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Steve Horton, Mayor  
Scott Andrews, City Manager

City of Covington  
**MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD**  
August 10, 2021 @ 6PM  
Meeting Minutes

**I. ROLL CALL**

Chair conducted a roll call. The following persons were present:

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jared Rutberg (Chair)  
Charika Davis  
Shawn McGovern  
Ruel Parker  
Bobbie Shepherd  
Mike Lassiter  
John Travis  
John Maxwell

**STAFF PRESENT**

Tres Thomas, P&D Director  
Marc Beechuk, P & Z Manager/Acting Chair  
Renee Criswell, Planner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Lee Aldridge

**GUESTS**

Matt Crowe  
Kyle Brock  
Sam Hay  
Phil Carson

**II. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

Chair confirms quorum.

**III. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair called the City of Covington Planning Commission Board meeting to order at 6:08PM.

**IV. OPENING REMARKS**

Chair reads into record: *"This Planning Commission meeting is being recorded via Zoom for the official record. All Participants are encouraged to conduct themselves accordingly. Please keep you microphone muted unless you are called upon by the chair to speak. Planning staff reserves the right to mute participants and if repeated outbursts occur to remove a participant from the meeting. We appreciate your patience and actions in this unique time."*, as well, *"The Planning Commission makes recommendations only with final decisions being that of City Council."*

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair called for approval of the July 13, 2021 minutes.

Ruel Parker motioned to approve. Bobbie Shepard seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. **OLD BUSINESS**

None

VII. **NEW BUSINESS**

A & B. **SPECIAL USE PERMIT: PSU21-0007 in conjunction with PRELIMINARY PLAT: PPP21-0001-REQUESTED USE – Subdivide +/- 23 acres for a proposed 227-unit, townhome development:**

LOCATION: Dr. ML King Jr. Ave.,

Tax Map Parcel Number: **C082 005B & C082 005C (CM)**

Owner: Neely Farms Family, LTD.

Applicant: Taylor Weaver

1. **STAFF PRESENTATION**

P&Z mgr. presented PowerPoint and staff report stating applicant was requesting a Special Use for a multi-family development on over 5 acres for 227 Townhomes as well as a request for a Preliminary Plat for those 227 townhomes lots as being a new phase of the Neely Farms Development. Beechuk stated parcel was approximately 22.73 acres, undeveloped with access via Scenic Pkwy and through proposed streets to be constructed as part of Neely Farms. Eastside Trail was approximately 700' east of the development along Scenic Pkwy proposed future access to the north in Neely Farms PH I which was adjacent to the east. Surrounded by Neely Farms PH I proposed (in construction review) subdivision (east) and proposed Neely Farms Mixed-Use development (west & north). Staff found that townhomes in this location are a reasonable transition from the proposed commercial of the future Neely Farms development to the planned single-family neighborhood. The proposed project site zoning is compatible with the surrounding uses. Parcel's zoning of Corridor Mixed-Use works with the surrounding plans and fits well with Covington's FLU of Mixed-Use Corridor. Staff recommended approval with following conditions for preliminary plat request:

**Conditions**

1. Minor technical issues to address as stated on staff report
2. Limit the number of units in a building to no more than 6
3. Road entering Scenic Parkway must meet minimum remoteness.

**Issues**

1. More guest visitor parking throughout
2. Proximity to Commerce (Sec. 16.28.025 E. 1.) – currently 6/10 of a mile
3. Amenities

Staff recommended **Approval of the layout of the subdivision to be used as a guide to the preparation of the final plat** by the Planning Commission at this time and

continued work by the developer to address technical standards necessary for administrative approval

**Technical Standards** *(needing attention prior to approval)*

1. Planning – Tree management plan, street trees need to be no more than 50' on center on all roadways
2. Planning - Each townhouse shall have a minimum of two hundred (200) square feet of private yard space in either the front or rear, not including driveways or alleys.
3. Fire – Road entering Scenic Parkway must meet minimum remoteness.
4. Water/Sewer – There is a noted water line along Scenic Parkway. The city will not be responsible for installation of proposed water to service said property. All easements and fees to acquire access will be the responsibility of the developer with all water easements platted and deeded to the City of Covington after inspections and as-builts of water. All water construction shall follow the City of Covington's Water and Sewer Standards and Specifications.

2. **APPLICANT AUTHORIZED AGENT(S) PRESENTATION**

Applicant, Taylor Weaver, presented that zoning allows for the townhomes and they made adjustments and willing to make further adjustments for board requirements. Felt the design conforms to design requirements. Reported a DRI had been done that should cover all public concerns as well an HOA would be in place with amenities and utilization to access the commercial components of the projects (Neely Farm) main plan proposal.

Charika Davis inquired about the number of exits/entrances. Mr. Weaver report approximately five (5).

Chair stated that would be with one to scenic and other out by Nitro 2 Go.

John Travis inquired if unit would be rental and what would the average number of bed room per unit. Weaver report no rental and bulk would be a 3/2 and approximately 1800 – 2200 sqft range.

Shawn McGovern inquired about the price point and GDOT plans for road. Weaver reported to date, looking at \$250K and up; however, may change due to current supply and demand (COVID). The develop of the entire design is handling the design and submission to GDOT, but last conversation was that there would be a red light where round-a-bout was proposed.

John Travis asked Beechuk regarding visitor parking. Beechuk reported that general design would like on street parking throughout with staff proposing to have two

parking areas on eastern side to allow for possible 48 additional spaces. Engineer would lay out plan.

Bobbie Shepard inquired do proposed units have two car garages. Weaver replied one. Shepard asked if more than one vehicle for family, where would they park. Weaver responded the driveway would be considered as a parking area along with the garage parking to ensure two car available parking.

Michael Lassiter commented that he just doesn't see how the area traffic will accommodate the influx of people coming in.

Chair reported based on general consensus of board and public statements, that the concerns of traffic coming to the area, GDOT's plans, etc. would make a big impact for this project and decision. City engineer/P&D Director, Tres Thomas went over report generated by GDOT showing long term plan of a 4-lane bypass by 2050. GDOT currently has all information regarding recent proposals and emails, calls, etc., and continually submitted to GDOT to try and determine route for current traffic reports submitted.

Ruel Parker commented aside from traffic concerns, there are some concerns regarding applicant's/developer's promise of green space, extra parking availability and providing amenities. I feel no motion should be made for recommendation of approval until plans show those changes.

John Maxwell commented it is developer's responsibility to pursue GDOT to obtain these changes for the road based on their proposed development plan.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair opens comment to floor. Approached Newton County resident and owner of Covington Ford off MLK. Mr. Ford proceeded to say he wasn't against growth, but he was concerned if the county's infrastructure was prepared for the all the proposed and really take a long look at the future of Covington and ensure that all items pertaining to its' infrastructure, school systems, emergency management systems, etc. was being looked at and ensure they can handle "what's coming down the line". He stated his concerns included not Neely Farms, but all proposed county/city developments.

4. MOTION

Shawn McGovern motioned to table the special use request in order for staff and developer to could establish what would be the required minimums for development and produce plans accordingly, regarding green space, parking, amenities. Ruel Parker seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Beechuk interjected that with special use being in conjunction with preliminary plat, the vote for preliminary plat should coincide boards motion of special use.

Bobbie Shepard stated with special use permit motion being approved for table, she motioned to table request for preliminary plat and return with special use request once all conditional items for special use have been addressed/presented. Mike Lassiter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

C. **ANNEXATION & REZONING - PAR21-0001**

**REQUEST – Rezone notated parcel FROM existing county zoning of CH (Highway Commercial) TO proposed city zoning of CM (Corridor Mixed-Use) for a proposed mixed-use development, to include office, commercial, a restaurant space:**

LOCATION: Eagle Drive

Tax Map Parcel Number: **0083 004B**

Owners: PDC Covington, LLC

Applicant/Authorized Agent: Randy Vinson

1. **STAFF PRESENTATION**

P&Z mgr. Beechuk began with the statement that the next case was an annexation request that was still awaiting some additional assistance/information from the county and that this case would not be presented at the next council meeting; however, that should not affect any recommendations from commission.

Beechuk reported that applicant was requesting annexation and Rezoning from Newton County Highway Commercial to Corridor Mixed-Use; Single lot with access through CVS and McDonald's; and proposed commercial and restaurant use. Reported current condition of parcel to be approximately +/- 4.4 acres, undeveloped, bordering Newton Co. by McDonald's, with residential parcel to the south, a neighborhood to east and commercial to the north in the Covington city area. Parcel has access via the drive through McDonald's & CVS (Hwy 36) and a proposed right-in/right-out on Eagle Dr.

Staff found that the parcel's proposed zoning of commercial fit within the County's commercial zone and Future Land Use and that it also fit with surrounding City of Covington zoning. Also, that it was a busy intersection that needed to limit traffic. Staff continued to report parcel had good access, potential for a neighborhood business district.

Staff recommended approval with the following conditions to be considered by the commission:

**Conditions:**

- No drive-thru restaurants

- The development be broken up in to multiple buildings and utilize the urban courtyard concept
- Maximum lot coverage of 65%
- A limitation of uses be placed on the property to include uses allowed under CM zoning in the following sections of the use chart:
  - Residential
  - Finance and Insurance
  - Real Estate & Rental & Leasing
  - Professional, scientific & technical Services
  - Management of companies and enterprises
  - Educational Services
  - Health Care and Social Assistance
  - Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
  - Accommodations and Food Services (other than fast food drive-through)
  - Other services
  - The following Retail uses:
    - All other specialty Food Stores
    - Beer, wine & liquor stores
    - Book stores
    - Camera and photographic supplies stores
    - Clothing Accessories stores
    - Cosmetics, beauty supplies and perfume stores
    - Electronics and appliance stores
    - Florists
    - Food and beverage stores
    - Fruit and Vegetable markets
    - Health and personal care stores
    - Jewelry stores
    - Luggage and leather goods stores
    - News dealers and newsstands
    - Office supplies and stationery stores
    - Optical goods stores
    - Pet and pet supplies stores
    - Pharmacies and drug stores
    - Sewing, needlework and piece goods stores

2. APPLICANT AUTHORIZED AGENT(S) PRESENTATION

Applicant, Randy Vinson, approached and commented they hoped to accomplish a space that people want to be in. Owner desired to mimic development something like Clark's Grove. Hopes to plant a seed for how future Covington Developments and urbanisms can be.

Bobbie Shepard questions if neighboring cul-de-sac would be overlapping into this community. Applicant responded no.

Shawn McGovern asked what was the desire for annexation and will there be access to Hwy 36. Vinson responded the county doesn't have a mixed-use zoning and county doesn't allow sell of alcohol for the proposed restaurant within community and easement is already in place for 36 access.

Mike Lassiter selfishly requests a Freddie's Hamburger in the development, but made a more serious comment the board doesn't seem to be presented with development's designed this nicely and aside from the same future concerns that may arise with traffic, finds no other potential problems with proposed. Vinson responded that the civil engineer would be getting with GDOT to resolve any issues regarding traffic concerns.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Floor open to public. None given. Floor closed for comment.

