



Village of South Russell

5205 Chillicothe Road
South Russell, Ohio 44022
440-338-6700

SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING DECEMBER 8, 2022, at 9:00am

MINUTES

Members Present: Steve Latkovic, Chairman, James Flaiz, Mark Porter, Mayor William Koons, Ph.D., Elisa Budoff

Other Officials: Chris Bell, Dennis Galicki, Bridey Matheney, Solicitor; Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer; Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary; Tim Alder; Service Director; Brian Meluch, Engineer, CT Consultants; Rich Washington, Landscape Architect, CT Consultants

Visitors: Michael Klonowski, 5133 Chillicothe; Ralph Richard, 5141 Chillicothe; Sven Nielsen, 118 Southwyck; Gene & Valarie Seminario, 110 Manor Brook; Liz Manchester, 106 Manor Brook, Brian Monroe, 110 Manor Brook

Meeting called to order by Mr. Latkovic at 9:00am.

Ruth Griswold conducted roll call.

This was scheduled as a Joint Special Meeting of the Planning Commission and Council, however, the number of council members attending did not provide a quorum.

This special meeting of the Planning Commission is for the purpose of viewing the location for the proposed landscaping and screening required by Planning Commission for the easement obtained by the Village for the Manor Brook project. The meeting began at the intersection of Manor Brook Drive and Chillicothe Road and continued in Village Hall Council Chambers.

Agenda Item 1: Manor Brook Landscape

PC Case #22-03-B: Discussion and Review of the Preliminary Landscape Plan for Manor Brook

Mayor Koons provided an overview of the entire project. Mr. Meluch of CT Consultants said they are currently wrapping up the design of the culverts and said the mound will be rebuilt and trees will be planted for aesthetic reasons.

Board members, other officials, and visitors walked the area, and the meeting continued in Village Hall.

Mr. Latkovic referred to the site plan and asked for feedback on the preliminary landscaping plan.

Mr. Porter asked the representatives from CT for the cost differential, in general, between 6-8' trees and 10-12' trees of the same species. Mr. Washington said it would be about double the cost. Ms. Budoff asked what would be more economical, doubling the size of the trees or adding more trees. Mr. Washington said adding more

trees would provide better screening in the long term, but the mound could also be built up by 3-4'. He said after viewing the area today, he noticed that there have been shrubs and trees removed by the HOA since the last time he was there, as there are a lot of empty beds. Mr. Latkovic asked how high the mound could be built up. Mr. Washington said it could be increased by a couple feet and still be mow-able, for a total height of about 4-5' higher than existing.

Mayor Koons referred to a property south of Village Hall that has planted many evergreens to screen their property, and said the trees look like they are on top of each other. He asked Mr. Washington to explain what happens when trees are planted too close to one another. Mr. Washington said typically, they should be planted 12-15' apart, and if planted too close together, they are not sustainable since they start shading each other out and inhibit healthy growth.

Mr. Flaiz said he noticed a number of existing pines on the site that are pretty much dead, and there were markings on some. He asked if there has been recent tree removal since the project started. Ms. Manchester said the Manor Brook HOA is in the process of removing some dead pines. Mr. Monroe pointed out that the area being discussed is part of Whitetail. Mr. Latkovic referred to the diagram and clarified the area being discussed.

Ms. Budoff asked who is responsible for maintaining the area after the Village project has been completed. Mr. Latkovic said the trees would be the responsibility of Whitetail, and the drainage easement itself will be maintained by the Village. Ms. Seminaro referred to dead pine trees near her home and asked if the Village would be replacing them. Mayor Koons said no because that is private property. Mr. Monroe said it would help that area to make the screening visible if those trees are removed, but he recognizes the limitations of what the Village can do on private property.

Mr. Flaiz said from the Planning Commission's perspective, they are treating the Village the same as they would a private developer, and the board will impose some screening requirements. He said it would be going too far to require the Village to address pre-existing maintenance issues, and he strongly recommends that the association take care of the dead trees and replant as necessary. Mr. Monroe said that is totally understandable.

Mr. Latkovic asked what the budget was for the preliminary landscape project. Mr. Porter said he would also like to know the cost per tree. Mr. Galicki said the cost per tree is about \$300-500, and larger trees would approach \$1,000 per tree.

