

Oakwood, Ohio
July 11, 2018

The Planning Commission of the city of Oakwood met in regular session at 4:30 p.m., in the council chambers of the City of Oakwood, 30 Park Avenue, Oakwood, Ohio 45419.

The Chair, Mr. Jeffrey Shulman, presided and the Clerk, Lori Stacel, recorded.

Upon call of the roll, the following members responded to their names:

- MR. JEFFREY B. SHULMAN PRESENT
- MR. ANDREW AIDT ABSENT
- MRS. HARRISON GOWDY PRESENT
- MRS. E. HEALY JACKSON..... PRESENT
- MR. STEVE BYINGTON..... PRESENT

Officers of the city present were the following:

- Mr. Norbert S. Klopsch, City Manager
- Mr. Robert F. Jacques, City Attorney
- Mrs. Jennifer S. Wilder, Personnel and Properties Director
- Mr. Ethan M. Kroger, Code Enforcement Officer

The following visitors were present:

- Jerad Barnett, Synergy Building Systems
- John Kopilchack, Synergy Building Systems
- Nick Raines, Russell Wealth Management
- Kip Bohachek, 86 E. Dixon Ave., Oakwood, OH 45419
- Steve Brooks, 209 Monteray Ave., Oakwood, OH 45419
- Paul & Donna Bohannon, 204 Pointe Oakwood Way, Oakwood, OH 45409
- Heidi Susta, 20 W. Schantz Ave., Oakwood, OH 45409
- Kevin Jones, 215 Pointe Oakwood Way, Oakwood, OH 45409

It was moved by Mr. Byington and seconded by Mrs. Gowdy that the absence of Mr. Aidt be excused; the motion was approved by viva voce vote.

Mr. Shulman called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. He asked if there were any questions or concerns with the minutes from the June 6, 2018 meeting. There being none, it was moved by Mrs. Jackson and seconded by Mr. Byington that the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held June 6, 2018 be approved as submitted and the reading thereof be dispensed with at this session. Upon a viva voce vote on the question of the motion, the same passed unanimously and it was so ordered.

Mr. Byington recused himself as he resides near the proposed development. Mr. Shulman accepted his recusal. At that time Mr. Byington left the dais and was seated in the audience.

Before commencing the public hearing, Mr. Shulman asked the Law Director to explain the presence of Mr. Kip Bohachek in the audience.

Mr. Jacques explained that the Zoning Code requires three votes to decide a matter, and there are only three Commission members to hear this case due to absence and recusal. In the event that the three Planning Commission members would come to a deadlock vote, the Zoning Code allows a member of the Board of Zoning Appeals to participate in the meeting. City staff invited Board of Zoning Appeals Chair Kip Bohachek to attend the meeting and to cast a vote if needed.

Mr. Shulman reviewed the meeting procedure with all in attendance.

Mr. Shulman opened the public hearing for Application #18-3, to amend the site plan to construct a 16,600 sf, 2-story office building on the 4.3 acre parcel located east of Sugar Camp Circle, west of the Pointe Oakwood residential development, and north of W. Schantz Avenue

Mr. Kroger stepped forward to present the staff report. He shared that the Planning Commission recommended approval for the construction of the Russell Wealth Management Building last year, but that application has lapsed. The previous contractor, JZ Construction, is no longer involved in the project due to various reasons including employee health conditions and budget restraints. Russell Wealth Management has decided to proceed with a new developer, Synergy Mills, and is seeking approval of a revised plan.

Mr. Kroger referenced a PowerPoint presentation and explained that the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to Oakwood City Council to either approve or deny the request to construct a 16,600 sf, 2-story office building on the 4.3 acre parcel. City Council will then hold a public hearing, and by a majority vote either approve, deny, or approve with conditions the request for an amended site plan for Russell Wealth Management. Mr. Kroger then reviewed the recent history of this parcel, sharing that in November 2017, City Council approved a special use request to construct a 3-story, 22,000 square foot office building to serve as the headquarters for Russell Wealth Management.