4. MOTION

Shawn McGovern motioned to recommend approval of city annexation and rezoning with conditions to include those submitted by staff. Mike Lassiter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

D. SPECIAL USE PERMIT – PSU21-0010

REQUEST: Allow multi-family land use in the CM (Corridor Mixed-Use) District for a proposed 315 residential unit development, to include extension of an existing multi-use trail for connection to a commercial component of the proposed development:

LOCATION: Hwy 278

Tax Map Parcel Number: **C081 072**

Owner: Martins Surround, LLC

Applicant/Authorized Agent: Crescent Acquisitions, LLC

c/o Phil Carson

1. STAFF PRESENTATION

P&Z mgr. Beechuk presented PowerPoint reporting to board that applicant was requesting a special use for a multi-family development on over five (5) acres having 315 units to make up seven (7) stacked flat building having 500 bedrooms. Staff reported parcel's current conditions was being undeveloped and having 19.6 acres. Being bordered by Martin's Crossing commercial center to the west, planned Neely Farms mixed-use development and car dealership to the south, a multi-family complex to the east with Newton Co. property to the north. Parcel's zoning and future land use matched the proposed use. The parcel had a busy intersection with access to commercial, I-20 and south Covington and had a proposed beneficial arrangement with commercial meeting

residential needs being directly connected (required in CM for stacked flat & 3-unit density bonus). Parcel has connection to Eastside Trail (alternative transportation & exercise), would maintain open space on site and include amenities (clubhouse, pool, dog park & trail connection).

Beechuk stated developer was requesting three (3) architectural design variances for the project that would not be apart of the meeting's deliberation, but the variances would be needed in order to meet zoning standards. Those variances would be heard at the August 17<sup>th</sup> BOAA. Variance requested were for the allowance on the maximum amount of fiber cement siding (hardiboard), natural wood siding or natural wood shake to be raised from 20% to 80% as well as thickness to be that of 5/1" not 3/8". Variance for the use of a 4:12 roof pitch in lieu of the required 6:12 pitch and a 25-year asphalt shingle in place of the current, 50-year architectural asphalt single requirement.

Staff recommended approval of the special use permit.

2. APPLICANT AUTHORIZED AGENT(S) PRESENTATION

Owner, Same Hay, presented board commented that his family has owned this parcel and been in Covington through many generations. His family wanted to create a new destination that would represent Covington well. This center was in need of repair and now there was a great didn't offer the best price but they are the best company for the job. Presented Crescent Acquisitions rep, Kyle Brock, commented Crescent is a national company and felt they have the experience to build a high-quality product for Covington. Brock reported site will have three means of ingress and egress off 278 and not the by-pass road, not maximizing zoning density in order to provide green space for residents and development will have connection to trail.

Ruel Parker inquired about concerned of entrance to development itself. Brock responded primary entrance will be off Hwy 278 and residents will have easement to traverse the parking lot of Martin's Crossing as well. Parker inquired about the requirement for two (2) entrances, Beechuk responded different standards for fire requirements for one lot as opposed to subdivisions.

Charika Davis inquired on price point. Brock replied sqft from 715 to 1313 with various bedroom plans ranging from approximately \$1300 - \$1800 monthly.

Bobbie Shepard commented she was pleased with the proposed plan.

John Maxwell inquired if "old Walmart" shopping center would be incorporated in development plans? Hay responded there would be intention of plans to take off for portion of that area, including upgrades to façade.



Chair asked if amenities would have connections internally as well as externally to Eastside Trail and play area for kids? Brock replied yes for trails along with play area, pool, clubhouse, greenspace on north side potentially being volleyball court.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Floor open for public comment. Matt Crowe, resident/owner Covington Ford, presented to reiterate the need for good development, but emphasized he hoped Covington was prepared for the influx of people coming into the area.

4. MOTION

John Travis motioned to recommend approval with staff conditions. Ruel Parker seconds. Motion passed unanimously.

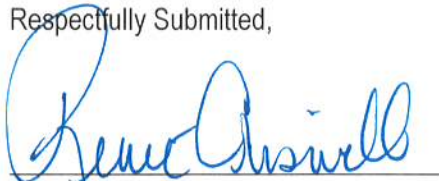
**VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION**

Regional commission on October agenda for discussion, no vote required.  
Per board request, chair assured board he would get letter for moratorium request to council for review/vote.

**IX ADJOURNMENT**

Shawn McGovern motioned to adjourn. John Travis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Renee Criswell  
Planning & Development



Jared Rutberg, Presiding Chair  
Planning Commission Board