Mr. Flaiz asked if the culvert project has been bid out yet. Mr. Alder said they want to do all four on Chillicothe Road at the same time, so it has not gone out for bid yet. Mr. Flaiz asked if the bid specs for the project would include the remediation at the site. Mr. Alder said yes, it would be part of the contract. Mr. Flaiz asked if the raising of the mound and the planting of the trees would be included in the bid package. Mr. Alder said that is up to the engineer. Mr. Washington said it would make sense to include it; they will excavate, put pipe in and rebuild the mound. He added that any additional dirt needed to build the mound higher would be an extra cost. Mr. Flaiz asked if the Village still had an excess amount of dirt available. Mr. Alder said they have about 2,000 yards and are able to get more if needed.

Mr. Porter asked if the bid for the culvert project was still scheduled to be out by the end of the year. Mr. Meluch said due to a number of factors at play, it will be more like the end of January. Mr. Porter said there is somewhat of a time crunch to have the culverts completed before the State paves 306, which is scheduled for the summer of 2023. He said he likes the idea of having the mounding added to the bid contract for the culverts, and the trees, however many are decided on, could be part of that contract as well.

Mayor Koons said any increase to the mound height and additional trees would be paid by the Village.

Mr. Seminaro asked if the north side would be extended. Mr. Latkovic said he didn't think it could be done. Mr. Flaiz said he noticed the stakes that outline the edge of the easement, but there seems to be 20-30' between the

stake and the end of the mound. Mr. Latkovic referred to the drawing for reference and estimated the distance to be 25'. After confirming that the green area could not be touched, Mr. Seminario asked why they couldn't dig it out and put a culvert 30' deep and then cover it with a mound. Mayor Koons said a gas line runs through that area. Mr. Monroe said it could be done, but the grant does not allow it to be. Ms. Matheney said that is correct.

Mayor Koons asked Mr. Seminario what they would hope to see achieved by increasing the mound. Mr. Seminario said they would hope to no longer be able to see all the cars on 306, and it would help with the noise as well. Mr. Latkovic said he can appreciate their frustration, but because their home sits so high, he doesn't feel there is a way that the Planning Commission could restore what they had, since the easement area cannot be touched. Mr. Flaiz said he had wanted to explore the possibilities, but because their house does sit so much higher, it makes it very difficult.

Discussion followed regarding possibilities that would be feasible and still in keeping with legal and practical boundaries.

Mr. Latkovic said that without having Eric Haibach present at this meeting, they are at somewhat of a disadvantage. He said considering this would be a separate project anyway, he would like to get feedback from CT Consultants as to what could possibly be done in that area and have it ready for review at the next Planning Commission meeting on January 12, 2023.

Regarding the landscaping and screening for the Manor Brook project, Mr. Latkovic suggested the mound be raised as high as it could be and twice as many trees from the original proposal be planted. Mr. Latkovic asked Mr. Washington if doubling the trees would be feasible. Mr. Washington said yes, and that would be a way to provide more screening. He will revise the plan to show the proposed changes.

Mr. Monroe said that would not fix the problem, and that planting 14 trees in an area that is 70' wide would provide maybe 10-20% screening. Mr. Latkovic said while he is open to having more screening in the area, he doesn't think it's ever going to block the way it did. Mr. Monroe said he has been following the project and has always been assured that they will be screened and will not see 306, and what is being proposed isn't coming close to providing the screening they have been promised. He said by staggering and adding more trees it would block the line of sight. Mr. Latkovic pointed out that having the height of the mound increased would help substantially, but he is unsure of the ability to fit more trees in the area. Mr. Monroe agreed that the higher mound would help, but more trees are needed, and he has been told for a year that they would not be able to see 306. Mr. Flaiz said he doesn't see how it would be possible for them to not be able to see 306, and that the crowding of the trees has to be considered. Mr. Washington said they would provide a layout of what would be feasible.

Mayor Koons said with the increased mound height and the staggered trees, it would replace the screening that previously existed, since the trees would be as tall as the dead ash trees. He said the Village would also take a look at the ditch, since some residents are unhappy.

Ms. Seminario asked if there was any hope for landscaping to benefit them, due to the high elevation of their house. Mr. Latkovic said the plan is to have the landscape architect look at what is possible for the area. He said the fact is that there was a giant area which provided screening that had to be cleared for the project, and other than extending the mound, he's doesn't know what else can be done.

