

MINUTES
ONTARIO PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 12, 2024

The Ontario Planning Commission met in regular session on June 12, 2024, at 4:00 p.m., in the Municipal Building with Chair Jill Knight presiding. Present during roll call were Commission members Jill Knight, Diane Wolfe, Rick Pauley, and Mayor Randy Hutchinson; Engineer Mark Rufener, Law Director Andrew Medwid, Zoning Inspector Michael Morton and Clerk of Council Cathy VanAuker.

The minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting of April 10, 2024, were presented for approval. Hearing no corrections, the minutes were approved as presented.

The first item on the agenda was a variance request submitted by Sam and Melissa Weiler, 150 Tranquil Way, for an accessory building in the side yard.

- The steep decline in the back yard prevents them from putting the accessory building in the back yard. The location in the side yard is back as far as possible.
- There is a 12' drop from the driveway to the back of the house, and a 40' drop and ravine to the retention area behind the house.
- The side yard location needs built up which significantly increases the cost.

Mr. Pauley drove by the residence and concurred it was not possible to put the building in the back yard.

At 4:04 p.m., the public hearing was opened for the variance request by Sam and Melissa Weiler to place an accessory building in the side yard.

Sue Wills, 3866 Horizon Drive, came forward to ask what type of accessory building they were adding.

- Mr. Weiler responded, a two-car garage and the exterior will match the house.

At 4:06 pm., seeing no one else who wished to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Mayor Hutchinson moved to approve the variance request submitted by Sam and Melissa Weiler, 150 Tranquil Way, for an accessory building in the side yard, second by Mrs. Knight. Four members cast their votes aye, zero nay, and the motion was approved.

The next item on the agenda brought forward Natasha Repp, 2226 Ridgewood Court, Ashland, seeking a Conditional Use for a Day Care. Ms. Repp is the owner of Clover Hill Early Learning Center at 2986 Park Avenue West. They opened in November 2023 and are at full capacity with 37 children. With only two other childcare programs in Ontario there is a need for quality preschool childcare. The quote received for an addition at the current location was between \$600,000-\$1 million, which is cost prohibitive. The building at 347 Erla Drive is for sale and would be perfect because it is one level, an open floor plan, and off the main road at basically a dead end.

- Code requires a fenced area of 150 sf per child, a minimum of 5,000 sf. The Ohio Administrative Code that she follows as a Licensed Preschool and Child Care Program

requires 60 sf per child, a total of 840 sf. Ms. Repp plans to fence in 1,000 sf for the playground area. The maximum number of children on the playground at one time is fourteen. A larger playground area would affect supervision and be overstimulating for the children.

- Trees would be planted between the two properties as a privacy barrier.
- This program was rated a high-quality five-star program. That is the highest rating they can receive and normally takes facilities years to achieve, and they did it in 90 days.
- Inspector Morton said this property is zoned Business and a Day Care is a Conditional Use. The only requirement for Conditional Use is the 5,000 sf outdoor play area that is being requested to reduce to 840 sf.
- The new building would have one infant class, one toddler class, one pre-school class, and as revenue increases another room would be created for infants based on the high need for infant care.

At 4:15 p.m., the public hearing was opened for the Conditional Use request by Natasha Repp for a Day Care to be located at 345 Erla Drive.

Lea Saltz, 3080 Erla Drive, came forward to read a prepared letter opposing the day care due to the increased traffic it would create and the location is two houses away. The correct address is 345 Allen Drive but is listed incorrectly on the Richland County website as Erla Drive. The letter is attached to these minutes.

David Paone, 317 Allen Drive, stated he works on cars in the garage next to this location. He was concerned the garage noise would wake up the children, and the possibility of them falling in the creek. There are a lot of children that run in the street to play.

At 4:25 p.m., seeing no one else who wished to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Inspector Morton said the city does not have regulations on parking spaces so the Commission would need to make that determination. Neighboring communities use one parking space (10 x 20) per four children, and one space for each employee on the largest shift.

Engineer Rufener stated the Planning Commission should look at what is allowed in this zoning district. They can't deny it if it meets the zoning requirements and a day care is a conditional use. Traffic generated by a day care will not reach the threshold to require a traffic study. Planning Commission can't control if someone cuts thru a parking lot, that is a law enforcement issue.

Ms. Repp continued:

- They will have 40 – 45 children at this location, the maximum number of children allowed is 52. Because they want to achieve the five-star rating they will go with the lower ratio.

- Not all children are dropped off or picked up at one time, the times stagger throughout the day.
- This is not a latch-key program.

Engineer Rufener said a site plan will need submitted for approval that could include the parking requirements.

- Maneuvering lanes for emergency vehicles will also need to be on the site plan.

The Conditional Use request is for the approval of a day care in this location and if there are extra conditions that should be applied in this circumstance.

- Suggestions were to reduce the speed limit and put up a Children At Play sign.
- Planning Commission must determine how many parking spaces are required because code does not define it for a day care.
- A one-way driveway loop extending behind the building would prevent vehicles from backing onto the street.

At 4:56 p.m., the public hearing was closed.

Mrs. Wolfe moved to approve the Conditional Use, 10 parking spaces, and a loop around the building, requested by Natasha Repp for a Day Care, second by Mr. Pauley. Four members voted aye, zero nay, and the motion passed.

- Mayor Hutchinson verified the 1,000 sf playground instead of 5,000 sf.
- A privacy fence is required.

Miscellaneous Discussion

- Mayor Hutchinson announced his last day in office is July 10th.
- Inspector Morton provided an update on the Menard's project. A contractor was hired to correct the items necessary for compliance with the goal for completion by the end of summer.

At 5:01 p.m., with no further business to come before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Mrs. Wolfe, second by Mr. Pauley.

Jill Knight, Chair

Date