happens over there now. So for her, if a restaurant like Dina's went in she could see how traffic would be worse. As far as Swensons, she stated that is hard to predict what traffic will be like. Mayor opened the meeting up to the public about the traffic study. Rob Slattery asked Sal Russo how many other restaurants besides Swensons he had reached out to. Sal Russo stated he was contacted by Swensons, through his broker. He then stated over the years about 10 restaurants have reached out to him. There was discussion to types of restaurants that have contact Sal Russo. Rob Slattery asked Drew if he can guarantee traffic will be less. Laurent stated he cannot guarantee but based on the data collect it looks like it will not increase. Rob Slattery stated that there were two accidents that struck two houses have been struck down the street on Ridge since this study has been out. Laurent then asked Slattery how is that related to this development. Slattery stated that it is traffic on Ridge Road. Laurent then asked how those accidents are related to the access points of this development. Slattery then asked Drew if he studied the accidents in the past three years and you said there is just one and here are two more is just last 10 days. Mayor Gallagher stated the Laurent said there was one accident in the site frontage. Slattery then asked if Laurent's company has ever done a study and then found the results less than factual. Laurent responded that his results are estimates based upon national data, he would argue they could be higher or lower. Slattery responded without having an exact count of cars and actual physical study this is just a guess at best. Laurent stated this is a lot of data collected to come up with an estimate. Slattery then stated it is just an educated guess. Jason Hammond stated he understands what they are interpreting about the traffic study is the way it read but he does not agree with it. He also wanted to say that the plaza is not half empty the plaza is only missing one tenant, one large tenant but only one tenant. There was a discussion on the old tenants and the number of tenants in the plaza. There was a discussion on traffic and a traffic study. Mark Bowser asked questions about the plans and mention there is a trash problem in the park area. Mayor Gallagher stated the last meeting that Swenson offered to clean up park area for the trash a couple of times a day. Mayor Gallagher then stated that the Planning Commission needs to take the time and determine the conditions that would need to be set if this gets approved next meeting. She mentioned the Commission can have a conditional approval with a time frame (ex: 6, 12, 18 months) to revisit the conditions to see if they need to be adjusted. She also mentioned there will also need to be a Council confirmation if this Conditional use were approved so there is a next step if there is an approval. She asked the Commission members to please think of conditions that you would like to set. She asked them to send the Commissioner Kulcsar and email as to the conditions you would like to set. VanKirk stated he does agree that having a time frame set to revisit the conditions would be the direction he wants to go. He feels six months is to soon but maybe a year to give time to let the newness of Swensons were off and assess the problems if any there may be. Mayor Gallagher stated we have mentioned about different types of restaurants going into existing plaza, those would not need approval from this commission, is not to give a fear factor to anyone. She just wants to inform everyone as to what the possible reality is. She asked Mr. Russo what his plan will be if Swensons does not go in. Sal Russo right now fast-casual restaurants are really popular. He has received a lot of those type of phone calls for this and his other plazas. He feels fast-casual is growing. He stated he will fill this location with the best tenant he can find if it is a restaurant it will be a restaurant. He stated this is a very large space that is connected to two other spaces that may not be in

business forever. Ron Dee just wanted to mention that they have been in business for 85 years and they will never serve alcohol. Russo then stated most fast-casual restaurants do serve alcohol that helps with their profit mix. There was a discussion on liquor license and restaurants hours. Russo then went on to talk to the residents and Commission about what would be the right choice for the city now and 10 years down the road. Mayor Gallagher then opened the meeting to the public for any questions, comments, and concerns. Rob Slattery asked if there are any unused liquor license available. Mayor Gallagher stated she would need to check with Chief Mielke but she believes there are. Randy Hammond brought up putting an exit on to Biddulph cutting through the park. Mayor Gallagher explained that that would not be a bad idea but it would cost roughly about a half million dollars to do that, that leads to the question to where does the money come from, and who funds that. Morgan Baker asked what plans are for helping daycare find a new location. Russo replied he is trying to help them find something close. There was a discussion on how to ensuring that there is no right turn on Glencoe.

There being no further business, **Motion** by Gallagher second by VanKirk to adjourn. **Vote Resulted: To ADJOURN: Yes: Gallagher, VanKirk, Grodek, Oper, Coyle (Meeting Adjourned)**


Secretary


Chairperson