Mr. Kroger then detailed the summary of changes with the current application.

The applicant proposes a slightly different location for the building within the site. While the building would be substantially scaled down in size, it would be positioned closer to W. Schantz Avenue and would have a setback of 121.6 feet. The setback from the Pointe Oakwood neighborhood is 117.1 feet. The new Russell Wealth Management building would be moved 30 feet further away from the Pointe Oakwood neighborhood and 15.5 feet closer to W. Schantz Avenue.

The parking lot, which was located 41 feet from W. Schantz Avenue, will now be 97 feet away from the public right-of-way. Instead of being located south of the building near the W. Schantz frontage, the applicant wants to move it to the north and west, between the building and the remainder of the Sugar Camp campus. The number of parking spaces has increased from 30 to 33.

The originally approved 3-story 22,000 office building with a walkout basement would be scaled down to a 2-story, 16,600 square foot building with no walkout basement and minimal excavation into the hillside.

Primary ingress and egress to the site would be from Sugar Camp Circle, entering from the existing signalized W. Schantz Avenue and Kramer Road intersection. Secondary access is proposed from the existing curb cut off W. Schantz Avenue, although the developer requests that it be limited to a right-in/right-out traffic movement only.

The applicant is proposing to add a 6' x 8' monument sign located inside the existing curb cut along W. Schantz Avenue.

The developer hopes to save as many mature trees on the site as possible. The east hillside between the proposed building and the existing Pointe Oakwood residences will be heavily planted with a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees. The existing mature tree stand just to the north of the building will be preserved with dead trees and vegetation being removed and

replaced as appropriate. Similarly, the existing vegetation along W. Schantz Avenue would be substantially enhanced, with dead plant material and trees being removed and new vegetation planted.

Mr. Kroger closed his presentation by sharing that city staff recommends approval, subject to the following conditions: 1) The final landscape plan must be approved by the City Horticulturist; 2) The monument sign and building signs to gain final approval from city staff; 3) City staff will review and approve a satisfactory traffic study result; and, 4) Architectural details and materials compliment existing buildings located within Sugar Camp.

Mr. Shulman thanked Mr. Kroger for his presentation and then welcomed the applicant.

Mr. Jerad Barnett with Synergy Building Systems addressed the Planning Commission on behalf of the developer and thanked them for their time. He said that they had the opportunity to take a fresh look at the project and make some positive changes. For example, after hearing that the parking lot location was a concern, they relocated the parking lot further off of W. Schantz Avenue. There is also a plan to have secondary access to the building from the existing curb cut off of W. Schantz Avenue to provide more convenient access for customer, and to improve emergency access.

Mr. Shulman asked if the monument sign mentioned in the presentation is for a new sign or an addition to the existing sign.

Mr. Barnett said that they are proposing a new sign for the right-in/right-out roadway access point at W. Schantz Avenue specific to Russell Wealth Management. He explained that this sign will help customers locate the building because the Russell Wealth Management building is not visible from the street.

Mrs. Gowdy shared that she does not like that Russell Wealth Management is separating off from the Sugar Camp campus. The secondary entrance seems more like a primary entrance for Russell Wealth Management and could take away from the residential community across the street.

Mr. Barnett said that they do not consider the secondary entrance a main entrance to the site.

Mr. Shulman asked if other people would use the secondary entrance as a main entrance.

Mr. Barnett said that anyone could use the secondary entrance, but for people not going to the Russell Wealth Management building, it would be a longer route to take.

Mr. Shulman asked if the applicant would object to having a sign similar to the existing one that lists all occupants at Sugar Camp.

Mr. Barnett said that he would not think so, although he does not feel that a sign this far back into Sugar Camp would benefit the other occupants.

Mrs. Gowdy commented that Russell Wealth Management is proposing to have three signs. Two signs on the building and one sign at the secondary entrance.

