

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING - VALOR ACRES CONDITIONAL USE & RESIDENTIAL PDA
BRECKSVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
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Present: Michael Bandsuh, Mayor Hruby, Eric Lahrmer, Ron Payto, Kirk Roman, Dominic Sciria
Absent: Michael Harwood
Others: Eric Hall, Gerald Wise, and 15 guests

Mr. Roman opened the public hearing at 7:01 p.m. by reading the following legal notice published in the February 25, 2021 issue of the *Sun Star Courier*. Messrs. Lahrmer and Sciria attended the meeting via teleconference call.

The Brecksville Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at Brecksville City Hall, 9069 Brecksville Road, Brecksville, Ohio to review a proposed R-A Conditional Use and Conditional Use Residential Planned Development Area preliminary development plans on PP#'s 603-21-088 and 603-21-089 as part of the Valor Acres Development, north of Miller Road and west of Brecksville Road, in Brecksville, Ohio 44141,

Present: Kevin DiGeronimo, DiGeronimo Properties
Joshua Decker, Project Executive
Scott Wallenhorst, Director of Design

Mr. DiGeronimo provided some history on the VA property, beginning with an agreement DiGeronimo Properties entered into with the City of Brecksville in 2018, for DiGeronimo Properties, in consultation with the City, to develop the property. Work on the VA site began with an environmental remediation of the land, followed by demolition of all the VA Hospital buildings on the site. The City envisioned a mixed use development of the land that could include office/lab, retail, restaurants and a residential component. Early on, Sherwin-Williams committed to building a large research and development complex on the site to make them the major, anchor tenant. That multi-year building project was currently in the design phase.

Other businesses have expressed interest in locating on the site, but for reasons of confidentiality could not be identified. However, due to the current COVID stagnant status of commercial/retail development, the mixed use portion of the development project was expected to progress at a slow pace. DiGeronimo Properties have chosen to proceed first with the twenty-three and a half acre residential portion of the project by creating a community within a community. A single, long cul-de-sac street on the northern end of the property, parallel to Westview Drive, would feature apartments, townhouses, attached condos and some single family homes. A half-acre VA memorial public park was planned in the location of the VA smokestack as an amenity for residents. A brief video of the proposed residential project component, fully landscaped and populated with residents, was shown to depict how the buildings would look and their location along the street. The hope was that the high quality and attractiveness of the residential area would attract Brecksville residents, young people just starting out, empty nesters seeking to downsize, as well as people who work at Sherwin Williams or one of the other businesses on the site. Mr. DiGeronimo asked residents to trust in their intent to develop a residential area in keeping with the reputation for quality of the City of Brecksville.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public present. Ms. Paula Stankiewicz, 6862 Westview Drive, asked, as it related to downsizing, about the size of the homes, which she was told would be about 1,800-2,500 sq. ft.

Mr. Joseph DiGiorgio, 6645 Westview Drive, asked about the buffer, structure-to-structure, from the homes along Westview and the new construction. Mr. DiGeronimo said the buffer varied along the street, but averaged 300 ft. Mr. DiGiorgio was also concerned about property from Westview Drive being acquired or taken by imminent domain for their project. Mr. DiGeronimo assured him they did not intend to acquire any Westview Drive property. Mr. DiGiorgio suggested there might be some supplier discount to be had from the number of trees to be purchased by both the developer and the Westview Drive residents.

Ms. Nancy Woelfl, 10134 Village Lane, asked about the retail and restaurants that were planned when the project was first discussed. Mr. DiGeronimo responded that they were still in the process of identifying other anchor

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businesses. Once that happens retail and restaurants would follow. With the COVID related slowdown of the market, the development of commercial/retail was unpredictable, but probably slow paced.

