



Planning & Zoning Commission
Tuesday, February 23, 2021 - 6:30 PM
MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Ryan Green called to order the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting for February 23, 2021 at 6:31 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present - Ryan Green, Ron Danne, Jesse Coppel, Benjamin Lee, Jon Merriman
Absent - None

Staff present - Bailey Klimchak - Village Planner, Jim Blair - Zoning Inspector, Carol Van Deest - Village Council, Cheryl Robertson - Village Council, Marvin Block - Village Council, Teresa Monroe - Clerk of Council

Public present - Robert Miller Jr., Leon Miller, Luis and Marcela Ponce, Doug and Kim Cook, Nancy Willis, David and Michelle Grabill, John Luke, Joan, x3 callers not identified

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

5. Approval of Minutes

Clerk of Council noted all members were present for both the Special meeting and the Regular meeting on February 9, 2021 and the minutes could be approved as a block.

a. February 9, 2021 Special Meeting

b. February 9, 2021 Regular Meeting

ACTION: Ryan Green moved to Approve as written; Jon Merriman seconded and the vote was as follows:

AYES: Chairman Green, Ron Danne, Jesse Coppel, Ben Lee, Jon Merriman

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

Passed 5 - 0

6. Application # 2021-060-Z

a. Lot Split; 214 N. Main Street

Property owner and Applicant Nancy Willis was present for the lot split application; Ms. Willis said she owned this vacant land along with a small strip of land which had the original address of 214 N. Main Street and in 2009 she was given a variance by the village to treat that strip as a driveway to access the vacant land behind it. She is asking for a lot split of the .89 acres which is substantially larger than any of the neighboring properties; she asks to divide into two lots, one for .502 acres and the other for .388 acres.

Mr. Danne inquiry on which way the property would face; Ms. Willis said it would face SR 37. Mr. Lee noted that it appeared there was sufficient room to run utilities under or along the driveway to the newly formed lots. Mr. Lee asked if there had been any feedback from neighbors regarding the lot split. Mr. Blair said he heard from one neighbor on Stonehedge with concern about water runoff; Mr. Blair said that would be up to the contractor to resolve with the footprint of a house. Chairman Green asked if there was drainage back there to tie into; Mr. Blair said not that he was aware of.

Public Hearing

1. Marvin Block - Edwards Road; Council member

- History given on Ashbrooks buying the original parcel, said village encouraged them to buy that as an easement to get back to those lots and that Ms. Willis is not asking to do anything that the village has not encouraged over the years. Thinks it would be better to have houses and income for the village than to have the lot sit vacant.

2. Luis Ponce - 229 Stonehedge Row Drive

- Concern for their land being lower, said during heavy rains water pools and drains to their back yard, the vacant lot is higher in elevation and drainage is a concern; hopes that when construction happens the commission and developer take into account.

Mr. Blair said when developed, the driveway will have to be hard surface concrete or blacktop and that may control some of the water problems. Mr. Lee added that the Stormwater Management Plan would help to manage that also. Some further discussion on where drainage could connect to existing storm drains; Mr. Danne noted a storm sewer location bordering the property.

3. David Grabill - 202 N. Main Street

- Agrees with statements on drainage, has same concerns.
- Said that their sewer line runs parallel to the driveway easement, had repair work done in 2008 and in order to excavate had to get permission to get into the easement; if they put driveways in and bring heavy construction vehicles through

there, he is concerned for the safety of his sewer line being so close to the border of the easement.

Mr. Blair said if the sewer line was in the easement or at the edge and was damaged it would be up to the contractor or excavator to make repairs. Ms. Klimchak added that these challenges would still exist even if the lot split was not on the table; this is zoned as residential and somebody could build a single family home on this lot. Commissioners noted that two houses would be different than one.

4. Marvin Block - Edwards Road; Council member

- Unsure verbal permission to install Mr. Grabills sewer line would stand; may need to work with property owner if it is going to stay in that right of way.