Mr. Barnett said that the sign facing west is one that can only be seen when on the site. The idea behind having the sign at W. Schantz Avenue is to give the Russell Wealth Management building a presence because there is some concern that customers will travel to other buildings by mistake.

Mrs. Jackson asked if city staff is requiring that the secondary access road be built for emergency vehicle access.

Mr. Klopsch responded no.

Mrs. Jackson asked why an access road would not be built on the east side of the Sugar Camp campus instead.

Mr. Barnett said that they did not explore that option because the access road would need to be built directly through the campus and it would take away from valuable land that could be used for office space in the future.

Mrs. Gowdy shared that she always thought of Sugar Camp as a campus. If an additional entrance is created, it would take away from the campus feel.

Mrs. Jackson asked for the applicant to explain the lighting on the building and on the sign.

Mr. Barnett shared that there will be pole lighting at the access road leading from Sugar Camp Circle, and around the edges of the parking lot. The lighting on the sign will follow the same as the previous application. Only the west elevation letters will be backlit and will be consistent with Oakwood lighting standards.

Mrs. Jackson asked for more information about the complimentary materials that will be used on the building.

Mr. Barnett shared that the primary exterior building material is a buff-colored limestone with a predominant stone glazing that compliments the stone on the existing Sugar Camp buildings.

Mr. Kevin Jones, 215 Pointe Oakwood Way, shared that he resides closest to the project. He inquired about the landscaping around the Pointe Oakwood neighborhood.

Mr. Barnett said that the east hillside between the proposed building and the existing Pointe Oakwood residences will be heavily planted with a mixture of trees.

Mrs. Sarah Waechter, 231 Northview Road, asked the following questions: 1) Are additional parking spaces needed because the applicant foresees an increase in traffic; 2) Have the building materials changed because the building material seems to have a darker and more recluse look; and, 3) Could the access road be moved further north so it does not dissect the land versus using the W. Schantz Avenue entrance.

Mr. Barnett explained that the three extra parking spaces come from reconfiguring the lot layout, and are not based on additional anticipated traffic. In regards to the building materials, there is 25% more glazing and glass than the prior proposed building. He explained that the renderings being shown portray a darker image of the building than what it truly is, possibly due to the dimness of the projector. He mentioned that they did not want to add an access road through any land that could be used for future office space.

Mrs. Jackson asked how large the lettering will be on the building sign.

Mr. Barnett said that they have not ironed out size dimensions, but the dimensions will meet the Oakwood sign regulations.

Mr. Shulman asked if the applicant is willing to decrease the size of the signs.

Mr. Barnett confirmed yes.

Mr. Paul Bohannon, 204 Pointe Oakwood Way, asked where the air handling equipment units will be located.

Mr. Barnett said that all of the air handling units will be placed on the rooftop with parapets screening them.

There being no further public testimony offered, the public hearing was closed and the Planning Commission began their deliberations.

Mr. Jacques clarified a few points with the Planning Commission before they began deliberations. He explained that the Oakwood Zoning Code requires a traffic study if necessary to evaluate an application. In this case, no traffic study was requested until the application was reviewed and staff discovered the proposed right-in/right-out access point on W. Schantz. City staff then requested the study, but the applicant was unable to get the study done prior to the hearing which is why the staff report included this as a condition upon approval. It will be provided prior to Council's review. He also explained that the curb cut is not mentioned in the Pointe Oakwood Settlement Agreement from the previous lawsuits involving the condos around Pointe Oakwood, but that does not preclude it as an approved entrance. The purpose of the Settlement Agreement, as it relates to access for this site, was to reduce or eliminate commercial traffic through the residential Pointe Oakwood neighborhood.

Mrs. Jackson said that she does not see the need for an additional entrance when so few people will be using it.

Mrs. Gowdy stated she is a bit concerned that Russell Wealth Management property is being separated from the Sugar Camp office complex.

Mr. Shulman mentioned the main entrance sign and asked about the possibility of relocating the sign.