Ms. Tracy Adanich, 7022 Westview Drive, moved here two years ago from Arizona. She had no idea her secluded backyard would now be about 100 feet from three story townhouses. Ms. Adanich was concerned about stormwater management, as her property was at a lower level than the VA property and she already had a stream running through her backyard. Mr. DiGeronimo assured her that the stormwater management would be engineered to put no additional water on her property. He illustrated, on a map of the residential area, where two retention ponds were located. Ms. Adanich mentioned that, at a previous meeting, the City Engineer had noted the omission of waste water drains from the plans. To relieve her drainage concerns, Mr. Decker reviewed with her the topography of the site adjacent to her property and their plans for water management.

Ms. Adanich wondered about the orange, spray painted markings on the trees. She hoped it didn't mean they would all be slated for removal, especially since some of them were on her and her neighbor's property. Mr. DiGeronimo responded that all trees in the area, including some not on their site, were being surveyed to help develop a tree savings plan. Ms. Adanich was not happy going from a secluded wooded lot to a high density populated area. She asked if the developer would be willing to plant as many trees in the back of the buildings, as they planned for the front, to create a visual buffer from Westview Drive. Ms. Adanich didn't want to put up a fence, but she was very concerned about privacy. Mr. DiGeronimo said buffering for privacy was something his company dealt successfully with all the time. He asked that residents wait to see the results of what they would plant before doing additional landscaping in their yards. He also offered to work directly with Ms. Adanich on her concerns.

Ms. Denise Paulsen, 6834 Westview Drive, asked the distance from her back property line to a new structure and she was told 40 foot. She asked about how many new residents the development would bring to the City and then what effect that increase would have on City services. The Mayor estimated the development could result in about 600 new residents, with perhaps a 2% increase in City services. Ms. Paulsen asked why the town houses weren't located at the end of the development and the single family homes behind the Westview properties to give them more privacy. Mr. DiGeronimo said it had to do with creating a balance between the different structures along the street. He commented that the plans were preliminary at this stage and they would be open to discussions on the placement of buildings on the site, as long as a good balance could be maintained. Ms. Paulsen was concerned about the effect the new development would have on her property value. Mr. DiGeronimo thought her property value would increase based on the quality of the project. He hoped many of the new residents would be from Brecksville. Ms. Paulsen asked if there were similar properties they developed that she could look at to assess their effect on neighboring properties. Mr. DiGeronimo mentioned Pinecrest and he also offered to put together a list for her.

Mr. John Woelfl, 10134 Village Lane, felt the buildings looked a little bland and cookie cutter. He thought the architectural design could have more character, yet preserve the Western Reserve architectural style of the City. Mr. DiGeronimo pointed out that the plan was still in the preliminary stages. He was confident the building facades would be of the highest quality to be seen in northeast Ohio.

Ms. Adanich asked if the Commission's concern for a low parking space count for the apartments had been addressed. Mr. DiGeronimo said they did increase the parking space count, although they are still seeking a deviation. They have designated an area to landbank enough spaces to meet Code in case the need arises.

Mr. Hall read some e-mail questions from residents attending the meeting virtually. Ms. Ann Koepke asked about the length of the street, and the response was approximately 2,300 feet. Mr. Phillip Paulson, 6834 Westview Drive, asked the distance dwelling-to-dwelling from Westview Drive homes to the new buildings. Mr. DiGeronimo commented that it was generally 250-300 feet. Ms. Paulsen asked the distance from the back of her property line to one of the new buildings and the response was 40 foot.

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Aaron Zmich asked about the protection from development of the conservancy land at the end of the street. Mr. DiGeronimo noted that the conservancy was located on Sherwin-Williams property. The Mayor advised that the establishment of the conservancy land was part of the Dalad deal and should continue in perpetuity.

Mr. Pelligreno Ciccarello, 9701 Brecksville Road, asked if any exit from the development was planned other than the one on Brecksville Road. Mr. DiGeronimo said an exit was planned from the mixed use area onto Brecksville Road. He also said there would probably be an exit onto Miller Road across from Southpointe in the future depending on the development mix. To a question from Christie Trala-Sponsellor on any new traffic signals, he anticipated no signal at Parkview and a full signal at Miller Road. He added that they would need to analyze traffic study results.

