

City of Springboro
320 West Central Avenue, Springboro, Ohio 45066

Planning Commission Work Session
Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 6:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Becky Iverson called the Springboro Planning Commission Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Springboro Municipal Building, Council Chambers, 320 West Central Avenue, Springboro, Ohio.

Present: Becky Iverson, Stephen Harding, Chris Pearson, Becky Hartle, Jack Hanson, Robert Dimmitt, John Sillies

Staff: Dan Boron, City Planner; Elmer Dudas, Development Director; Amy Brown, Planning Commission Secretary

II. Agenda Items

A. Site Plan Review

920 West Central Avenue (SR 73), new retail building

Background Information

This agenda item is an application for site plan review filed by Jason Sams of ARC, Jeffersonville, Indiana, seeking approval to construct a 2,300-square foot retail building at 920 West Central Avenue (SR 73). The proposed retail building will be occupied by a Verizon store. The site is currently owned and occupied by Smyth Automotive which will continue to operate under this proposal. The property has frontage on West Central Avenue (SR 73) and access from Greenwood Lane through access drives and easements to the south and through the proposed store site, and to the north behind the Smyth Automotive store. A vicinity aerial map is included in the meeting materials.

The subject property is zoned HBD, Highway Business District, a designation that permits both the proposed use and existing Smyth Automotive store. The HBD is intended to accommodate uses that depend on high-traffic volume and visibility, and which generate high traffic volumes throughout the day.

As indicated in the submitted materials, ARC proposes to construct a 2,300-square foot retail building on 0.31 acres carved out from the southwest corner of the 1.435-acre Smyth Automotive property. Existing pavement within this portion of the site would be removed and the existing circulation pattern for Smyth Automotive would be modified so that access to the Smyth Automotive building from the south would be by way of a one-way, north bound access drive. The easement that provides access to properties to the west of the existing Smyth Automotive site would also be relocated under this proposal. The proposed Verizon store would be located on a separate property from Smyth Automotive. The creation of that lot would necessitate a record plan approval following preliminary review of the site plan.

Adjacent land uses include retail development to the north, east, and south with properties fronting West Central Avenue in the vicinity of the I-75 interchange. To the north is the existing Smyth Automotive site as well as Hampton Inn, to the east is Chipotle Mexican Grill, and to the south on the south side of West Central Avenue is the Thornton's gasoline station and convenience store. To the west is a vacant parcel as well as a parcel that is occupied by the former BP service station building. Access to properties to the west is through an easement on the south side of the proposed Verizon store site.

Adjacent zoning for the entire vicinity of the subject property is HBD.

Formal approval of this site plan review case may take place at a regular business meeting following review at a work session, as soon as the November 14, 2018 combined Planning Commission work session/meeting. No City Council review is required.

Staff Comments

City staff identified the following comments for this agenda item at this time:

1. Provide a materials board of proposed building exterior materials at the October 10th work session.
2. Revise south (West Central Avenue/SR 73) elevation to include an entrance door.
3. Building design to include a tripartite building design consisting of a top or cornice, body, and base. No top/cornice or base present on proposed plans.
4. EIFS is not permitted below 8 feet above grade on any exterior elevation.
5. Remove parking spaces adjacent to dumpster, as access to the dumpster is blocked.
6. Following work session discussion provide an exterior lighting plan consistent with Chapter 1273 of the Planning & Zoning Code including but not limited to plans and specifications for proposed architectural and site lighting, and a photometric analysis. This also applies to new lighting on the Smyth Automotive site.
7. Verify the location of the proposed lighting and the relocated lighting. Is there a proposed light pole in a parking stall? Also, the east side sidewalk appears to be located within the same parking stall as the light pole. Adjust sidewalk accordingly.
8. Signage is not part of the site plan review process however applicant is advised that proposed signage on south elevation significantly exceeds maximum message area. Coordinate with City staff following work session review.
9. Provide a landscaping plan consistent with Chapter 1280 of the Planning & Zoning Code following completion of the work session review. This also applies to proposed landscaping on the Smyth Automotive site.
10. Verify location of the existing sanitary sewer lateral to the auto store. Provide private sanitary sewer easement if the lateral is going through the proposed Verizon site. Verify the existing water lateral location as well, along with possible easement.
11. Provide two way access between parking lots, minimum 22 feet wide pavement.
12. Revise utility note 4 (C400) to state water meter to be located in the building along with remote reader.
13. Provide proposed sanitary sewer lateral invert at lift station. Provide minimum cover on sanitary sewer lateral to be 4 feet. Also, lateral material to be SDR 35 or SCH 40.
14. Provide building setback to all property lines.
15. Complete a traffic impact study is required per 1278.03(d).

