

\*\*\*\*\*  
**MINUTES OF SYMMES TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 19, 2018**  
 \*\*\*\*\*

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Members of the Commission present were: Ms. Bucco, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Kessler, Jeffrey Reichman, and Mr. Singler.

Also present: Bryan Snyder - Hamilton County Rural Zoning and Kim Lapensee - Township Administrator.

GEORGE FLYNN made a motion to approve the Agenda. GREG KESSLER seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Bucco - 'yes'; Mr. Flynn - 'yes'; Mr. Kessler - 'yes'; Mr. Reichman - 'yes' and Mr. Singler - 'yes'.

MR. FLYNN made a motion to approve the July 18, 2018 minutes. MR. SINGLER seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Bucco - 'yes'; Mr. Flynn - 'yes'; Mr. Kessler - 'yes'; Mr. Reichman - 'abstain' and Mr. Singler - 'yes'.

**FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MODIFICATION:**

CYNTHIA BUCCO called to order the public hearing for **SYMMES 91-2 SYMMES STATION – AT HOME** to consider approval of a modification to the Final Development Plan to allow demolition of the existing entry area on the façade of the building and construct a new entry and rebranding of the façade to allow conversion of the former Sam’s Club into a new At Home Store.

BRYAN SNYDER stated that the applicant has proposed the installation of the At Home branding to resemble the façade of a home, including the installation of awning elements and sconce lights. The applicant has also proposed new signage for the building including on the front of the building, rear of the building near the loading docks, and both sides of the building. Striping is also proposed to be done at parking stalls, cross walks, aisles or islands, as well as signage and bollards for parking stalls.

Mr. Snyder stated that the BCC of Approval for case Symmes 91-2 includes 22 conditions and is applicable to a much larger area than the former Sam’s Club, including a condominium project zoned “DD” Planned Multiple Residence. The following analysis applies only to the 14 conditions for the “EE” Planned Retail district as they relate to this proposed plan to convert the former Sam’s Club to an At Home Store. Conditions 1 – 4 states that these conditions relates to maximum size of permitted retail uses, limitations on fast food uses, installation of sidewalks, and parking requirements. Findings for these conditions are the existing development was constructed in accordance with these conditions. No changes are being proposed that would impact this compliance.

Mr. Snyder stated that condition 5 states that interior landscaping for the parking lot, with landscaped islands at the end of each parking aisle, shall be submitted as part of the Final Development Plan. Findings for condition 5 states that the existing parking lot for this portion of the “EE” area included in the original approved does not include landscape islands at the ends of the parking aisles. It appears that the Final Development Plan approved by the STZC in 2000 did not include the islands at the end of the rows and the site was constructed in accordance with these approved plans. The applicant is not proposing to modify the existing parking lot. Therefore, due to the limited nature of the requested FDP Modification, staff finds that the plan complies with the previous approval.

Mr. Snyder stated that conditions 5 - 14 related to landscaping along Fields Ertel and Montgomery Roads, stormwater detention, lighting and right-of-way dedication. The findings for condition 5 – 14 states that the applicant is not proposing any changes to the existing landscaping along Fields Ertel Road, which appears to comply with the requirements for a 30-foot buffer, and all other development related issues were handled as part of the original development of the site.

Mr. Snyder advised that the Hamilton Rural Zoning Commission approved Phase III of the Final Development Plan for Sam's Club on February 18, 1993. This Phase was approved with the condition that the wall signage include a maximum 7 feet high letter design and a maximum sign area of 400 square feet. Signage was only approved for the main façade facing Montgomery Road. This FDP approval currently governs permitted building signage on the property because the FDP approved on January 19, 2000 by the Symmes Township Zoning Commission did not address building signage.

Mr. Snyder stated that the existing Symmes Township's Zoning Resolution includes signage standards for "E" and "EE" districts that permit 1.5 square feet of sign area per foot of building façade facing the public street on which the main entrance is located and 0.75 square feet on all other facades having street frontage. The existing building has frontage on Montgomery Road, Fields Ertel Road, and Connecticut Court. Signage would therefore be permitted by the current Zoning Resolution on the northern, southern, and western facades with permitted sizes of 510 square feet on the western façade and 293 square feet on the northern and southern facades.