5. Doug Cook - 221 Stonehedge Row Drive

- Asked which way the houses would face. Ms. Willis said it would make the most sense to have them face N. Main Street but another idea was to have the houses face each other; they certainly would not face Leafy Dell.
- No matter which way the houses face, two houses will be sandwiched between two houses and it won't look right.
- Does not have a problem with one house but two is too much.
- When they bought their house they were told that property was land-locked so nothing could be built back there, they would always have that buffer. Not sure when the lot was split before, they were not notified.
- Provided pictures of flooding to the commissioners.
- Addressed Ms. Willis saying it was not a \$99,000 lot.

6. Nancy Willis - Applicant

- Chairman Green asked if Ms. Willis had marketed the property previously. Ms. Willis said maybe for nine months and nobody wants that big of a lot, it is not at all comparable to the rest of the neighborhood.
- Addressed Mr. Cook's statement answering that the easement was approved in 2009 and she should not be bound legally by what other people have told him about what would be done with the property.
- Drainage issue is not a basis to deny a lot split; that will be addressed when construction begins to make sure any water issues are corrected.

Mr. Lee said it is good to note the drainage issues but does not think it is a factor that contributes to whether or not the lot split is approved, especially when it conforms to everything except for road frontage which is addressed in the next application; drainage would be addressed when and if the property is developed. Some further history explained by Mr. Blair and discussion with Mr. Merriman and other members on interpretation of highest and best use for the property.

7. Marvin Block - Edwards Road; Council member

- Addressed Mr. Cook's comments with some history of when the property was land-locked.
- Once a house is put there and land is leveled off, water will dissipate on its own when drainage is put in for it.
- Not right for anybody to tell Ms. Willis she cannot build two houses back there, she is going about this the right way and should not be told she cannot have the highest and best use of her property.

8. Doug Cook - 221 Stonehedge Row Drive

- Commented on the non-uniform look of the N. Main Street shared driveway and said shared driveways do not always work out the way you think.

9. Nancy Willis - Applicant

- Said the shared driveway between 160 and 190 N. Main is only the part that goes straight up, the horseshoe part has always belonged to 190 and doesn't have anything to do with not sharing well.
- Does not believe most people want to pay for such a large lot and then have to pay to build; by dividing this into more manageable size properties, which are completely in line with the rest of the neighborhood, it make the attractiveness of purchasing much greater.
- The village land-locked this property when Leafy Dell was developed and did not give them any access and that is why she is in this dilemma; if she did not own that strip, she still would not be able to get back to the property.

Jesse Coppel verified the drainage concerns would be addressed when any houses are built; Mr. Blair confirmed.

No further comments or discussion.

ACTION:	Benjamin Lee moved to Approve the lot split for Application 2021--06-0Z; Ryan Green seconded and the vote was as follows:
AYES:	Ron Danne, Jesse Coppel, Jon Merriman, Benjamin Lee, Chairman Green
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Passed 5 - 0

7. Application # 2021-061-Z

a. Variance; 214 N. Main Street

Applicant Nancy Willis present for the application. The Variance is for a shared driveway to the now split .890 acre property approved with Application # 2021-060-Z.

Ron Danne asked if the driveway would require a new curb cut and would this include fixing the sidewalk along N. Main. Jim Blair said there is a curb cut there but it will need to be replaced with a new driveway apron and new sidewalk across the twenty five foot strip.

Jesse Coppel asked if there was a minimum driveway width in the village; Mr. Blair said there are a lot of driveways that are only ten foot wide but he would push to have this twenty or twenty five foot.

Ben Lee reviewed and answered the practical difficulty questions in the application for planning consideration and said it meets all of the requirements for the variance; he supports it as presented.

Public Hearing:

1. Kim Cook; 221 Stonehedge Row Drive

- Asked why they have never been informed of any of this. Mr. Blair said certified letters were sent; Ms. Cook confirmed she did receive the one a week ago but was referring to applications in past years. Chairman Green said this is separate from previous applications. Ms. Klimchak noted staff has changed over the years and cannot speak to previous notification.

Nancy Willis reviewed more of the history on the variance approved in 2009 and a previous lot split in 2015.