Discussion:

Jason Sams, ARC, project developer, was present this evening to answer questions and discuss the project.

Mr. Sams said that he has been working with Smyth Automotive for a year to come up with a real estate deal with Verizon for a free standing store. He gave a brief overview of the project and the materials that would be used, and said that he is eager to get through the Planning Commission process.

Ms. Iverson said that Mr. Sams didn't have to go through every comment, just the ones you have questions about or objections to.

Mr. Sams said there are three items where they take exception. He referred to the plans and said that the site has access through an access easement through Greenwood Road. He said the proposal is to carve out 0.3 acres from the Smyth Automotive lot and build a 2,300 square foot building with a parking lot. He said one of the items of discussion is proposing a one way drive lane and the purpose is to provide a 9-foot buffer between the property line to the building. He said the building meets all the setback requirements.

Ms. Iverson said that the first issue is the one way drive.

Mr. Sams said, yes.

Mr. Sams referred to aerial pictures and said that McDonald's, Wendy's, and Chipotle have one way traffic with a 15-foot drive lane. He said he reviewed the code, and a 12-foot drive lane is allowed.

Mr. Boron said that the engineering practice today would be a two-way drive. He said there would be a parking lot, and it would need to function as such, with two way access through the parking lot, with a minimum 22 feet in width per code.

Mr. Sams said that he approached Planning about a month ago with another plan, showing a 22-foot lane, but that forced a variance. He said he was trying to find balance between not asking for a variance, and providing access. He said Smyth Automotive has two access points on Greenwood, and there were 4 cars in the parking lot at 5:00 this afternoon, so it is not a high volume parking lot. He said they would be meeting all of the parking requirements from a calculation standpoint in front of the building. He said would like to avoid a variance request, but satisfy the zoning code by providing a 9-foot buffer in between the property lines.

Mr. Dimmitt asked if the adjacent property were to be developed, would the one way access affect the ability to get to that property.

Mr. Sams said that the access easement that they are proposing to relocate would be an old service road easement, and it would be stubbed out into the adjacent property.

Mr. Pearson said this access is to the former BP station lot, and someone coming from Greenwood the other way, would go the wrong way if no one was coming the other way.

Mr. Sams said you could physically drive on that road if you wanted to. He said that the majority of the traffic coming into Smyth and Verizon would be coming from Central Avenue and Greenwood Lane.

Ms. Iverson said that nothing is existing there today, and she isn't sure what Smyth will do if another business comes in. She said they have to think long term about not just what is currently there, or what their volume is.

Mr. Sams said that they would maintain the majority of the parking in front of the space, and there would be a crossover agreement between Verizon and Smyth.

Ms. Iverson asked if the building could be made smaller.

Mr. Sams said this is the smallest he could make it at 2,300 square foot.

Mr. Harding asked how wide was the one way drive.

Mr. Sams said it would be 15 feet.

Mr. Harding said that he had concerns about getting fire apparatus through there.

Mr. Sams said that he had no reservations about that, and added that fire trucks drive through 12-foot drive lanes all the time.

Mr. Boron said that he had an opportunity to speak with Larry Carman, Clearcreek Township Fire Department, and he expressed concerns about the drive. He said that at a minimum it would need to be striped or at least marked for a fire lane with signs. He said the preference would be a two way, 22-foot wide drive.

Mr. Sams said they are providing two access points, and he would feel differently if there were only one way in and one way out.

Mr. Dimmitt asked if the building could be moved closer to SR 73, and the parking could be in the back instead of the front.

Mr. Sams said that he has been working on this project for a year, and Smyth made it clear if the building moves, the deal dies. He said they did not want the building blocked, and he has worked with them over several rounds of discussions to get an agreeable location.

Ms. Iverson asked if he had looked at other properties in Springboro.

Mr. Sams said this is where Verizon wants to go, and if something were to go wrong, they would tell him to go to another market.

The members discussed possible alternate locations for the building and parking.

Mr. Sams said that he looked at and reviewed the code that says a 12-foot lane is allowed.

Ms. Iverson asked for clarification because she is hearing two different things, where Mr. Sams says the code is saying it is permissible, and staff is saying it's not.

Mr. Dudas said it all depends because each site is different. He said the other sites that Mr. Sams referenced are applicable to those sites, but this site is unique because it does have a front and a back. He said where Mr. Sams thinks that's okay for a one-way aisle, staff thinks that's the reason to have a two-way aisle, so the front access and the back access can access each other. He said that creates a drive for the parking lot, and also gives access for front and back, where if there is issue on front side, you could come in the back side, and vice versa.

Mr. Boron said that the lane width comes from a section of the parking code, which talks about specific design standards. He said if you have parking aligned a certain way, the basis for the 12-foot wide comes from that section of the code, but the rest is engineering interpretation.

Mr. Sams also asked about the traffic impact study. He said that his engineer wrote a letter to Mr. Dixon. He said it was prepared by a licensed traffic engineer, and asked if that would be sufficient.

Mr. Dudas said that based on code, if the property lies within 600 feet of an intersection, it requires a traffic study. He said that peak hour traffic doesn't apply, and it would need to be done to see the results of a one way versus two way drive.

Mr. Boron said he would be happy to work with the applicant regarding the traffic study.

Mr. Sams confirmed that the next meeting for formal approval would be November 14th. He said that he made the application back in August, and the plan wasn't right, so he never moved forward. He said this real estate deal expires on November 2nd, and he is trying to keep Verizon interested in the project. He added that he has brought lighting, landscaping, and utility plans this evening.

Mr. Dimmitt said that he was not sure the traffic study could be completed that quickly.

Ms. Iverson said that the issues would have to be worked out by Friday, for final review on the 28th.

Mr. Pearson said he probably would not approve it because of the one way access.

Ms. Iverson said it sounds like if Mr. Sams could come up with a plan for the two-way drive, it would be more likely to move forward.

Mr. Sams said that he would have to go back to the seller to see what can be worked out.

Mr. Dimmitt said that he didn't understand why they would not allow Mr. Sams to move the building up, because it gives them more room, and doesn't block the building.

Mr. Sams said they are looking at the view of SR 73 and coming off the interstate from the interchange.

Ms. Hartle said that she would agree there needs to be two-way access.

Mr. Sams asked about a variance for the project.

Mr. Boron said there was another plan submitted for a previous Planning Commission meeting, and after we reviewed it, staff told Mr. Sams that he was looking at probably 7 or 8 variances in order to make this plan even something that Planning Commission could approve. He said the variances were all related to the placement of the driveways and parking lots within the relationship of proposed property lines. He said that the staff's position has been that the site plan and also the

record plan because they are proposing to carve out a lot which requires setbacks, are self-created situations. He said that one of the four criterion in which the Board of Zoning Appeals looks at is hardships, and if they are self-created. He said he would have to answer, yes. He said that Mr. Sams is welcome to approach the Board of Zoning Appeals, but he doesn't think he would be granted a variance when it is the site plan that is creating the problem.

Mr. Harding asked if this item would go to Council for 3 readings, which would go into November.

Mr. Boron said the record plan has to go through Council.

Mr. Dudas said that he thought that could be done in one reading.

Mr. Boron added that the variance would be from the Board of zoning appeals, and not this Board.

Mr. Sams said that he looked at the plan with Mr. Boron, who identified the 6 or 7 variances, so he was able to drop it down to one to get to this plan today. He said he would be asking for relief on one side of the property line.

Mr. Boron said that there would still be one variance that is self-created.

The members discussed possible alternate placements of the building.

Ms. Iverson said that Planning Commission has given Mr. Sams some options to explore. She said this plan would be unlikely to pass. She asked if there were any other comments or questions. She added that Mr. Boron and Mr. Dudas were available to work with the applicant.

Mr. Sams said that he would need clarification on the scope for the traffic study.

Mr. Boron said that the City engineer can let Mr. Sams know the scope, and the concern is not on the volume, but the drive and the interconnected driveway.

III. Guest Comments

Ms. Iverson asked if any guests would like to speak, please come up to the front, and state their name and address for the record.

Mark Langdon, Schuler Group, said that he represents the property owner on the adjacent property, and their interest is the access to their property. He said he was present this evening to just hear the discussion.

IV. Planning Commission and Staff Comments

Mr. Dimmitt said that he would not be at the Planning Commission Meeting on October 31.

V. Adjournment

Ms. Iverson adjourned the Wednesday, October 10, 2018 Planning Commission Work Session at 6:45 p.m.



Becky Iverson, Planning Commission Chairperson



Dan Boron, Planning Consultant



Amy Brown, Planning Commission Secretary