Mr. Monroe said at the last Council meeting, there was a strong suggestion of adding screening at the west side of the project. He said if there were 6-8' trees in that area, his patio would be screened from 306. Ms. Seminario referred to an area on the plan and said if something could be planted at a specific point, it would help them also. Discussion followed regarding topography of the area and various possibilities.

Mr. Latkovic said the Planning Commission has been reviewing this project from a development review perspective. He asked Ms. Matheney what rights and authority the Planning Commission has outside the area

that was changed, or within the easement. He expressed concern regarding possibly doubling the cost for a budget they don't control. Ms. Matheney said before anything is done, Whitetail and Manor Brook would have to give consent to do anything on the property outside of the easement. She said that may be stretching the bounds of the Planning Commission's authority.

Mr. Latkovic said he feels this is not the forum to direct these requests to, and that it should be brought to Council. He said he is concerned about the Planning Commission's ability to do what is being talked about, which are outside of the specific areas that were part of the discussion at Planning Commission since the beginning.

Mr. Porter agreed and suggested that at the Council meeting Monday, December 12, the residents bring up their concerns regarding the north section.

Mr. Latkovic said in anticipation of providing an accurate bid package, he would like the representatives from CT to design a plan that would show the maximum possible height of the mound, as well as the largest number of trees possible. He said at \$400 each, he feels the Village could absorb the cost of the additional trees.

Mayor Koons said in January, it will be the fifth year of talking about this project, and he recognized that the process is slow. He asked the residents to keep one another informed. He said he got permission from Whitetail to walk the property today, and he will let them know what transpired. Mr. Monroe said the area in the front along Chillicothe is controlled by Whitetail, but they have a 17% vote. Mr. Flaiz said they need to work together to have the dead trees removed and add some new plantings.

Mr. Monroe said he has sat in several meetings with the Mayor and Council, and this is the second one with the Planning Commission. He is very disappointed in the whole process, as they have been constantly reassured that they would be satisfied with the solutions, and that is not the case. He referred to the area inside the easement and said it needs to be raised from 1182 to 1187, and that 14 trees will not be enough, but 20-25 trees, spaced in different rows, would get them closer to doing what was promised. He said the project was done very well, but if the screening is not done properly, it will not help their sight lines or the noise levels from 306 as was promised multiple times.

Mr. Latkovic said he appreciates his comments and understands his frustration, but as chairman of the Planning Commission, he does not want to see 25 trees planted in that area, as he feels after walking the property it would just be too many trees. He said he recognizes that the residents want a solution now, but this is a long-term project, and the impact of planting too many trees would be a disaster, which is why he has asked the landscape architect to provide a plan showing the maximum number of trees possible.

Ms. Budoff asked if there was a way, through virtual technology, to show what the planting of 14 trees would look like, because she agrees that 25 trees is too many. Mr. Flaiz said the area will be wider and higher, and with the spacing requirements, the landscape architect will show how many trees would be feasible.

Mr. Latkovic said apart from the visual aspect, the sound is another issue. Mr. Monroe said the mound will help tremendously with the noise. Mr. Latkovic agreed, but the reality is, the residents will still be able to hear 306 because there were a lot of plantings removed, and there is a lot of road. He said if the mound goes up 5', that will be very helpful, and he believes the positioning of the trees is more important than the number of trees. He suggested that the landscape architect visit the site and look at it from both sides before designing a plan.

Ms. Seminaro asked what the advantage would be of them coming to the Council meeting on Monday. Mr. Latkovic said Council has the authority to address a broader project, and the Planning Commission does not.

Mr. Seminaro asked when a private developer comes in for a project approval, at what point is the landscaping portion reviewed. Mr. Flaiz said it is typically done after the project, and sometimes during. He said this project is unique because the board wanted to see how the project ended up before deciding on how to provide the best landscaping, and that if it were approved ahead of time, they would simply have the seven trees on a 2' mound.

Mr. Latkovic said this is a massive water remediation project and was necessary no matter what. The subject of when the landscaping would be approved isn't relevant to a project such as this since this project was going to happen regardless. Mr. Seminaro said he does understand that this is a unique project.

There being no further business, Mr. Latkovic adjourned the meeting at 10:30am.



James Flaiz, Acting Chairman

1/12/23

Date



Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary

1-12-2023

Date