
MINUTES OF SYMMES TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 21, 2018

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

Also present: Bryan Snyder - Hamilton County Rural Zoning and Jana Grant - Zoning Secretary

MR GEORGE FLYNN made a motion to approve the Agenda with the modification of removal of the approval of Minutes from December 20, 2018. MR. GREG KESSLER seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Bucco - ‘aye’; Mr. Flynn - ‘aye’; and Mr. Kessler - ‘aye’.

FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MODIFICATION:

CYNTHIA BUCCO called to order the public hearing for **SYMMES 91-5 J. FONNER – MONTGOMERY CROSSING STORAGE** to consider approval of a modification to the Final Development Plan to allow a self-storage use on the site and realignment of property lines to create separate lots for the proposed storage use, the remainder of the existing building, and one (1) new outlot for future development.

BRYAN SNYDER stated that the rezoning petition for this site from “A” Residence to “EE” Planned Retail was originally approved by the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners as part of case Symmes 4-87 to permit retail development of the site and an entrance drive to a condominium development to the north located in Deerfield Township. The retail site was also partially in Symmes Township and partially in Deerfield Township to the north along Montgomery Road. Prior to construction of the retail development, the majority of the site (excluding the entrance drive to the Arbors of Montgomery) was approved for a Major Revision to the “EE” district as part of case Symmes 91-5’ J. Fonner. This case replaced the Symmes 4-87 case and now governs the site.

Mr. Snyder advised that the development of the site was constructed in four (4) phases between 1993 and 1996 and eventually included three (3) stand-alone retail building, one (1) retail strip center, and a portion of a parking lot for an outlot located in Deerfield Township. The area of the proposed modification encompasses what was approved as part of Phase III of the development, which includes a portion of a vacant big box building located mostly in Deerfield Township, a section of the retail strip center, and a portion of the parking lot along Montgomery Road.

Mr. Snyder stated that the applicant is requesting an Final Development Plan Modification to allow conversation of the Symmes Township portion of the vacant big box store to a mini self-storage use, create a separate lot for the mini-storage building and parking area, create a separate lot for the remaining portion of the strip center and associated parking area, and create a new outlot along Montgomery Road for future development. The applicant states that the big box portion of the main building has been vacant for more than five (5) years and they have received a long term commitment from the mini-storage operator. Of the overall fifty-five thousand five hundred twenty-five (55,525) square feet of the big box storage, a total of eight thousand one hundred two (8,102) square feet is located in Symmes Township. The applicant further states that the mini-storage use was approved by Deerfield Township for the majority of the vacant big box store. Finally, the applicant states that no changes would occur to the exterior of any of the buildings or to the parking areas and that any future plans for the new outlot would be submitted to the Zoning Commission for FDP approval.

Mr. Snyder stated that the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners placed twelve (12) conditions on the zone amendment. These conditions related to traffic and county engineer/ODOT approval, signage, landscaping, lighting, and parking requirements.

Mr. Snyder advised that the proposed modification would include no changes to the approved and existing traffic patterns, driveways, signage, landscaping, or parking lot lighting. In addition, the three (3) proposed lots include parking calculation that meet the zoning resolution for the portion of the property located in Symmes Township. Therefore, the proposed modification would comply with all twelve (12) conditions.

Mr. Snyder stated that there are two (2) portions of this request. One portion deals with the creation of separate lots for the individual buildings and the second deals with permitting the conversion of the Symmes Township portion of the big box store to a mini-storage use. In reviewing the first portion to allow the creation of separate lots, staff finds that there would be no zoning issues created by the request. The site is part of an overall Planned Unit Development that governs the use and development of the site. Internal lot lines within a PUD are not considered for setbacks or minimum lot size provided that the parcels are approved as part of an FDP. Since the applicant has submitted this request for FDP approval, there are no issues with the creation of the lots. Additionally, the future development outlot would be required to submit and receive FDP approval prior to construction of any additional commercial building. The development of this outlot would be governed by available parking and no use could be constructed on the lot that does not meet the parking requirements. Further, the conditions of Resolution #882 related to driveways, landscaping, lighting and parking would remain in effect and would apply to any future development of the outlot. Therefore, staff finds that the proposed lot creation portion of the request would be appropriate.