Mr. Snyder advised that the applicant has proposed five wall signs including two signs on the main western façade and one sign each on the northern, southern, eastern facades. According to the applicant's submitted Finalized Development Plan, all four of the building's facades are visible from a public road. The signage on the front western façade would include a large "At Home" sign approximately 300 square feet (37.5 feet wide, 8 feet high) and a smaller "The Home Décor Superstore" sign approximately 52 square feet (22.3 feet wide by 2.3 feet high). The western façade would therefore include a total of 352 square feet in sign area. The three signs located on the sides and rear of the building would be approximately 118 square feet each (23 feet wide, 5 feet high).

Mr. Snyder stated that the portions of the proposed signage are inconsistent with both the approved FDP for the site and with the Zoning Resolution. The approved FDP allows 400 square feet of signage on the western façade with a maximum letter height of 7 feet. The proposed 352 square feet would be consistent with the size restriction but the proposed 8-foot letter height would not be. Signage was only approved on the western façade as part of the existing FDP, so all three other signs on the three other facades would not comply. The Zoning Resolution is more lenient in that additional signage would be permitted under the base zoning standards. The proposed signage on the northern, southern, and western facades would be permitted only, the proposed sign on the eastern façade, the signage located over the loading dock area of the building, would not be permitted.

Mr. Snyder advised that given the building faces towards the rear of outlots on Montgomery Road, Staff finds that the proposed signage on the northern and southern facades would likely be appropriate. These proposed signs would be located near the driveway entrances off of Fields Ertel Road and Connecticut Court and would be permitted by the current Zoning Resolution. Additionally, the 588 square feet of building signage proposed for the northern, southern, and western facades would be far below the 1,096 square feet permitted by the current Zoning Resolution. However, staff finds no good reason to support allowing a building sign on the eastern façade over the loading dock. This façade does not contain an entrance to the building or to the parking lot. Additionally, though the sign would be very visible to traffic traveling west on Fields Ertel Road, the façade is clearly visible to the condominium buildings located directly across Fields Ertel Road from this façade.

TONY CALLAWAY, Callaway Architecture, 1207 Hampshire Lane, Richardson, Texas stated At Home, formerly Garden Ridge is based in Plano, Texas and has been successfully promoting the brand through new construction and renovations. They started out with about 60 stores six years ago and now they are about 150 plus stores and are continuing to expand across the country. They developed a standard prototype entry house which is very strong proportionately and this is their key from a branding standpoint. The height of the entry house is based on the height of the existing building.

Mr. Callaway stated that the proposed revision to the Exterior by At Home will replace the Sam's Entry and Customer Pick-up/Loading canopy with At Home branding. The balance of the elevation

will be enhanced by awning elements to interrupt the expansive face of the building as well as sconce lights. The side elevations will further delineate the brand and fully rehabilitate the entire exterior of the building.

Mr. Callaway stated that that main thing they are doing with the site is tearing off the canopy section, redoing the front sidewalk which will have a handicap entry. They are moving the main entry to the left to center the retail space. Anytime the entry is moved you need to move the accessible spaces as well and there will restriping of this spaces.

JEFFREY REICHMAN asked if they plan on doing any landscaping or adding to the landscaping on the property.

Mr. Callaway advised that at this point they are not proposing any changes to the site.

Mr. Flynn advised that he would be apt to move forward but with the restriction of a non-illuminated sign.

Mr. Kessler stated that he is concerned of setting precedence for business to ask for additional signage on other facades.

Mr. Reichman stated that he is inclined to approve but without the sign facing towards the condo's.

Mr. Kessler stated that he would also approve the application but without the signage on the east side.

MR. GEORGE FLYNN moved to approve modification to the Final Development Plan for case Symmes #91-2; Symmes Station - At Home Modification, to approve demolition of the existing entry areas on the façade of the building and construct a new entry and rebranding of the façade to allow conversion of the former Sam's Club into a new At Home Store with the following condition.

1. That no building sign shall be permitted on the east elevation.

MR. SINGLER seconded the motion and the roll call was as follows: Ms. Bucco - 'yes'; Mr. Flynn - 'yes'; Mr. Kessler - 'yes'; Mr. Reichman - 'yes' and Mr. Singler - 'yes'.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

None

ADJOURNMENT

MR. FLYNN made motion to adjourn at 7:46 p.m. Mr. Kessler seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Bucco - 'yes'; Mr. Flynn - 'yes'; Mr. Kessler - 'yes' and Mr. Singler - 'yes'.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zoning Secretary