Mr. Barnett said that they would consider moving the sign from W. Schantz Avenue to Sugar Camp Circle, while keeping the W. Schantz Avenue access point.

Mrs. Gowdy added that she could see using the secondary access road as an emergency entrance or an exit, but not as a primary entrance.

Mrs. Jackson said that she understands that the City has signage rules in place, but she still has major concerns regarding the size.

Mr. Klopsch shared that there are size limits for signs and city staff will ask the applicant to provide sign renderings to scale.

Therefore, it was moved by Mr. Shulman and seconded by Mrs. Jackson that the preliminary staff findings shall be adopted, with the condition that a proposed monument sign be moved from the right-in/right-out roadway access point at W. Schantz Avenue to the intersection of Sugar Camp Circle and Russell Place, in the interior of Sugar Camp, and application #18-3, to construct a 16,600 sf, 2-story office building on the 4.3 acre parcel located east of Sugar Camp Circle, west of the Pointe Oakwood residential development, and north of W. Schantz Avenue, be recommended for approval by City Council.

SPECIAL USE STANDARDS

- A. The proposed use at the specified location is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

PRELIMINARY STAFF FINDINGS:

- The proposed use is consistent with the recommendations in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan that corporate offices and general tenant office space would be an appropriate use for the Sugar Camp acreage. Moreover, the proposal also meets the stated site development guidelines that the property be developed as a “campus-type” environment with a well-landscaped and attractive physical setting that does not adversely impact the existing residential neighborhood.

- B. The proposed building or use will not adversely affect or change the character of the area in which it is located.

PRELIMINARY STAFF FINDINGS:

- As with the previously approved special use, the use of the proposed building for office purposes is consistent with the business uses of the 12+ acre Sugar Camp site that have existed since 155,000+ square feet of office/training space was constructed in the late 1960’s. Even prior to that, NCR used the property for business purposes dating back to temporary tents originally used in the early 1900’s and then replaced in the 1930’s when more than 50 cabins were built on the site.

Primary ingress and egress to the building will be from Sugar Camp Circle, with traffic entering through the signalized entrance on W. Schantz Avenue. Also being proposed will be a right in and right out entry and exit from W. Schantz Avenue, which is an effort to accommodate emergency response vehicles without the unusual road stub (turnaround point) that was previously approved. Staff does not believe this configuration will negatively impact the adjoining neighborhood streets, and in fact it will improve access for emergency services.

In addition, although the proposed building does not mirror the nearly 48 year old architecture of the existing buildings, the designers are using complimenting building materials with a compatible 21st century architectural theme designed to link the eclectic architectural themes and building scales in the immediate area.

- C. That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the special use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience or general welfare.

PRELIMINARY STAFF FINDINGS:

- There is nothing to suggest that public health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience or general welfare will be at risk since the proposed use of the land is consistent with the business uses that have existed on the site for well over 100 years. As far as safety is concerned, a great deal of time has already been spent by the site engineers on issues pertaining to fire safety and how the building will be accessed by safety vehicles and personnel.

- D. That the proposed use will not be injurious to the reasonable use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, or substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood.

PRELIMINARY STAFF FINDINGS:

- With less than 20 employees expected to work in the building, and given the nature of the services being provided to the public, on most days, there will in all likelihood be less than 10 visitors to the building – far fewer than most of the physician office spaces already existing within Sugar Camp.

In developing the tree and landscape plan for the site, special attention was given to establishing a vegetation buffer along the hillside on the east side of the site between the building and the Pointe Oakwood residential area. Of equal importance is the fact that most of the existing large canopy trees on the site will be maintained.

The proposed building is more modern in appearance than many surrounding properties, but will be set back significantly from the nearest homes and roadways and will be attractively landscaped. There is no reason for Staff to believe this proposal would interfere with the lawful use of other properties or have an adverse impact on property values in the area.