Ms. Janet Popielski, 10021 Gatewood Drive, asked who would be responsible for the memorial smokestack should it need maintenance and/or repair. Mr. DiGeronimo said that, although it had not yet been discussed, he assumed his company would be responsible. Ms. Renee Unger, 6640 Westview Drive, asked who would be managing the apartment complex and the response was an affiliate of the DiGeronimo companies.

Mr. Vince Weber asked about the status of a walking/biking trail to connect to the MetroParks. Mr. DiGeronimo said that may have been an aspiration, but was not a part of their plans. Mayor Hruby commented there were two possible points of connection across Brecksville Road to the MetroParks, one at Parkview and the other further south through a City right-of-way. He indicated the idea of a trail was proposed as part of the overall master planning for the area and had not yet been discussed.

Mr. Pelligreno Ciccarello asked about two parcels (PP #'s 603-20-001 & 603-21-020) that appeared to be investor owned. He wondered if they had plans to acquire those properties for the project. Mr. DiGeronimo indicated they would like to acquire those parcels for the project, but so far had not been able to do so. Ms. Tracy Adanich said Westview Drive residents were trying to purchase both the above two investor owned parcels and the 100 ft. parcel owned by Hashem Investments to assure they remain as a green space buffer to screen Westview Drive properties. She pointed out the 100 ft. parcel was particularly important to the residents as a screen from the view of the five story apartment building. Mr. DiGeronimo indicated he could make a commitment not to pursue those properties. Ms. Theresa Tytko, 6628 Westview Drive, questioned whether there was other residential development planned for the property and the response was that the current project was the only residential development proposed.

There was a question on the timetable for development. Tree clearing would occur during the last weeks of March followed by grading in April, and speculatively construction completion in 2022.

The Public Hearing closed at 8:16 p.m.

THE BRECKSVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

KIRK ROMAN, CHAIRPERSON
DOMINIC SCIRIA, VICE CHAIRPERSON
ERIC LAHRMER, SECRETARY

Minutes recorded by Nancy Dimitris

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Present: Michael Bandsuh, Mayor Hruby, Eric Lahrmer, Ron Payto, Kirk Roman, Dominic Sciria
Absent: Michael Harwood
Others: Eric Hall, Gerald Wise, and 15 guests

Mr. Roman opened the Special Meeting at 8:16 p.m. He indicated since the scope of the residential development plan had been discussed at the earlier public hearing, the developer could proceed to review how the City Engineer's and Commission's concerns from the February 18, 2021 Planning Commission meeting had been addressed.

Present: Kevin DiGeronimo, DiGeronimo Properties
Joshua Decker, Project Executive
Scott Wallenhorst, Director of Design

Mr. DiGeronimo opened the discussion by saying that they had advanced the details of the drawings since the last meeting with the Commission. Mr. Decker outlined further refinements including:

- Reduction of the single family homes from six to four in order to provide more rear yard buffering
- Slid the attached homes down and added an additional townhome T8
- T6 unit buffer increased from 5 foot to 10 foot
- T1 Unit setback increased to 100 foot
- Increase setback from Brecksville Road to 100 foot
- Parking for multi-family units increased from 174 to 236

Mr. Wise summarized his comments from a March 10, 2021 letter to the Building Department as follows:

1. Right-of-Way – deviation required for proposed 50 ft. width instead of Code 60 foot requirement. Turnout radius in all instances should comply with Code
2. Replace common parallel parking proposed on east side of Roadway "A" with perpendicular parking
3. Provide rear-yard drains for final design
4. Correctly sized box culvert crossing Roadway "A"
5. Details and corrections needed for sidewalks
6. Details and corrections on building setbacks
7. Reports outstanding: Traffic report, full geotechnical report, wetlands and streams permit and updated HOA document

Mr. Payto understood that the setback for buildings from Brecksville Road was going to be 100 ft. He wondered if consideration could be given to pulling the Code requirement for parking back from 25 foot to 100 foot also along Rt. 21. Mr. Payto surmised that the developer would have design guidelines and restrictions for the project. He was concerned that the single family homes being developed by an outside contractor not look like orphans in the neighborhood. The developer would retain the right to choose the contractor and approve the architectural design of the single family homes. Mr. Payto asked about the status of the vacant house at Miller Road and Rt. 21. The Mayor noted that the Building Department was looking into it and that it was not a part of the proposed project. ADA access was brought up, which was an issue still in the planning stages, however elevator access was being considered.

Mr. Lahrmer acknowledged the increase in parking to 236 spaces for the multi-family component. Mr. Decker confirmed that they also plan to landbank 85-95 spaces in case the 236 spaces were inadequate. Mr. Lahrmer asked how the frontyard setback along Brecksville Road increase from 75 foot to 100 foot was accomplished. Mr. Decker responded that they had to lose a unit to increase the setback. Mr. Lahrmer questioned the steep drop-

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off behind units C1, C2, C3 and C5. The steep drop-off along those units resulted from a choice to save some trees. Residents for those units would be given the option of decks to help offset the steep drop-off. Mr. Lahrmer asked about safety measures for a ravine area with an 8-10 ft. depth. Mr. DiGeronimo remarked that as the grading plan was refined a decision would be made to terrace, or in some way buffer that area. Mr. Lahrmer asked about buffering the Westview Drive properties from areas of pavement. Mr. Decker pointed out that an extra five foot of buffering was added to the original five foot and that the plan was to plant double rows of screening trees in conjunction with the existing trees.

Mr. Lahrmer asked where snow would be stacked considering the density of the development. Mr. Decker said the six foot from the curb to the sidewalk would be used to stack snow from the road, and driveway snow would be plowed to the sides along the driveways. Mr. DiGeronimo offered to provide data from snowbelt communities to demonstrate the snow distribution could be handled successfully. He anticipated the HOA would have a full-time maintenance crew that would deal with all the snow plowing beyond the City's responsibility for the street.

The Mayor asked about the height of the apartment complex. Mr. DiGeronimo commented that the building was five stories, a first floor parking garage with four residential floors above. He noted that, by Code, the building could have been higher and the density as many as 250 units. The developer wanted to keep the building size and density on the lowest level that would still result in high quality and good service. The developer offered to provide a line-of-sight drawing of the apartment complex to give Westwood Drive residents a better sense of the visual effect from their property.

The Mayor mentioned the VA memorial park. Mr. DiGeronimo confirmed the integrity of the smoke stack which would undergo only minor restoration and staining or painting. He expected maintenance, now and in the future, to be handled by one of their affiliate companies. Mayor Hruby had received some comments from residents asking if the architecture of the buildings could be tweaked to be more Western Reserve to integrate with the architecture most prevalent in the community. Mr. DiGeronimo responded that they planned to use a red brick similar to the Red Brick Store in the center of town. He had no problem committing to working with the City on the building façades to see what changes could be made without affecting the cohesiveness of the plan. In consideration of families with children, the Mayor observed that most units had virtually no backyards. Mr. DiGeronimo responded that children would play in their frontyards, designated playgrounds and pools. He said that although it was a new concept in our community, it worked quite well in other areas of the country.

Mr. Bandsuh questioned what drove the density decision for 160 apartment units with some apartment square footage at 715 sq. ft. Mr. DiGeronimo said they were guided by both market studies as well as successful projects they have developed in urban and suburban settings. Mr. Decker added that while some one bedroom units were 715 sq. ft. the average was 825 sq. ft. with just under 1,500 sq. ft. for three bedroom units. Mr. Bandsuh found the deviation request from the minimum 50 foot rear yard to allow as low as 20 foot concerning. Mr. Decker remarked that all the attached homes were at 40 ft. The 20 ft. quoted in the deviation was for only two townhouses.

Mr. Sciria questioned the need for a 160 unit apartment building in the community. Even though the complex was being developed as a PDA, he had some concern for the number of deviations requested. Mr. Sciria didn't think the windowless bedroom in a single bedroom unit was representative of quality development. He questioned whether the rooftop patio/gardens would be viewed as a privacy issue for the Westview Drive neighbors. Mr. Sciria reviewed the deviation requests relating to density and building spacing and wondered if the plan needed to be reduced by some units to provide more space. He questioned whether Code setbacks were being applied correctly. Mr. Sciria pointed to problems with parking area and drive setbacks for some of the townhouses. He suggested the island in front of Townhome #7 could be eliminated to provide more space. Deviations #25 & 26 to permit a 10 foot setback adjacent to a vacant lot by Townhome #4 was questioned. Mr. Lahrmer suggested removing a unit might eliminate that deviation request.

Mr. Sciria questioned the reasoning behind the four single family homes in the plan. Mr. DiGeronimo commented that the single family homes were being offered to provide a little variety and to satisfy a potential resident that might want to live in the neighborhood but want to be a little separate also.

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Mr. Bandsuh remarked that while he supported the concept, appreciated the amount of work put into the development proposal and found the video presentation pleasing, he was concerned about the density and the large number of deviations from Code being requested. Mr. DiGeronimo cited several areas in Brecksville where a precedent was set for lot density greater than the Valor Acres development proposed. The developer was confident the density proposed would work for the community, but was willing to work with the Commission to consider any of the suggestions brought up during the evening.

Mr. Hall asked to amend, for the record, Deviation # 27 in regard to the Code maximum building height. Due to the first floor parking provision the maximum building height Code requirement would be 40 feet instead of the 30 foot shown.

Mr. Roman made the motion for approval of an R-A Conditional Use and Preliminary approval for the PDA which was seconded by Mayor Hruby. Mr. Sciria said that while he supported the project, he felt voting on preliminary plan approval was premature. He wondered if the site clearing could be approved now and a little more time given to discussion of the preliminary plan without disrupting the developer's schedule. He pointed out that approval this evening would be on the plan as presented, with no consideration of the considerations discussed this evening. Messrs. Bandsuh and Lahrmer were in agreement with Mr. Sciria's suggestion. The motion and second were withdrawn. While Mr. DiGeronimo would have preferred preliminary plan approval he was agreeable with a motion for site clearing and a clear path forward to furthering the discussion of preliminary plan changes. After some discussion, it was agreed to consider the preliminary plan again at the Commission's next scheduled meeting on March 18, 2021. **NOTE: The minutes reflect that the next Planning Commission meeting is on March 18, 2021, however, the next scheduled meeting is March 25, 2021.** While it was recognized there was only seven days until that meeting, not enough time to address all the suggestions for change, but at least an opportunity to move forward with some of them. There was a general consensus to move forward with a motion to approve tree clearing for the residential portion of the Valor Acres development project.

VALOR ACRES RESIDENTIAL TREE CLEARING PLAN

It was moved by Mr. Roman and seconded by Mayor Hruby that the Planning Commission recommend to City Council approval as part of the Valor Acres development on PP # 603-21-089 and 603-21-088, located north of Miller Road and west of Brecksville Road, in Brecksville, Ohio the Tree Savings Plan delineated as Drawing #C1.1 Tree Savings Plan by Neff & Associates, dated March 1, 2021 and referenced in the application submitted as part of the agenda of the Public Hearing held on March 11, 2021.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Michael Bandsuh, Mayor Hruby, Eric Lahrmer, Ron Payto,
Kirk Roman, Dominic Sciria
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

The Special Meeting closed at 9:30 p.m.

THE BRECKSVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

KIRK ROMAN, CHAIRPERSON
DOMINIC SCIRIA, VICE CHAIRPERSON
ERIC LAHRMER, SECRETARY

Minutes recorded by Nancy Dimitris

