

Monroe Planning Commission Minutes
April 24, 2019 – 6:00 pm
233 South Main Street, Monroe, Ohio

The Planning Commission of the City of Monroe met in regular session at 6:00 pm on April 24, 2019. The meeting was held at Monroe City Hall.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mr. Morris. Members present were Robert Routson, Ron Tubbs, Steve Wood and James Berry.

Also present were: Kevin Chesar, Development Director; Kameryn Jones, Planner; Dan Arthur, Assistant Public Works Director; and Deana England, Deputy Clerk of Council.

Mr. Tubbs moved to approve the minutes from the March 19, 2019 meeting; seconded by Mr. Berry. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Case No. 2019-4-6 Consideration of site plan application for a Kroger Fulfillment Center.

Ms. Jones stated that Mr. Mark Shefchik with Ryan Companies, on behalf of the Kroger Company, has requested site plan approval regarding a forthcoming industrial fulfillment center on Hamilton Lebanon Road. The project is for 314,000 square feet of warehouse space with 144,500 square feet of occupied work platforms and 31,300 square feet of office space. According to the applicant, the use will be a first-of-its-kind operation for Kroger in the United States that will provide direct-to- customer grocery delivery. The facility will house dry and perishable food storage retrieved by an advanced automated tote system, while the frozen foods will be a manual operation. All products are to be delivered to customers via small profile (sprinter) delivery vans. The property is currently zoned L-1 Light Industrial and will be located on approximately 41.5 acres. The applicant anticipates a project start date of May 2019 and completion date at the end of 2020.

Ms. Jones stated that on April 22, the developer for this project went before the Board of Zoning Appeals regarding four variances regarding this site. To allow accessory structures, normally permitted in the rear or side yard, to locate in the front yard. The accessory uses entail a vehicular washing building, vehicular maintenance building, a refueling area, and containerized computer rooms (CCR) related to the automated and technological process at the facility. To allow a reduction of the minimum front yard building setback requirements for an industrial site adjacent to a residential use from 150 feet to 101 feet (Mr. Greco's Residence). To reduce minimum outdoor storage setbacks adjacent to a residential use from 200 feet to 51 feet 4 inches (Mr. Greco's Residence). To reduce access drive and employee parking adjacent to a residential use from 100 feet to 31 feet 6 inches (Mr. Greco's Residence). It is also important to note the applicant is the property owner of all parcels involved in the variances, including the parcel related to variance requests 2, 3, and 4. It is Staff's understanding that the previous

property owner, Mr. Greco, sold the land to the Kroger Company based on the condition that he be permitted to reside in the residential structure until he vacates it.

Ms. Jones states that the applicant has indicated that loading dock doors are located on the north and east sides of the proposed building, oriented away from residential occupancies. No warehouse activities occur on the west side of the proposed building. In discussions with Staff, the applicant is meeting or exceeding the minimum setbacks and buffering requirements per code regarding the Colonial Manor Subdivision with the intent to minimize parking, loading, etc. in order to minimize adjacent impacts. Because the project is adjacent to State Route 63, the front façade is required to meet commercial architectural requirements as opposed to the typical industrial regulations. The applicant has indicated that due to the refrigeration needed for the internal operations of this user, certain waivers (via alternative equivalency application) are being requested. The front 31,300 square feet office portion of the building generally meets the elevated commercial architectural criteria. The use will have two front yards as it will have frontage along the new public road to the north, under construction as part of the Bed Bath and Beyond development. Staff recognizes, however, the northern front yard will not function as a typical front yard and is generally in support of the applicant not providing the landscaping and architectural requirements, especially in light of the docking and loading locations.

