

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Public Hearing of the Trustees of Sycamore Township Sycamore Township, Hamilton County, Ohio

Tuesday, December 21, 2021

The public hearing for Zoning Case 2021-11LU, a proposed Land Use Plan for Sycamore Township, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman James.

Mr. James noted for the record all three Trustees are present for this hearing.

Present for the hearing were Chairman James, Vice Chairman LaBarbara, Trustee Weidman, Interim Administrator/Superintendent Kellums and Planning & Zoning Administrator Miller.

Mr. Miller presented the case and case history for Zoning Case 2021-11LU, a proposed new version of the Land Use Plan for Sycamore Township. He reported the Land Use Steering Committee began the process for developing this document in November, 2019. He noted the process was stymied in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and then picked back up in May 2021. Mr. Miller stated the plan was submitted to Zoning Commission for multiple reviews in the fall of 2021. He said there have been some changes made by those groups as well as the addition of a policy area section before the Zoning Commission made a recommendation for approval.

Mr. Miller stated almost everything we do as a Township is with a redevelopment mindset as there is little vacant land. He said there is a theme of a push for development while protecting and preserving existing residential areas. Mr. Miller then displayed the Land Use Map and reviewed it for the Board beginning with North Sycamore. He said they tried to get rid of ambiguous transitional use areas by replacing it with mixed use, noting the higher level of control is in the policy areas. Mr. Miller noted instead of varying degrees of residential they have been collapsed into a larger suburban residential category and multi-family.

Mr. James asked if the Heavy Industrial Use had been removed.

Mr. Miller stated there is no Heavy Industrial Zoning District to go with that use and went on to discuss industrial uses within the Township.

Mr. Weidman asked if the portion of land owned by the Township in front of an office building on E. Kemper Road should be colored green instead of blue.

Mr. Miller answered that lot is for storm water management, so it is not a stand-alone recreation area it is part of the office area. He went on to discuss an area on school road that is noted as recreation but does not currently have any public access. He suggested calling it vacant land for the time being.

There was a discussion about whether to change the designation of that property and what land constitutes parks and recreation.

Mr. Miller went on to display the portion of the Land use Map dealing with South Sycamore and discussed the Blue Ash Road corridor and Montgomery Road corridor.

Mr. James asked if there is a definition for Mixed Use spelled out in the document noting one of the problems in the old Land Use Plan was the presence of undefined terms.

Mr. Miller read the description of Mixed Use and said it should be specifically called out. He said he may have to make changes for approval at the next meeting.

Mr. James expressed concerns about residential areas in the Blue Ash Road corridor near those designated as mixed use.

Mr. Miller noted the document does not change any zoning designations. He said the plan is called 2030 because it shows how we see the Land Use Plan evolving and where we want things to grow. He noted the Blue Ash Road corridor is one of the areas we need a policy area for, and Zoning Commission wants to kick that back to the Land Use Steering Committee after a working document is approved. He said this document should be fluid.

Mr. Miller reviewed the policy areas that are established in the new Land Use Plan and explained the vision for each. The policy areas are Grooms/Kemper Roads, the Kemper Road corridor, Village Green, Reed Hartman/Fields Ertel Road, Kenwood Towne Centre/Sycamore Plaza, Jewish Hospital, Redstone Center Montgomery Road, Montgomery Road Central and Reading/Galbraith Road. There was a discussion about the use of the property located on Montgomery Road which has been designated office, but the policy are limits the density. He also spoke about the Reading Road Corridor committee and their work on that area noting the Land Use Plan reflects their recommendation.

Mr. James asked if Mr. Miller had heard from any of the residents who live on near the Reading Road area of the Township and if any of them were concerned about the move to light industrial.

Mr. Miller said the residents on Chaucer have only expressed concerns regarding cleaning up the properties or affecting some positive change. He noted residents are pro-development in that area.

There was a discussion about what kinds of uses are light industrial and how to preserve the residential area.

Mr. Miller stated he has had positive responses from the public about the Land Use Plan until today. He stated Mr. and Mrs. James and Elizabeth Stanley were present at the hearing because they are concerned about the plan's designation of their property located on Montgomery Road.