Mr. Snyder stated that the second portion of the request to permit the conversion of the Symmes Township portion of the retail big box store to mini-storage use, the analysis is more complex. For the Deerfield Township portion of the building, mini-storage uses were not a permitted use on the property and the setback and screening requirements could not be met by the existing development. The applicant applied to the Deerfield Township Board of Zoning Appeals in late 2017 for both a use variance to allow the mini-storage use and dimensional variances to modify the setback and screening requirements to fit the existing development. The Deerfield Township BZA held a hearing on December 14, 2017 and approved the request as submitted. Therefore, a use variance was granted to allow mini-storage use for the forty-seven thousand four hundred twenty-three (47,423) square-foot portion of the fifty-five thousand five hundred twenty-five (55,525) square-foot big box building located in Deerfield Township. However, mini-storage uses are permitted by the Symmes Township Zoning Resolution as a conditional use in the "E" Residence district. Any use permissible in the "E" district is also permissible in the "EE" district as long as it is approved as part of the FDP. Therefore, the use is not an issue with the Symmes Township portion of the request and no use variance would be required.

Mr. Snyder stated that the Symmes Township Zoning Resolution includes five (5) specific standards for mini-storage facilities in retail districts. The first standard requires a minimum building setback of fifty (50) feet and parking setback of twenty-five (25) feet from any adjacent residential property line. No portion of the existing building or parking area located in Symmes Township is located closer than fifty (50) feet to the adjacent residential property line to the northwest. The second standard requires direct access to a collector or arterial street. The property has existing connections to Montgomery Road and Fields Ertel Road, which are both considered arterial streets. The third standard requires landscaping buffers. The current site was required to provide buffers by the original zone amendment approval and these buffers would not be modified. The fourth standard limits the site to one (1) thirty-two (32) square-foot sign. The freestanding signage on the site is governed by conditions of the original zone amendment approval and this standard would be superseded by the overall signage requirements of this original approval. Finally, the fifth standard requires security measures to be submitted with the application. As there would be no outdoor storage areas as part of this request, all storage areas would be secured within the building. Additionally, the proposed mini-storage facility would be consistent with the spirit and intent of the zoning resolution to provide limited industrial use opportunities in commercial districts, would not have an adverse effect on the adjacent properties based on the limited impact of the interior storage design, would not impact any features of significant interest and would be consistent with the goals of the adopted Symmes Township Land Use Plan to provide community and regional oriented business uses in this portion of the

township. Therefore, given the above findings, staff finds that the proposed mini-storage use would be consistent with the requirements of the Symmes Township Zoning Resolution.

ADAM ELLSWORTH, 1340 Duncan Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45208 Hickory Capital Group stated he is with the company that is looking into buying the current building and turning it into self-storage. The project that they are proposing will be a high quality suburban in-fill storage re-development project. As the retail model has changed, so has the viability of large, big-box retail buildings. Modern self-storage is a good fit to repurpose big-box buildings as many of them are usually well located and close to renters and residents. The property will be a Class A facility featuring approximately seven hundred (700) units that are all internal and ranging in size from 5'x5' to 10'x20'. The final project will include an on-site management office, two (2) elevators, 100% climate controlled units, a covered internal loading/unloading zone and parking.

Mr. Flynn asked Mr. Ellsworth will people be coming in the front door to investigate renting from them and if so would they be parking in the front.

Mr. Ellsworth stated that yes, the rental office is up front so when people come to rent the units they will first park out front but almost all of their activity is going to be exclusively on the side of the building on the north side.

ADAM CASTO, 8280 Montgomery Road, Cincinnati, OH 45236 stated that they are the owners of the property and have been in business for over ninety (90) years. The commercial retail landscaping is changing and last year over eight thousand (8,000) stores announced that they would be closing. The retail boxes are going to come available and they are going to need to be re-leased or repurposed in some format. Their goal is to take the Old Hobby Lobby building of about fifty-two thousand five hundred (52, 500) sq. ft. as well as the old Tuesday Morning site and create that to self-storage.

Mr. Kessler stated that he is in favor of it.

Mr. Flynn stated that he is in favor of it but wanted to add a condition to it.

Ms. Bucco asked Mr. Flynn if he would share his condition.

Mr. Flynn stated that Deerfield Township restricted outside storage and they should do the same. He does not want to see any long term vehicle storage where someone might put a car cover over a vehicle and let it sit there for weeks.

MR. GEORGE FLYNN moved to approve modification to the Final Development Plan for case Symmes #91-5; J. Fonner – Montgomery Crossing Storage, to allow a self-storage use on the site and realignment of the property lines to create separate lots for the proposed storage use, the remainder of the existing building, and one (1) new outlot for future development with the following condition.

1. No outside storage of any kind including no long term vehicle storage.

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

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

MR. FLYNN made motion to adjourn at 7:28 p.m. Mr. Kessler seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Bucco - 'yes'; Mr. Flynn - 'yes'; and Mr. Kessler - 'yes'.

Approved:

Chairperson

Zoning Secretary