Staff Comments:

Ms. Jones states that code requires sidewalks along all portions of a parcel that front a public or private street, as well as a sidewalk connection to the building/use. The site is required sidewalks along the future public road to the north as well as State Route 63. The applicant has shown a sidewalk connection from the road to the building entrance. The applicant has shown a future sidewalk location along State Route 63 but has not showing a sidewalk location to the north. The proposed landscape plan does not meet all landscaping requirements but generally complies with what has been expected of past industrial sites. Truck docks are required to be located in order to not be visible from the public right-of-way or residential zoning district. If this configuration is not possible, screening to meet 75% opacity up to 10 feet in height is required. Docks are proposed along the east side of the site with visibility from the right-of-way along State Route 63 and the future public road to the north. The applicant has indicated a 6-foot solid fence with canopy and evergreen trees. In addition, the van storage lot assists in screening any dock activity from the road. Outdoor storage is required to be fully screened with a solid fence not to exceed 14 feet in height. As such, the delivery van lot would need to be screened. The applicant has proposed a 6-foot solid wood fence. Staff requests this fence be raised to an 8-foot fence to further screen the delivery vans, which will be approximately 10 feet tall. All rooftop and ground-mounted equipment must be screened from view. Rooftop equipment appears to be visible from multiple angles along State Route 63 and possibly the forthcoming new road on the north side of the site. Ground mounted equipment is indirectly screened by the buffering and mounding along the west side of the site as well as several evergreen trees placed to the south of these structures to block view from the parking lot and the road. All CCR structures appear to be screened with solid fencing. However, renderings provided appear to show the structure slightly taller than the fencing. Staff requests any fencing for these structures be, at minimum, equal in height to the structures they screen. As this site is located along State Route 63, commercial architectural standards apply on the southern facing façade. The base-body-cap requirement is not met. Exposed metal panels (i.e. corrugated metal) are prohibited. Required façade variations every 50 feet is not met. All other sides of the building must comply with industrial architectural standards: Minimum 25% primary masonry (clay brick, natural stone, manufactured stone with natural appearance) is required. The applicant does not meet this requirement. All accessory structures (refueling center, maintenance building, van wash building), accessory buildings must meet commercial architectural standards as they are located

in the front yard along State Route 63. Buildings likely do not comply with minimum 25% window requirement for facades visible from a public road. Staff requests base-body-cap percentages on all buildings. The fuel station canopy is required to be gabled with a maximum clearance height of 15' feet. The canopy is proposed with a flat roof. Staff requests clarification on the clearance height.

Department Comments:

The Fire Department will need to confirm that we have sufficient radio coverage in the building after construction is complete and infrastructure is in place. FDC needs to be marked with identifier and address per code. Is the FDC supplying the private hydrants as well? Ensure turning radius is met throughout property. The Police Department commented regarding entry and exit of all traffic from State Route 63. We would like to see turn lanes allowing vehicles to slow down before entering the facility. We understand this is in the process of being evaluated. Semi-tractor trailers entering State Route 63 eastbound from the facility could cause issues. The rear public lane access to Salzman may solve this issue. Portable radio coverage inside the building. The Public Works Department stated that storm water calculations have been submitted and reviewed for the project. At this point in time, the calculations are acceptable but may require revisions. The orifice size on the outlet structures are only 2 inches in diameter to detain the water and will require frequent maintenance. Some review of the current cross sections of the pond outlets and of the on-site headwall to headwall cross sections, may need revision, which could "change/revise" the current storm water calculations. Isolation valves must be installed on north and south ends of the proposed 10" water main where it connects to the City of Monroe's water system. The water main connection on the north end of the property will be installed beyond the pavement of the street and will not require a bore and jack to make the connection. Please look for possible conflicts and proper separation between the proposed storm sewer and 10" water main. The TIS for this project was received on 4/5 by Public Works and will be reviewed as soon as possible. Improvements within the right-of-way of State Route 63 will be submitted separately for review once the engineering consultants complete design. There appears to be off-site storm and right-of-way drainage issues that may require additional review.

Dan Arthur stated that a Traffic Impact Study has not been completed for the project at this time. Integration of the signal lights at Salzman and Hollytree should be done in order to control traffic flow and timing.

