



Village of South Russell

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

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES November 21, 2024 at 7:30PM

Members Present: James Flaiz, Chairman, Mark Porter, Phyllis Marino, Elisa Budoff, Greg Bruhn

Member Absent: Mayor Bill Koons

Other Officials: Chris Elko, Solicitor; Dave Hocevar, Building Official; Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary

Visitors: Stephen Ciciretto, 270 Park Place; Police Chief Mike Rizzo; Sgt. Nick Divita

Meeting called to order by James Flaiz at 7:30pm.

Ruth Griswold conducted roll call.

Mr. Flaiz said the first order of business is to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission meeting on October 10, 2024. He asked for any additions or corrections. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Bruhn motioned to approve. Mr. Porter seconded. There was no further discussion. On roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 1

PC Case #24-16: Police Chief Mike Rizzo, applicant on behalf of the Village of South Russell, is seeking approval to have an accessory structure built to accommodate a drone vehicle at the Police Department located at **1228 Bell Road.**

Mr. Flaiz said board members were given a tour of the drone vehicle before the meeting and asked Chief Rizzo to begin his presentation. Chief Rizzo said they have been the fortunate recipients of two donations. Sgt. Nick Divita is the current commander of the team, and he has family members who own several car dealerships down south. The family member learned that the department needed a vehicle after hearing that officers were running the UAS team out of their personal vehicles. The donation last year was used to purchase the vehicle that the board just toured. He said this year she gave the department another donation to protect the investment and build the garage, and they will also get a few more years of life from the vehicle if it is protected from the elements. He went on to say that the equipment inside the vehicle must be kept in a temperature-controlled environment.

Mr. Flaiz asked Ms. Griswold if the garage was granted the necessary height variance at the Board of Zoning Appeals the pervious evening. Ms. Griswold said yes, they did receive approval for the variance. Mr. Flaiz asked about the Architectural Review Board. Mr. Hocevar said that is the next meeting they will appear before.

Mr. Flaiz asked board members if they had any questions. Mr. Bruhn asked if the building would have a heating and cooling system. Chief Rizzo said yes, a mini-split system will provide both. Mr. Flaiz asked how far from the police station building the garage would be located. Chief Rizzo said it will be 20' from the station and lined up with the western edge of the building. Mr. Flaiz said you will have to go outside to access it. Chief Rizzo said yes, it will have a man door and a 12' overhead door to accommodate the vehicle. The garage would be located behind the police department building, along the side of the driveway.

Mr. Flaiz asked him what their timeline was. Chief Rizzo said as soon as they have all board approvals, the department would be ready to accept bids. He is hoping to break ground as soon as possible. Mr. Flaiz said that would be a good winter project.

Mr. Bruhn asked if there would be room for anything else in the garage. Chief Rizzo said the garage would accommodate the vehicle and extra storage shelves. He said they want to allow clearance that would enable having all the doors opened while the vehicle is inside the garage. Mr. Flaiz said he realizes the department has limited space, and the extra storage will be good for them. Chief Rizzo said if they receive another donation, they would like to connect the two buildings and add a training room and restroom facilities.

Ms. Marino said the department seems to be leading the way with the drones. Chief Rizzo asked Sgt. Nick Divita to talk about the recent mission involving the Secret Service. Sgt. Divita said the Secret Service had reached out to the department, knowing what their capabilities were. They said the Vice President and Governor Walz were giving speeches at the Convention Center. The department provided all the overwatch for the Secret Service with their drone vehicle as the planes flew into Cleveland Hopkins Airport. The Secret Service saw the department's capabilities and were stunned, thrilled and pleased with them. They expressed an interest in training with the department and possibly using the department more because of their skills,

and to utilize the streaming service and satellite system. Chief Rizzo said they have the Starlink satellite system in the truck, which has the ability to send a link to other law enforcement agencies to monitor the video. Anytime the SWAT team gets deployed, the drone vehicle also goes out with them. The department also has an indoor drone that can go into a building to ensure that it is safe before the team enters. Mr. Flaiz said he has seen a few of those situations, and being able to send the drone in to assess the danger level was very valuable. Chief Rizzo said the South Russell Police has offered their assistance to other police departments with their drone to provide intel. Mr. Porter said this is an important investment, and the garage would protect the vehicle by keeping it enclosed.

Mr. Flaiz asked board members if there were any further questions. Hearing none, Mr. Porter made a motion to approve. Mr. Bruhn seconded. On roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Flaiz thanked the applicants, and Chief Rizzo thanked the board for their time and consideration.

Agenda Item 2:

PC Case #24-17: Mr. Steve Ciciretto, applicant on behalf of property located at **539 East Washington**, owned by RTB Partners Ltd, is seeking approval for the construction of two additions to the commercial property.

Mr. Ciciretto handed board members supplemental plans which included an aerial view and a better perspective of the 539 East Washington building. The site plan displayed on the media screens was the original site plan from 38 years ago. He went on to describe the many changes the area has been through in the past decades, and eventually the entire property was integrated into one parcel, leading him to his current proposal. Mr. Ciciretto is proposing small additions to the east and west sides of the building. He said they were granted the needed variances at the Board of Zoning Appeals at the meeting last night. He referred to the document outlining the parking breakdown. He said he realizes there are parking issues in the area, but they have ample parking at this site, and even more so since the engineering firm moved out.

Mr. Flaiz asked how many square feet would be added to the building. Mr. Ciciretto said the small additions would both equal about 1200 square feet. Mr. Flaiz said this project is more of a reconfiguring. Mr. Ciciretto agreed, and said originally the building was two houses, with things having been added over the years.

Mr. Bruhn asked if anything was being demolished. Mr. Ciciretto said the walls will be torn down and rebuilt to have better framing and insulation, which will make it more energy efficient. Mr. Porter asked if the Architectural Review Board has seen the proposal yet. Mr. Ciciretto said no; their intention was to secure the necessary developmental approvals prior to creating full construction drawings and appearing before the ARB.

Mr. Flaiz complimented Mr. Ciciretto on his work, and said he always does a nice job on his projects. He said this is one of those buildings that you don't really notice, and when he drove by the building, it was apparent that it had been pieced together in the past. He absolutely loves the design of the proposed finished look with the additions and upgrades. He said this will be a huge improvement, and gives credit to the owner, because for a fairly marginal square foot increase, the look of the building will be dramatically improved. Mr. Flaiz went on to say that this week, having had a half day off, he was able to visit various properties in the Village around noon. He doesn't often get the opportunity to do so. He was surprised at the unused parking at this site, as it looked to be at about 30% of the spaces were being used. He asked Mr. Ciciretto if the building had a lot of available occupancy. Mr. Ciciretto said the building is fully occupied, and they just have an overabundance of available spaces. He said they have never had parking issues, which has been one of their selling points. It is an attractive office area if you want to be close to Chagrin Falls, and not have any parking headaches. Mr. Flaiz said the property is very well maintained, and he is happy they are in the Village. He asked board members for any other comments or questions. There were none. Mr. Flaiz asked Mr. Hocevar if there were any issues from his standpoint. Mr. Hocevar said since the zoning variance was granted, everything complies with the codes.

Mr. Flaiz asked for a motion from board members. Ms. Budoff motioned to approve the additions as presented for 539 East Washington Street. Ms. Marino seconded. Mr. Flaiz asked for any discussion on the motion. Hearing none, he asked for roll call. On roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Flaiz thanked Mr. Ciciretto and complimented him again on his work. Mr. Ciciretto thanked the board members for their time and consideration.

Mr. Flaiz asked for any **Old Business**. There was none.

Mr. Flaiz said for **New Business**, he wanted to briefly mention that recent research of records has shown that a tenant on Industrial Parkway has not yet been to the Planning Commission for approval. He asked if there were any possible applicants, other than that, for December. Mr. Hocevar said he has been told that Panini's will close on November 30. Mr. Flaiz said he had heard that as well, and that Tavern 6 bought the restaurant. Mr. Hocevar said that is correct. Mr. Flaiz said he was surprised, because he didn't think Panini's had been struggling. Mr. Hocevar said he believes it was something internal. He said he called Panini's, spoke to a manager, and let them know the new owners must appear before the Planning Commission. He doesn't know if the business or the building was bought, and he's waiting for a return call on that. Mr. Flaiz asked when Tavern 6 is planning to open. Mr. Hocevar said he has been told it would be after the first of the year.

Mr. Flaiz asked about the status on Lopez. Mr. Hocevar said he spoke with Brad Friedlander about his plans, and he wants to have private events at the site, within the occupancy limits. Ms. Griswold said Mr. Friedlander told them the valet was costing too much, and he thought private parties would be a good fit. He said he has done that in the past at this site, and the parties are never more than 40 people.

Ms. Budoff asked about the status on the proposed EV charging stations that was tabled in October. Mr. Flaiz said they withdrew their application and asked Ms. Griswold if it was because they needed a variance. Ms. Griswold said when they notified the Village, they did not give a reason for their withdrawal.


Discussion followed regarding ongoing issues at the Industrial Parkway site. Mr. Flaiz said he drove back there, and the No Parking signs are an improvement, which allows emergency vehicle access. The area still needs attention. The rear parking lot is a mess, and half is gravel. He doesn't think they have enough clearance to provide an adequate parking area. Mr. Hocevar said he does not have sufficient parking, and Mr. Derry was told he must appear at the Board of Zoning Appeals to obtain a variance.

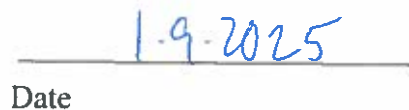
Mr. Flaiz said he is inclined to cancel the December meeting, and that they could always call a Special Meeting, if need be, as he wouldn't want to hold anybody up. Discussion followed and all board members agreed. Mr. Flaiz asked for a motion to cancel the December meeting. Mr. Porter motioned to cancel the December meeting. Mr. Bruhn seconded. Mr. Flaiz asked for any further discussion or comments, and hearing none, he asked for roll call. On roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, Mr. Flaiz asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Budoff motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Marino seconded. Ayes all, the motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm.


Chairperson


Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary


Date


Date