- E. The proposed use at the specified location will not significantly adversely affect the use and development of adjacent and nearby properties in accordance with the regulations of the district in which they are located. The location, size and height of proposed buildings and other structures, and the operation of the use will not significantly adversely affect the use and development or hinder the appropriate development of adjacent and nearby properties.

PRELIMINARY STAFF FINDINGS:

- This could potentially be the last commercial building constructed on the Sugar Camp campus and its proposed use is consistent with the existing office space on the site. The size and height of the proposed building along with the exterior building materials complement the existing buildings at Sugar Camp. Staff sees no reason why this proposal should hinder the use or development of any nearby properties.

- F. That the exterior architectural appeal and functional plan of any proposed structure will not be so at variance with either the exterior architectural appeal and functional plan of the structures already constructed or in the course of construction in the immediate neighborhood, or the character of the applicable district as to cause a substantial depreciation in the property values within the neighborhood.

PRELIMINARY STAFF FINDINGS:

- The Comprehensive Plan suggests that architecture and landscaping treatments should be compatible with the surrounding existing development. As already mentioned, the existing buildings at Sugar Camp are more than 48 years old and the applicant is proposing a building which, while being sensitive to the other buildings in the immediate area, is also distinctive in its appearance, reflecting 21st century architecture. While Oakwood is certainly known for its older buildings and eclectic mix of architectural styles, modern architecture is already represented throughout the community and Staff sees no reason why this proposal would represent a significant change to the character of this neighborhood.

The primary exterior building material is a buff-colored limestone that compliments the stone on the existing Sugar Camp buildings. The applicant also plans to preserve as many of the mature trees as possible. Along W. Schantz Avenue where vegetation screening already exists, dead trees and underbrush will be removed and enhanced with more aesthetically pleasing plant material.

- G. That adequate utilities, access roads, off-street parking and loading facilities, drainage and/or other necessary facilities, have been or are being provided at the applicant's cost.

PRELIMINARY STAFF FINDINGS:

- Consistent with the Settlement Agreement between the developer, neighbors and the city, primary access to the building will be from Sugar Camp Circle. A secondary point of ingress and egress is proposed at the location of an existing curb cut on W. Schantz Avenue. Although this was not specifically addressed in the Settlement Agreement, Staff's understanding of the agreement was that the access provision was intended to prevent commercial traffic from passing through the residential Pointe Oakwood neighborhood. This proposal meets that intent.

Parking, drainage, utilities and the roadway serving the building directly are being provided at the applicant's expense. The applicant has also changed the location and size of the parking lot to reflect the use of the building and expected parking demand. The building owners also have a cross-lease with OIG to use existing Sugar Camp parking spaces on those rare instances when demand may exceed capacity.

- H. That adequate measures have been or will be taken at applicant's cost to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets and avoid hazards to pedestrian traffic.

PRELIMINARY STAFF FINDINGS:

- Primary ingress and egress to the site will be from Sugar Camp Circle, entering from the existing signalized W. Schantz Avenue and Kramer Road intersection. Secondary access to the building will be from the existing curb cut off of W. Schantz Avenue, although the developer has limited it to a right-in / right-out traffic movement to minimize the impact on W. Schantz traffic.

- I. That the special use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulation may, in each instance, be modified by Council pursuant to the recommendations of the Planning Commission.

PRELIMINARY STAFF FINDINGS:


- Throughout the planning process, the developer and owner of the building have been sensitive to compatibility issues involving Sugar Camp and the surrounding residential neighborhood. The footprint of the building and parking lot were minimized, and special efforts are being undertaken to preserve existing large trees and to further enhance the vegetation screening on the site with additional plantings.

Upon call of the roll on the question of the motion, the following vote was recorded:

MR. JEFFREY B. SHULMAN	YEA
MRS. HARRISON GOWDY	YEA
MRS. E. HEALY JACKSON.....	YEA


There being three (3) YEA votes, thereon, said motion carried.

There being no further business, the Planning Commission adjourned. The public meeting concluded at 5:31 p.m.



CHAIR

ATTEST:



CLERK