Ben Lee said sidewalks continue to be a topic of consideration when looking at variances and lot improvements and asked Mr. Blair if it was guaranteed that the sidewalk on either side of this proposed shared drive would be replaced with any development back in that space; Mr. Blair said yes, whoever builds back there will have to pay for a sidewalk permit and install. Also noted that the driveway would need to be paved at that time.

No further discussion.

ACTION: Ryan Green moved to Approve; Jon Merriman seconded and the vote

was as follows:

AYES: Jesse Coppel, Jon Merriman, Ben Lee, Chairman Green, Ron Danne
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

Passed 5 - 0

8. Application # 2021-062-Z

a. Conditional Use Permit; 20 E. Pratt Street

Robert Miller with Tekton Engineering was present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Blair reviewed the application and provided some detail on the owner's plans for the property. Applicant owns the commercial building at 70/72 S. Main Street and the vacant second floor will now be addressed as 20 E. Pratt. Applicant plans to convert the entire second floor into a single family residence with a first floor two car garage off of Pratt Street and a first floor Bourbon bar. Mr. Blair stated the building exterior would be redone to match the color scheme of Ghostwriter.

Some further detail on owner plans for the property shared by Mr. Blair.

Mr. Lee validated that the scope of this application is only for the residential aspect of the second floor of this building and the Conditional Use should be subject to 1131.03 standards in the Zoning Code. The Certificate of Appropriateness is relative to design and exterior modifications in the next application.

Public Hearing: There were no comments either for or against this application.

Ben Lee reviewed the criteria for approval in 1131.06 and said for him, it meets all the criteria. There were no further comments on the application.

ACTION: Benjamin Lee moved to Approve Application 2021-062-Z Conditional Use permit; Ryan Green seconded and the vote was as follows:
AYES: Jon Merriman, Ben Lee, Chairman Green, Ron Danne, Jesse Coppel
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

Passed 5 - 0

9. Application # 2021-066-Z

a. Certificate of Appropriateness; 20 E. Pratt Street

Robert Miller with Tekton Engineering was present for the application. Mr. Miller stated he

Vision Statement: The Village of Johnstown is dedicated to providing a secure community environment that fosters cultural, recreational, educational and economic opportunities while preserving our unique historical character

brought color samples but the building would basically be a duplicate of Ghostwriter; the exterior brick would all be painted the same Iron Ore color, the awning, windows and doors black and the trim would be Mount Edna, identical to what Ghostwriter has.

Chairman Green said he would hate to see every building turn the same color downtown and would like to see something to break it up. Mr. Miller said branding is an important aspect for them when bringing in clients.

Ron Danne asked if the proposal is to remove the existing sandstone arches over the second floor windows; Mr. Miller said that is correct, they intend to square them up. Mr. Danne asked the same about the detail at the top of the building; Mr. Miller said those would be removed. It was also noted that the blank space in the center near the top would be for sign space. Mr. Danne said he thinks this looks good and definitely will be a nice look for downtown bringing a historic building into modern times; it will look good.

Ben Lee asked if the proposal was for the sandstone accents on the corners and at the door to also go away; Mr. Miller said yes. Mr. Lee said it is hard for him because he feels the downtown has an identity and although the features proposed for removal will bring conformity to the building relative to the overall design, the entire historical look of that space goes away and is essentially erased; he gets tying in the two spaces and the maintenance of a brand, just has a hard time seeing the big arches on the second floor and the identity of the other sandstone tying in being erased from the downtown space. Mr. Miller said one concern on the arches was structural and explained the construction aspects. Mr. Lee said for him that is understood and that was fine; so with removal of the sandstone on the second floor and the arches going away, there was not much left to tie the rest together. Mr. Lee said he was protective of the downtown space and historical qualities but must err on the side of safety. Some further questions asked on the plans shown; garage door is a standard two car garage; French doors are for a future patio not in the budget at this time.

Questions and further discussion by the board with Mr. Miller on exterior features and color scheme of the building; Chairman Green and Mr. Coppel expressed desire to see second floor exterior trim features such as the window mantels stay bare or a natural color to match other downtown buildings. Discussion on tabling the application in order to see another design or approving it conditionally; Mr. Miller said they are at the point of demo and they would like to submit for permits. Mr. Lee reiterated his previous point that with the stone archways going away because of structural issues, he does not think any other natural element on the front of the building is going to do any good, the "brand" from the village side may be gone from that building and so then the conversation turns to consistency and connectivity of the downtown space and if the village proposes this building to be different than the Ghostwriter building then it has deviated from what has been previously approved for the downtown space. Then this building sits on an island from a design perspective because there really are no natural elements on the current Ghostwriter building so a natural feature will not tie them together; he would hate to hold up this project because for him without the archways a lot of that identity is gone and removal

errs on the side of safety.

Chairman Green said the precedent is there to ask for the ledges above and below the windows to be a natural or lighter color paint; the bank building, Shulls Hardware, Bob's electric all have this, he doesn't think it is asking a lot, he would like to see things broken up for a different look and would be in favor of conditionally approving tonight. Jesse Coppel said he would like to see more accenting than just the windows. Chairman Green said he would like to see some original architecture stay and a more of a two-tone look with some accents. There was continued discussion on conditional approval for preserving natural stone accents.

Public Hearing

1. Marvin Block - Edwards Road; Village Council

- Everything that Dennis and Denise have done since coming to town has been first class, is it like the architecture we have all over town, no, but what did it look like before; they have cleaned things up and put a lot of money into the buildings and have brought a lot of employees. Looking at other downtown buildings that don't look great, there is no continuity; he encouraged board members to take a closer look at the buildings downtown.

Mr. Coppel said the improvements to downtown are appreciated, he thinks this is a great plan and will be a huge upgrade for this structure and does not want anyone to feel underappreciated or that by their comments that they don't appreciate everything that has been done to the buildings in Johnstown. There was further discussion.

2. Cheryl Robertson; Village Council

- Johnstown needs to be remarketed, she is thankful that the Blankemeyers have come in and made improvements, for years it has been nothing but red brick and we should be thankful that they are investing millions of dollars into Johnstown and she does not want to discourage them and what they are trying to do on this building; thinks the board is being way too critical.

3. Carol Van Deest - Oregon Street; Village Council

- In agreement with Ms. Robertson. Said she has lived here her whole life and really loves history and historical buildings but sees the vision that Dennis and Denise have, she is not opposed to what they are proposing to do and as a resident she thinks it is very exciting and hopes the board does not make it too stringent.

4. John Luke - Westview Drive

- Johnstown's downtown was definitely something they were drawn to when moving

here but when he thinks of downtown Johnstown, he thinks of "Bobs Electric", the brick work. He was a really big fan of what Ghostwriter did and what Horseshoe did, those are the kind of things he thinks of when he thinks of downtown Johnstown, he does not think of the colors around windows... but he does think it's great that he won't have to drive to Granville to get a bourbon any more. Said he was unsure that the stipulation, in his mind, is something that would really stick out to the look of Johnstown but having a bourbon bar would.

Ben Lee said again that without the arches on the second floor, there is not a whole lot, for him, that ties the rest of the building together and with that it becomes less about the identity of the building in the village and more about the identity of the branding that is trying to be conveyed by the design presented and so he does not support the conditional aspect, it does not make sense for the end goal of the space.

Mr. Lee asked if there was any additional exterior lighting being proposed on Pratt Street with the updates to the building; Mr. Miller said there are light sconces on the walls in front and none currently shown on the plan for the Pratt Street side but he is fairly confident the owners would want to have some sort of lighting, they have not talked about that side however he said he knows that would not be an issue to add.

Mr. Lee noted previous discussions on the traffic flow of Pratt Street and vehicle parking and truck loading zone. Said there is some concern with business owners in that space that that might not be advantageous for the block of businesses in the area; said the Safety and Service Committee should look to see if there is enough space to have two parking spaces between South Main and the garage, one space between the garage and Post Office Alley, and keeping the loading zone where it is, doing this may address concern with other business owners in that space. Not relative to any conditional aspect for tonight but something to take away with regard to the curb-cut application submitted.

