

**CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**November 17, 2014**

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The meeting was called to order at 1:33 p.m.

Chair Holt began the meeting with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. The following members were present: Mr. Marv Holt, Chair, Mr. Chuck Boso, Mr. Gary Leasure and Ms. Julie Oyster. Mr. Mike Linder had an excused absence. Others present: Kim Shields, Planning/GIS Specialist; Kyle Rauch, Planning & Development Officer; Jennifer Readler, Frost Brown Todd; Mike Boso, Chief Building Inspector; Tami Kelly, Clerk of Council, and Molly Frasher, Secretary.

Chair Holt noted a quorum was present. Ms. Oyster motioned to reconsider the postponement of the Pizzuti project from the December 2 meeting and place it on today's agenda for this special meeting; Mr. Leasure seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**Item #1 – Grove City Town Center Apartments – Preliminary Development Plan**

**(PID# 201410240061)**

The applicant is requesting approval of a preliminary development plan for a multi-family residential development on the former lumberyard site west of City Hall at 4035 Broadway. The proposed development will have one point of access from Grove City Road and another from Park Street.

Four buildings are proposed around the site containing 120 units in the form of one and two bedroom apartments; one-hundred fifty-two parking spaces are also proposed on the site. Preliminary plans show building exteriors to be finished in horizontal lap and vertical board and batten siding with brick veneer accent. In order to be more compatible with structures in the Town Center, staff recommended additional brick be incorporated into all proposed buildings with the final development plan

Ms. Shields stated that staff believes the proposed apartments will have a beneficial effect on the city and Town Center by providing new residential opportunities in the Town Center area, an opportunity recognized in the 2008 Town Center Plan to strengthen the area. The development was initially proposed as part of the larger development of the Town Center and has been designed to fit in the context of existing development in the area.

The Development Department recommended Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to City Council for the preliminary development plan as submitted.

Dan Gore and Jim Russell, The Pizzuti Co, were present to speak to the item. Mr. Russell thanked the Commission for taking time to meet with them today. Mr. Gore stated they have reviewed staff's comments. Proposed set-backs will be added to the site plans as they move forward as well as additional landscaping to enhance to overall look of the property to keep in line with all of the streetscape work that has been done in Town Center. Mr. Gore noted, regarding the brick on the building that the project is still in the schematic design phase and they have the expectation that they will continue to develop the elevations and make them more fitting with the downtown as a whole; they will take the brick into consideration.

Mr. Leasure asked if the roof on the buildings would be flat. Mr. Gore stated that the roofs would be flat, keeping with the downtown commercial nature and less with the residential. Pizzuti is trying to align the buildings with the Town Center more than with the neighboring residential community.

Chair Holt asked what the rental points would be. Mr. Gore answered that rent averages are expected to be \$1.10 per square foot. The one bedroom units would be around 740 square feet resulting in rents around \$800 a month. The two bedrooms would be around 1000 square feet and approximately \$1,000 a month.

Ms. Oyster asked if the siding would be cement board. Mr. Gore stated it was cement board. She then asked if there would be any covered parking; as plans currently do not show any. She asked the representatives to explain the reasoning behind having no covered parking on the site. Mr. Gore stated the management companies they have interviewed state that there is no demand for covered parking and the market would not be willing to pay for covered parking; with no market demand, covered parking is not being offered at this time. Chair Holt hypothesized that if he is paying \$800 a month for rent, probably single and driving an expensive sports car, he would like to park it under covered parking. He stated that he felt that this property deserves some sort of covered parking. Mr. Gore stated that in his past experience with apartments, often once the units are leased they will then decide if there is a market for carports. The typical car port can be constructed of relatively light materials and can easily be installed after the initial building investment. Installation afterward would be fed on demand and not speculation. A parking structure will typically have steel columns for every two parking spaces; the structure would be designed around the existing parking lot. The competition in larger communities' offer a very limited number of covered parking spaces for which they charge extra.

Chair Holt then asked how Mr. Gore thinks this project compliments the Historic Preservation Area. Mr. Gore stated this project will be an economic development 'engine' to the larger planning efforts that are going on in Grove City right now. By bringing in a high-quality apartment complex, 120 apartments housing approximately 180 people, businesses in the area will benefit directly. He believes the development will stimulate more growth and attract more development to the Town Center.

Chair Holt stated that, in his opinion, the submitted drawings of the buildings show nothing that compliments the historical preservation area. Mr. Gore stated the intent is to do a design that is contextual yet of its era. Often times buildings that try to mimic historic character fall short and create a false historic sense that doesn't improve the quality of the area.

Chair Holt stated that he personally disliked the exposed stairwells; he would like to see the stairwells closed in the final development plan. Mr. Russell spoke, stating that part of the challenge, and this also relates to the covered parking, is this is a new market for Grove City having a non-suburban apartment project brought into our urban core and because of these challenges they are very sensitive to the market. They're proposing higher-quality finishes in the units while still trying to hit market rents. They are very sensitive to the cost up and downs which they will potentially face. The open stairwells are less expensive; however it is not the look that Pizzuti wants and they will propose to enclose the stairwells if they can afford to. While they modify the plan, they agree to explore the closed stairwell and covered parking. He stated that designing the buildings appropriately for the Town Center is a challenge because of the diversity in nearby residential units, while bringing the fabric of the Town Center into the neighborhood. Mr. Russell stated that they are not currently satisfied with the architecture and will work to refine it to ensure it fits into the community.

Chair Holt then stated that the drawings almost look like subsidized housing; with not much architectural imagination and the City deserves more. Chair Holt would appreciate the stairwells being closed and more brick and stone added; it may up the cost a bit but it's a sacrifice that needs to be made. The City wants something to be proud of ten years down the road, something more aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Russell stated they were 100% on the same page.

Mr. Leasure revisited the stairwell concern; Chair Holt stated the façade should be solid, to eliminate the exposure of the stairwell. Mr. Gore stated they tried to give the stairwells more visual interest, to make them look like a balcony or an outdoor shared public space.

Chair Holt asked for additional comments. He stated that he recognizes that this is a preliminary development plan, but that Pizzuti has more work to do. He has additional concerns that he would like to see addressed with the final development plan such as the number and location of dumpsters and where the mail boxes will be located. He stated that, personally, he is disappointed with the concept thus far but is hopeful that as Pizzuti works toward the final development plan, they will consider the comments that were made here. Mr. Russell stated Pizzuti would consider the comments.

Mr. Leasure revisited the roof and asked about the longevity of a flat roof. He mentioned that schools had maintenance issues with the old flat roofs and that the new school buildings have a pitch in their roofs for that reason. Mr. Gore stated the proposed roofing system is a TPO roof, said to be a 30 year roof and very durable. This product was used on city hall in Chicago, where the environment is much harsher.

With no further comments, Mr. Leasure motioned to recommend the approval of the preliminary development plan to City Council with the following concerns noted:

- The architecture of the buildings should complement the Historical Preservation Area, including the addition of more brick and stone to all structures
- Stairwells should be enclosed
- Covered parking should be added to plans
- Maintenance issues related to the flat roof should be addressed

Ms. Oyster seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Chair Holt noted he was very reluctant with his yes vote. He is hopeful that Pizzuti will address the Commission's concerns and reiterated that he does not want to see something ten or fifteen years down the road that the City will not be proud of.

Having no further business, Chair Holt adjourned the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

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Molly Frasher, Secretary

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Marv Holt, Chair