

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF June 13, 2018
6:00 P.M. Council Chambers
745 Center Street, Milford, OH 45150

The Planning Commission of the City of Milford met in regular session on the evening of Wednesday, June 13, 2018, at Council Chambers, 745 Center Street, Milford, OH 45150.

Roll Call:

Lois McKnight called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Other members present at tonight's meeting are Dino Pelle, Oliver Roe, and John Wenstrup. Mr. Pelle made a motion to excuse Fred Albrecht. Mr. Roe seconded the motion. The ayes carried.

Staff: Pam Holbrook, Asst. City Manager

Visitors: Brenda Jacoby, 707 SR 28; Jay Rothenbach, Masonic Lodge; Carson, 218 Bradford Dr.; Carl Samson, 233 Laurel; Donna Amann, Greater Milford Historical Society; Nancy Stander, 800 Milford Vista Ln.; Amy Brumleve, 912 Forest Ave.; Cole Carothers, 22 High St.; Ann Vuotto, 908 Forest Ave.; John Hueber and Susan Gates, 811 Center St.

Minutes Approval:

There being no addition, deletion, or changes to the March 14, 2018, meeting minutes, Mr. Roe moved to approve as written; seconded by Mr. Pelle. The ayes carried. Mr. Wenstrup abstained.

There being no addition, deletion, or changes to the May 9, 2018, meeting minutes, Mr. Pelle moved to approve as written; seconded by Mr. Roe. The ayes carried. Ms. McKnight abstained.

Ms. Holbrook stated that the Developers withdrew their application for the proposed project Site 18-06 Former Millcroft.

Mr. Albrecht arrived at the meeting at 6:08PM.

Ms. Holbrook stated that Mr. Werner was not present tonight to present his case, but he was notified of the meeting. Mr. Wenstrup made a motion to table Mr. Werner's request until the July Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Roe seconded the motion. The ayes carried.

Ms. McKnight asked the audience if anyone had any comments, questions or concerns.

Carl Samson thanked the Commission for volunteering their time. He stated that he felt the Property owner and developers heart was in the right place. However, a lot of people feel a tremendous connection to the building. My sense is that there are a lot of people in the community who would like to work with the Planning Commission and the owner to at least examine all the possibilities with regard to preserving it. If after reviewing every option, it may turn out not to be possible to preserve the building. There are enough people interested in saving the building so it is worth pursuing including community meetings, and surveys to get peoples ideas on how the building could be used and benefit the community as a economic driver to people in the future.

Mr. Albrecht stated that the Planning Commission is to act as a judge when people bring in their projects for review. In this case, the property is privately owned and any future use or development needs to come from the private owner. I recommend that the concerned citizens approach that owner. It is not Planning Commissions role to sit down with the owner to determine a proposed use for the property. Ms. McKnight

stated that the Planning Commissions role is more comprehensive to include all properties and not to approach a private property owner to tell them what to do with their property.

Mr. Albrecht stated that he was disappointed that the developer came to us with an opportunity and then withdrew it. Planning Commission was not given the opportunity to review or provide feedback. The Developer felt that his proposal was causing too much dissension within the community. However, this would have been an opportunity to let the process work. When anyone comes to the City with a plan, they have the right to be listened to. There is no preconceived notion when a project comes to Planning Commission.

Mr. Wenstrup stated that during all the dialogue, it was implied that Council had already made up their minds about this project when in fact, the project had not even been reviewed by council yet. Mr. Wenstrup asked Ms. Holbrook to review the process when an application is submitted to the City. Ms. Holbrook stated that once an application is submitted a technical review is scheduled with all the department heads and then the project is placed on a Planning Commission agenda. In this case since the applicant was asking for a Planned Development, the project would also be reviewed by City Council. Mr. Wenstrup stated the process is working. He recommended that people be part of the solution and not exacerbate the problem.

Mr. Wenstrup stated that he met Donna Amann from Promont today. He referred to a 1979 article regarding the Millcroft in which the developer reopened the restaurant in the spring after rebuilding it from cellar to roof. A quote from the article stated that the only thing holding the building up was the siding, and it probably would have been cheaper in the long run if we had torn the place down and started from scratch in 1977 but it wouldn't have been the same. Mr. Wenstrup stated the building has always had a place in Milford's heart.

Brenda Jacoby stated that she did not feel a four-story building was appropriate for the aesthetics of old Milford. There is nothing down there that looks like that, and any four-story building is going to overpower the compact area of historic Milford. Ms. Holbrook noted that the 20 Brix building and Riverwalk are both four stories. In that zoning district, buildings are permitted a max height of 45 feet.

Mr. Pelle stated that he has been through the Millcroft and reviewed it for investment possibilities but found the amount of work required was just far to expensive. That does not mean all the ideas for that building have been exhausted. He stated it was important for anyone interested in preserving the building to go have a conversation with the owner or come together as a group with ideas. He felt that it would be difficult to reuse the building based on his review, but it is not impossible.

John Hueber stated that he is a custom home builder who has done custom homes and rehabs in Over The Rhine and is pretty familiar with what is required to manage an old building like this. When the building came on the market, he hoped a citizen group could have bought it. Mr. Heuber met with the owner and walked through the building. He agreed with Mr. Pelle's assessment that the building is in rough shape and needs a lot of work to be rehabbed. Mr. Hueber stated that he would love to see it preserved. However, he could not make the numbers work to make a feasible project. He felt that it could be an event center if a citizen group got together, formed an LLC and took it over. He would support a small special assessment on his tax bill that would go towards preserving the Millcroft, the City could hire an Event Planner to manage the center much like 3CDC does. He offered his services as a consultant going forward.

Mr. Wenstrup referenced an analysis prepared by the Finance Director regarding the amount of money that would be brought in by a 1 mill levy. In 1 year a 1 mill levy would raise approximately \$173,000; that would cost the average homeowner \$35 per \$100,000 of housing value. It could be placed on the ballot and then the community could decide whether they were willing to preserve historic buildings like

the Millcroft. He stated that he would like to see the City look into that. Cities such as Mariemont and Lebanon have historic preservation groups that are funded and would be good models going forward.

Donna Amann stated she was pleased that the community cares that much about this historical site but wishes there were a solution. The Historical Society is willing to be a part of the solution. However, they don't have a lot of resources. She noted that they can, but we can get people stirred up. We would like to be more proactive rather than reactive.

Cole Carothers stated that he believes Hamilton County has some portion of their tax that goes toward the Public Library. It would be in the City's best interest to create a historical fund that would be used to preserve some aspects of the city.

Mr. Pelle stated that this is a property under private ownership. This situation may be more akin to a Valley View type of response where a group of concerned citizens formed a 501c3 and purchased the property in order to preserve it.

There being no further business or comments to come before the Planning Commission, Ms. McKnight made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 pm; seconded by Mr. Roe. Following a unanimous decision, the ayes carried.

Assistant City Manager

Lois McKnight