While Mr. Miller was looking for the Stanley's property on the map, Mr. James asked if anyone else present had any comments or questions. No response.

Mr. Miller showed the Stanley's property on the map. He reported in past land use plans the property was designated as office. He said the Land Use Steering Committee discussed it and decided to leave it as suburban residential. He said that may have been an error and he will let the Stanley's speak on it. Mr. Miller said the property may be difficult to develop but does have quite a bit of frontage on Montgomery Road and three sides of the property abut commercial uses.

Mr. Weidman said this is inconsistent with Mr. Miller's comment that the Township focus commercial uses along our main arteries.

Mr. James asked all those from the public who wished to comment to rise to be sworn in and then swore in Mr. Stanley.

Mr. James Stanley, along with his wife Elizabeth, of 8253 Montgomery Road, addressed the Board regarding the designation of his property. He said the current Land Use Plan designates his property transitional office and the proposed plan designates it as suburban residential. He noted every land use plan dating back to Hamilton County up to this date have designated the property as office.

Mr. Stanley stated he has lived there for 36 years and seen lots of development around it and noted he has had people approach him to purchase his lot but only for commercial development. He noted the Township has even pointed developers in his direction and once approached him about possibly constructing a fire station there. Mr. Stanley said office is an appropriate use for the property with the appropriate buffers. He went on to discuss the issues with the property as a residential use such as traffic and trash. Mr. Stanley went on to discuss changes in the volume of water in the creek. He stated it would not be a good house for a family with children.

Mr. Stanley concluded he does not want the property to be rezoned as they are living there, but he is asking for the new Land Use Plan to keep the office designation as it is the obvious and best use for the property.

Mr. Miller stated from a staff perspective he does not have an issue with recategorizing Mr. Stanley's property, but noted it is right at the boundary of two policy areas and the intensity would be influenced by the policy area. He suggested it be placed in the Montgomery Road Policy Area as opposed to the Central Montgomery Road Policy Area to allow for more flexibility for the small size of the site.

There was discussion among the Board about the appropriate policy area for the property with Mr. James noting the importance of protecting the residential areas on Kugler Mill Road.

Mr. Miller stated he needs to polish the Land Use Plan based on discussions at the hearing and will bring it along with a resolution back to the Board at a future meeting.

Mr. Miller asked how the Board wanted to handle the School Road property and was directed to leave it as recreation.

Mr. Miller noted the Zoning Commission has recognized the Blue Ash Road Corridor as a critical policy area and set a task for staff and the committees to get that policy area in place. He thinks the proposed plan still holds value in its current state.

Mr. Miller stated he should have a resolution for the Board the second meeting and pointed out that although the document has been vetted by staff at Hamilton County it has not been reviewed by Planning Commission. He stated, at their request, Hamilton County Planning Commission will review it after the Board of Trustees approves it. Mr. Miller said he did receive positive feedback from Hamilton County.

Mr. James asked if there were any additional comments. No response.

Mr. James stated there is an additional item on the agenda for the public hearing.

Mr. Miller stated he would prefer to wait until the Land Use Plan is in place to get a formal approval on any text amendments to the Zoning Resolution as a point of principle.

Mr. James asked if there is any point in holding a public hearing for Case 2021-12T.

Mr. Miller said we are already over time, but he would be happy to introduce it to the Board if they like or close the public hearing and discuss it at the second meeting in January with the final updated Land Use Plan.

Mr. James suggested the Board move on to the Trustees Meeting. He asked if there was anyone from the public was present to comment on Case 2021-12T the proposed Text Amendments to the Zoning Resolution. No response.

Mr. Miller stated the Text Amendments have to do with calculating total rear yard area and how we allow fences to be placed in yards.

The public hearing for Case 2021-11LU adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

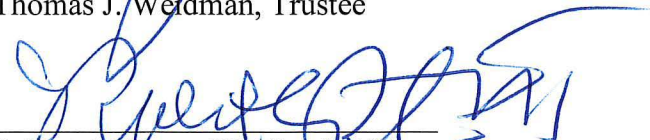


Thomas C. James, Jr., Chairman

Jim LaBarbara, Vice Chairman



Thomas J. Weidman, Trustee



Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer