

**EMPIRE VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024**

The Village of Empire Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, June 4, 2024, in the Empire Township Hall.

ROLL CALL –Bacon, Collins, Ellibee, Schous, Ford, Deering and Chase were present. Zoning Administrator Hall was also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Motion by Deering, supported by Bacon to approve the May 7, 2024, Public Hearing and Regular Meeting minutes as presented. AYES: 7, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.

TREASURERS REPORT – Chase presented the revenue and expenditure report for the period ending 04/30/2024, indicating that 20% of the budget has been used to date.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA – Bacon moved Cherry Republic Site Plan Review to first item of unfinished business. Bacon also added PUD Adjustment to new business.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & CORRESPONDENCE – A communication from Robin Johnson, the General Manager of Quercus Alba, LLC proposing an adjustment to the New Neighborhood Phase 5 PUD.

ZONING ADMINISTRATORS REPORT – Hall commented on the application and permitting complications from the two recent Mass Gathering requests.

CHERRY REPUBLIC SITE PLAN REVIEW – Hall summarized Site Plan Review Report, Case No. SPR-2024-01. Applicant proposes a ‘combination of uses’ in accordance with Article 4, Section 4.06.2.5 on parcels 041-719-024-05 and 041-719-024-10. Hall indicated that the application was complete and reviewed the Zoning Administrators’ findings of fact. Scott Jozwiak of Jozwiak Consulting presented the expansion project details on behalf of Cherry Republic. Roni Hazelton of Cherry Republic detailed the need to expand the existing building, with the focus being 15,000 sq.ft. of additional warehouse space, three more truck docks, and additional freezer space.

Topics/concerns from the planning commission:

- Elevation changes regarding the existing ditch and drainage
- Access by emergency services due to the entrance going through the self-storage units
- Stormwater and wastewater questions
- Noise from the industrial fans

Topics/concerns from members of the public:

- Fulfilling the landscaping/tree requirement
- Noise from the mechanicals, options to lower the noise
- The main entrance going in between the self-storage buildings
- Additional lighting for employees
- Future changes to the ingress/egress which may cause issues

A long discussion surrounded where to plant enough trees to satisfy the landscaping requirement. The applicant indicated that due to lack of space and appropriate areas to plant trees, they would be willing to donate trees to the Village to plant elsewhere. The planning commission settled on a conditional agreement that the applicant will plant 15 trees reasonably dispersed on site to be approved by the Zoning Administrator.

Motion by Deering, supported by Bacon to approve SPR-2024-01, including a conditional requirement that the applicant plant 15 trees on-site, which the Zoning Administrator will oversee. AYES: 7, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Presentation

Brad Lonberger of Place Strategies, Inc. and Elise Crafts of Placecraft presented a revised goal to “perform a master plan update that validates the current plan’s goals and values, expands on community needs for economic development, and develops three small area plans to educate and support private investment in the community”. Work will include data gathering and analysis, community survey and engagement, conceptual design, site planning, proposed redevelopment tools and hosting public meetings to present deliverables. A proposed timeline was included in the presentation.

Renovare Contract

Motion by Bacon, supported by Collins to accept Village Council’s approval of the Site Feasibility Analysis and Master Plan Update by Renovare. AYES: 7, NO: 0. MOTION PASSED.

Planning Commission members that have volunteered to serve on the Master Plan Working Committee are Maggie Bacon, Carey Ford and Margaret Ellibee.

(RRC) COMPLIANCE MEASURES – Consensus to table this agenda item until next meeting.

PUD ADJUSTMENT – Presentation given by Robin Johnson, General Manager of Quercus Alba, LLC developer of New Neighborhood PUD. The developer is proposing a minor adjustment to an existing PUD, which would expand the form of housing one could build in Phase Five. According to the developer, such an adjustment “would be a first step in allowing a greater variety of dwelling types, smaller units grouped together in a quadri-plex, for example, with long-term rental units or townhouses for work force housing, and/or accessible units for seniors to age in place.”

COMMITTEE REPORTS – None.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Karen Baja commented that all Site Plan Reviews should go through the Planning Commission and not handled administratively through the Zoning Administrator.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS – Schous commented that until the New Neighborhood Phase Five acquires a 2/3 vote to amend the PUD, no action can be taken by the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Alacia Acton, Recording Secretary

These draft minutes will be considered for approval at the September 3, 2024, Village of Empire Planning Commission meeting.