5. Marvin Block - Village Council

- Said the owner of Posty's has not spent any money to improve his building since he bought it; Mr. Block said he is not worried about accommodating him, he would rather accommodate owners who have brought money here.

Chairman Green said he sees the points but as far as money coming into the village, where it is coming from and bending to a certain party based on how much money they have brought in is a slippery slope because all kinds of people try to get things approved every day so decision should be based on codes that we have and will create to make it a fair playing field. Mr. Green said he did not want to be harder on one party than another and that he would probably say no parking down Pratt if it were up to him. Decision on parking spaces and loading zone will continue to be considered by staff and the Safety and Service Committee; Mr. Lee said there are comments and concerns by stakeholders in the community and those deserve a platform to be discussed, there was already action on this item taken by Safety and Service and final action to be taken by Village Council on what

happens in that space. Discussion is not meant for this evening and should not be a conditional aspect in any way but does have a relationship to the garage, does not think the garage is a problem, the parking is a deeper discussion for a different group at a different time when appropriate.

Continued discussion on conditional approval of the application. Chairman Green requesting that when the mantels are done on the front with the new windows, they be a natural stone accent color and to preserve the three accents across the top with natural stone if possible. Mr. Miller asked for the reasoning, noted precedence; Mr. Merriman said it is the attempt to keep some integrity to the downtown area of historical value and not just slap everything with paint. Mr. Miller said going forward, to be careful when dealing with architects on this because there are no statutes in place. Mr. Lee said he did not think there was precedence for the conditional aspect with this design, recommendation to just pass along the opinion from the board and not make it conditional; discussion continued. Ms. Klimchak said the board can ask but did not think it should be a condition. Jesse Coppel said if it is not a hard condition then it can be formed as a request from the board, that they think it would fit in more with the downtown if the window mantels and some accents at the top were left natural or light painted. Chairman Green said if it is not a conditional approval we won't get it. Mr. Lee said adding "if possible" dilutes the point of a condition so formalizing as a recommendation makes more sense; believes they are splitting hairs and need to vote on the COA and move on, Mr. Danne said he agreed.

ACTION:	Jon Merriman moved to Approve the application without any conditions; Benjamin Lee seconded and the vote was as follows:
AYES:	Ben Lee, Chairm Green, Ron Danne, Jesse Coppel, Jon Merriman
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Passed 5 - 0

Mr. Miller thanked the Board.

10. Zoning Ordinance Update

Work on the zoning code draft will continue in the special meeting next week. Ms. Klimchak said she would send out the draft of the new zoning district maps for their review before the meeting.

11. Other Business

1. Mr. Blair said there is a new cigar and tobacco shop opening at 717 W. Coshocton Street in the Johnstown Square center. Johnstown Square is also redoing the multi-tenant sign.
2. Ms. Klimchak said OPWC funding was received to repave Edwards Road.
3. Mr. Blair updated that ACE Hardware would move into the Shull's Hardware space in March; added that he was assigning addresses to five parcels (at the new location) so

everyone off of that drive will have an address. Mr. Green asked if anything had been done with the fence behind the ACE property; Mr. Blair said it is an approved fence, he has left messages for the property owner to let them know the fence is one foot over the property line and will need to be relocated but that is a civil issue between property owners.

4. Special Planning and Zoning meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 6:00 pm. Focus will be the Zoning Code draft.

5. Mr. Lee asked if there was an update on the development of homes off of Benedict; no update at this time.

6. Mr. Blair added that the new driveway on N. Main Street will have to be big enough to support fire trucks.

12. Adjourn

ACTION: Ryan Green moved to Adjourn; Jon Merriman seconded and all were in favor.

AYES: Ryan Green, Ron Danne, Jesse Coppel, Benjamin Lee, Jon Merriman

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

Passed 5 - 0

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.