Ms. Jones states that Staff recommends approval of the site plan based on the following conditions: discussion to waive, modify or require architectural requirements, specifically the base-body-cap requirement along the entire south facing façade. Discussion to waive, modify or require the screening for the rooftop equipment if a parapet (cap) is not required. At minimum, the Code would require the equipment to match the color of the main building. The applicant will increase the height of the solid fence screening the van storage area from 6 feet to 8 feet. Discussion to waive, modify or require the architectural requirements for all accessory structures, particularly the refueling station regarding a gabled roof. The applicant acknowledges a 5' sidewalk along State Route 63 may be installed at a future date as required by the by the City at the property owner's expense. The City can require installation by the property owner or install with the costs to be paid by the owner. A GIS compatible file shall be submitted to the City, and all other Staff comments be met.

Mr. Routson left the meeting at 6:40pm.

Mr. Morris asked what the decimal levels were for the rooftop cooling units on the west side, next to Colonial Manor.

The applicant stated that at the property line the decibels registered at 60 DB's, which is normal conversational speech level. When you add the mounding, vegetation and fencing along this side, the decibel levels should go down even further.

Mr. Morris asked if we could get an estimate of DB's at the property line with the screening requirements.

Mr. Tubbs asked if a substitute to wood fencing on the proposed berm on the west side with a vinyl/composite fencing. Wood fencing has a short life span and requires continuous maintenance.

Mr. Chesar added that the color should blend with surroundings (not white) or match colors already used in the structure.

Mr. Morris stated he would like to see an 8-foot fence rather than 6 foot to screen van storage.

Mr. Berry asked how tall are the light poles in parking areas around the site.

The applicant stated that they are 30-foot poles on a 2-foot base. The light fixtures will be LED pointing straight down.

The applicant and staff attempted to show a video presentation of the site traveling west on State Route 63. The presentation would not work on the projection screens so the applicant approached the dais and showed Planning Commission on a laptop.

The applicant stated that due to the refueling station matching the primary structure and that it sits on private property and not commercial property that the requirements for the gabled roof be waived in this instance. It is their belief that if to code, it will be more noticeable and not blend with the existing structure and screening.

Mr. Morris and Mr. Berry agreed and stated that they had no issue waiving this requirement.

Mr. Morris voiced concerns with the increased traffic flow in regards to this site. With added semi-truck traffic, delivery van traffic, and employee traffic, he is concerned with the safety of travelers driving through Monroe east and west on State Route 63. Especially due to not currently having a Traffic Impact Study.

Mr. Morris stated that with 94 U-turns on State Route 63 during peak hours of 6:45 am – 7:45 am and 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm, an approximate 38 delivery vans per hour entering and exiting the site, with 450 employees on two 10 hour shifts, and 16-18 semi-truck deliveries per hour at year five this will be a huge impact on State Route 63. It is also concerning that there will be 3 entry points off State Route 63 for this site alone. Mr. Morris stated that he would like to see the Traffic Impact Study and go over alternatives for traffic flow prior to approving this case.

Planning Commission members were in agreement.

The applicant stated that their main concern is the internal traffic on the site and believes that the external flow that is proposed is sufficient.

Mr. Morris stated that he believes that there is room for improvement and is willing to sit down and find the best alternative to insure internal and external circulation in regards to this site.

Mr. Berry moved to table Case No. 2019-4-6 Consideration of site plan application for a Kroger Fulfillment Center; seconded by Mr. Tubbs. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Chesar informed Planning Commission on newly acquired property on South Main Street that will potentially be used for future new Police Station facility. There are two remaining parcels owned by Munafo that may potentially be sold to the same developers that developed the property where Dairy Queen currently is. The buyer has inquired as to whether a gas station can be placed on one of these parcels. There are current regulations and a PUD that may currently prohibit this use.

It was Planning Commissions impression that there are issues with drainage/soil on those particular parcels that may hinder this kind of use. It would be proactive for soil samples to be taken.

Mr. Berry moved to adjourn at 8:58 pm; seconded by Mr. Morris.

Respectfully submitted by,

Deana England
Deputy Clerk of Council