



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

27700 Hilliard Blvd.
Westlake, OH 44145

Phone 440.871.3300
Fax 440.617.4324

**WESTLAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF WORK SESSION MEETING
February 10, 2020**

Present: Chairman Brad Lamb, Lauren Falcone, Duane Van Dyke, Lynda Appel, Phil DiCarlo
Also Present: Planning Director Jim Bedell, Assistant Planning Director William Krause, Economic Development Manager Michelle Boczek, Ward 5 Councilman Ken Brady 5.

The work session was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chairman Brad Lamb.

BUSINESS

Presentation of the schematic architecture and landscape design for the FSW/Corporate Circle project

Applicant Steve Rubin explained that he will reach out to the neighbors after this meeting. He wanted to have this meeting first, so the neighbors will have an accurate reflection of what is to be presented to the Planning Commission with the formal submittal. Project architect, David Craun, explained that they are nearing the end of the schematic design, with the retail design proceeding faster than the office building and landscaping. It is their intent that this project be reflective of traditional main street architecture and not a typical strip center design. As such there is much variation in the architecture. In accordance with the PDP, the average roof height is 25 feet. The design includes a color pallet that is fairly neutral to be of a timeless style and with modern materials. Most of the storefronts will not change based on tenant needs, with the exception of the mullions, canopies and signage. He explained the “sister” buildings at the central gathering space. The building design turns the corners, so as not to read like a “billboard” façade. The cladding on the rear of the buildings is the same as the front, to read like individual buildings added over a period of time.

The office building is designed in a style to complement the other two existing office buildings. The design is on a five foot grid to be flexible for leasing. All entries are external, as there are no internal hallways. There is a break in the façade created by a tall glass gabled wall that lines up with the centerline of the central gather space. Another glass gabled break is added at the northwest corner where the wall is chamfered to be a focal point from Crocker Road. Efforts have been made to give this building a residential scale. No rooftop units will be included, as units will be in landscaped beds adjacent to the entries. At this time, they are contemplating dark grey bricks, enhanced wood siding, asphalt shingles and standing seam metal roofing. The landscaping and buffering was clarified. It will be in accordance with other buffering to the rear and Mr. Rubin

said they would also address some of the existing buffer that has become less dense. At the retail buildings, an enhanced retail zone including festoon lighting will be designed to make this a lively area. Parking lots will be screened at the edges along Crocker Road with plantings and will include island plantings. He shared an image of landscaping details for benches, trash receptacles and bike racks, as well as lighting details. More traditional forms will be used closer to Crocker Road with more contemporary ones closer to the office building. Some of the lighting will be the same as the street lighting Crocker Park for a cohesive commercial neighborhood, while more modern ones will be behind at the office building. Bollard and festoon lighting will also be used. The lighting design has been done with 12' tall poles so as not to see the light source.

Planning Commissioners discussed screening. It was clarified that they will be constructing a 7 foot tall mound at the east property line with landscaping instead of a fence that would be less attractive and effective for screening. Planning Commissioners agreed that this was preferred and that a resident had commented on a fence being constructed to deter trespassing, but that was not thought to be a potential problem. The buffer area will have landscaped mounds including evergreens for screening. They will also address the existing buffer. Mr. DiCarlo suggested removing Austrian Pine and Blue Spruce from the design and replacing them with other appropriate spruces and/or Green Giant Arborvitae.

The design of the retail buildings was discussed. Mr. Van Dyke liked the design of the bank with its porte-cochere – like canopy and stately appearance and materials. He questioned if the north corner could also be given a similar imposing appearance, as it will be an important building for drivers from the north. Could this be accomplished by a feature, such as a clock tower, or cupola? He suggested that the roofline on the corner be extended to the back for a 3-D appearance. Mr. Craun explained that the roof design has been a challenge due to the maximum height requirement in the PDP. Mr. Van Dyke noted that the height was in response to resident's concerns and views to the commercial buildings will be blocked by the new office building and the Planning Commission may consider an appropriate height modification, such as at the corner where it will make the building more prominent. It was also noted that the drive to the rear office building passes this façade and it is visible from Crocker Road. Also, noted was the use of standing seam roofing that may seem excessive. Additional roof materials were suggested to lessen the possibility that this will look like a strip center. Crocker Park was noted as an example of hometown architecture versus strip center architecture. Mr. Rubin said they will consider but have not priced this yet. Mr. Craun clarified the cementitious trim material with integral color. Some canopies are fabric and others are flat, projecting at least four feet. The flat ones include recessed lighting and gutters built in. Mr. Van Dyke suggested that some of the back walls also get roofs like the front walls. Mr. Craun explained they will do site line studies to ensure the parapet roofs screen rooftop equipment. The fabric awnings will be used over the back doors where they can be swapped out for new tenants and are economical. Mr. Van Dyke reminded them that they wear out too and questioned maintenance and replacement. Dumpsters were discussed and Mr. Craun would like to have one for each building, but has not designed them yet. They may require removing two parking spaces per enclosure. Potential locations were discussed, such as in the parking lot in between the office building and retail buildings where they could be shared. The concrete masonry units (CMU) was discussed. Mr. Van Dyke explained that they are larger than typical brick, which affects the scale of the building. Mr. Rubin answered that they will provide samples and may utilize smaller scale CMUs but that would be worked out with the design details.

It was agreed that larger scaled CMU with a stone-like appearance was appropriate for the bank.

The office building design was discussed. Mr. Craun explained the challenge is that this is a very large footprint. He noted that the rendering of the roof was not accurate, as it will be more similar to the two existing office buildings. Care is being taken to not have a roof that has a busy appearance. The walls will be brick in different colors. They explored breaking it up into more than one building, but that does not work for leasing purposes and the way it is designed provides a solid barrier for the homes behind it. This design allows flexibility, as doors can be moved to accommodate tenants. Instead of a break in the building, they are exploring a symbolic break in the building in form of the glass gabled exteriors in two places. This is still a schematic design and will be further refined prior to being presented for approval. Other materials considered are cedar near the windows and standing seam metal roofing at the glass gables. Mr. Lamb suggested that the corner glass gable be given more design consideration, as it will be a focal point that is visible from Crocker Road.

Site lighting was discussed. Mr. Craun explained the different fixture types. They are shorter than code requires to limit any light pollution. Mr. Bedell suggested having the Crocker Park street lighting at the front of the development and along the drive that is in between the office building and retail buildings, with the modern lighting used in the rear for the office building. This will create a street-like appearance for the drive. Mr. Tilton will review the revised lighting plan.

Landscaping was discussed. Mr. DiCarlo suggested moving the parking lot screening back slightly to allow for the overhang of parked cars and trucks. Mr. Bedell suggested a double row of shade trees in the lawn area next to Crocker Road that is 60' wide and can accommodate the trees without blocking views of the development. A landscaping plan of the buffer area will be needed.

Councilman Brady was glad the site lighting is shorter than permitted. He recalled that a majority of neighbors preferred natural plantings for the buffer instead of having a fence and that the development will have security cameras that will help deter crime. He thanked Mr. Rubin for meeting with the residents. He asked that the dumpster locations be located far from residents due to trucks and noise associated with them.

Mr. Rubin explained that next step is to prepare preliminary drawings for staff review. He will meet with residents after staff has commented on them.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 pm. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 2, 2020 in the Westlake City Hall Council Chambers.

Chairman Brad Lamb

Jim Bedell, AICP
Director of Planning and Economic Development

Approved: March 2, 2020