

2011 Solon Master Plan Citizen's Committee
May 12, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

The City of Solon Master Plan Citizen's Committee met at City Hall on the above date.

Present: Citizen Members Eileen Siebert, Cindy Bomeli, Regina Olbinsky, Marilyn Matia, Bob Neides, Gene Kotmel, Richard Perry and; Planning Director Rob Frankland, Planner Linda Crombie and Secretary Cheryl Shackelford

Absent: Citizen Members Teresa Lichtcsien, David Gordon, and Greg Rosenberg

Also present: Bill Mazur (Planning Commission member) and Garrett Altman, Student Intern

Mr. Frankland introduced Garrett Altman, recent graduate of Solon High School, who is serving a two-week internship with the City of Solon. Mr. Frankland announced that the next meeting is Wednesday, May 18.

(Secretary's note: The May 18 meeting was later cancelled due to a lack of availability of the committee members and rescheduled to Thursday, May 26.)

Mr. Frankland complimented the committee members on their progress thus far in beginning to identify goal statements by working through the "SWOT" exercise. He gave the members a copy of the draft portion of the meeting minutes from the last Master Plan Committee meeting, which lists the statements the committee members made concerning the City's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Mr. Frankland said he hopes the committee can finish the "SWOT" analysis tonight. Once the 2011 SWOT analysis is completed, the committee can begin prioritizing their goal statements.

Mr. Frankland explained that the goal formulating process will take time to complete, and he anticipates the Master Plan Citizen's committee will be meeting periodically over the summer. He advised the committee members that he is also the facilitator for the Ward Redistricting Committee and their first meeting will be on June 2. He explained that the Ward Redistricting Committee is bound to a time sensitive completion deadline date, so that committee will likely be a priority through June.

Referral:

Mr. Frankland explained that the City has received a letter from John Wheeler, legal counsel, representing J. Lally Homes concerning a request to rezone a parcel of property located on Miles Road. Mr. Frankland said the

general location of the property is at the extreme northwest region of the city, which is nearby the Brainard & Miles Road intersection. As indicated on the zoning map that the Commercial properties are in blue, such as Miles Farmer's Market and the Shoppes of Solon North. Mr. Frankland explained that the Lally property is divided into two zoning classifications, the front portion of the property is zoned commercial and the remaining balance of the property is zoned residential; R-1-D Single-family minimum lot size one acre. Per the letter, they are asking that the rear portion of the property be rezoned to commercial.

In reply to Mrs. Matia's question, Mr. Frankland said there are residential subdivisions located behind this property to the south.

Mr. Frankland recalls there have been other proposals in the past; noting one interest was for Senior Housing.

Mr. Frankland advised the committee that there are other types of zoning classifications. He reviewed some of the other possibilities are Single-family R-1-A/minimum lot size 16,000 s.f., R-1-C minimum lot size of 24,000 s.f., R-2 Two family, R-3 Senior housing, or office/commercial. He also noted that the zoning classification of the property could remain the same.

Mr. Frankland noted that the former Master Plan Committee did not support the expansion of commercial zoned properties except in otherwise achieving specific goals of the Master Plan.

Mr. Frankland said whatever the committee's recommendation is; he suggested that they include their reasoning used to support their recommendation.

Mrs. Bomeli commented that the Kertesz development, the Shoppes of Solon North, located at the corner of Brainard and Miles is basically empty, having a lot of vacancies. Mrs. Bomeli recalls being told that the shopping center will be beautiful once all the buildings are built, and to date there are rock piles and orange snow fencing at the future building sites.

Mr. Kotmel asked what the zoning classification is for the apartment property located behind the Giant Eagle store at the Solar Center, and Mr. Frankland responded by saying that property is zoned R-3, Senior Housing.

Mr. Frankland said he understood if the committee wanted more time to think about this before making a recommendation.

Mrs. Matia asked if there is a fence separating the property in two, and Mr. Frankland replied by saying there is no fence on the property in question. Mr. Frankland said there is a fence separating the commercial from the residential properties along the Shoppes of Solon North development site.

Mr. Frankland explained that Solon's ordinances require some type of buffering when commercial property is developed when it abuts residential properties.

Mr. Frankland pointed out on the land use map the lot owned by Mr. Lally in relationship to the other properties located to the east having similar circumstances as the Mr. Lally's property; whereas from a planning perspective, Mr. Frankland explained that any rezoning should also include these other properties at the same setback depth.

Mrs. Bomeli reiterated that not even half of the storefronts are occupied for the buildings that already have been constructed at the Shoppes of Solon North development site. The areas where the other buildings are to be constructed at the development have been left abandoned for years now with just piles of rocks with snow fencing up.

Mr. Perry arrived at 7:35 p.m.

Mrs. Bomeli recommends the property remain single-family.

Mr. Kotmel suggested more information be provided by the owners about their plans for property before making a recommendation.

Mrs. Olbinsky questioned if there is any past precedent to refer back to regarding any similar situation.

Mr. Frankland explained that any recommendation made by this committee would be forwarded back to the Planning Commission, which in turn will make their recommendation to City Council and ultimately any rezoning will need to go before the voters.

Mr. Frankland said speaking from a planning standpoint, the property owner's request to rezone the property is not necessarily an unreasonable one; noting he could make good argue points for both sides in this matter.

Based upon the election results over the past couple of years, Mrs. Matia feels any rezoning change would be hard to get approved by the voters.

Mr. Neides said he would like to visit the site before making any type of zoning recommendation.

The committee members decided to take more time and visit the site before making a recommendation.

Review of 2011 SWOT Analysis:

Mr. Frankland passed out a copy of the SWOT analysis outline taken from the draft meeting minutes from the last committee meeting of April 21. The

committee members were also given a copy of the Strengths and Weaknesses as identified in the survey results taken from the 2001 Community Attitudes Survey. Based upon the committee's review and findings the 2011 SWOT Analysis was modified as follows:

Strengths:

- Quality of Public Schools
- Variety of Quality Housing
- Population diversity
- Economic Strength and Diversity leads to Solid Industrial Tax Base
- Access to highways
- Quality of Municipal Services (i.e. EMS, Safety, Services)
- Good Responsive Civic Leadership
- Good recreation facilities
- Family oriented community
- Proximity to Metro Parks
- Increasing stability of residential population
- Safe Community
- Engaged Citizens
- Well-planned Industrial Areas
- Easy Access to Healthcare Facilities
- Non-Polluting Industries
- Good Community Spirit

Weakness:

- Traffic Congestion
- Lack of large medical facilities
- Lack of quality retail/restaurants
- Poor building infrastructure (*shopping plazas, etc.*)
- Under developed Center of Town
- Lack of sidewalks (*industrial & residential*)
- Poor aesthetics of streetscaping in retail areas
- Not pedestrian friendly (*especially in retail areas*)
- Insufficient inventory of soccer and baseball fields, etc.
- Poorly designed existing road infrastructure
- Aging commercial & industrial building stock
- Poor directional signage to important community destinations
- Outdated codified ordinances
- Complex ownership relationships of existing shopping centers
- Unregulated residential rental properties
- Lack of housing opportunities for empty nesters
- Lack of attractions and housing for young professionals (*nightlife*)
- Lack of pedestrian infrastructure & attractions
- Lack of connection between Old South Miles & Bainbridge Road
- Lack of Cemeteries

Opportunities: (Bold text added per comments made at the 5/12/11 meeting)

- Access to services in other communities
- Ability to rework **community** park layout
- Following Master Plan
- Connector road--**road parallel to SOM Center Road to 422 to lessen traffic on SOM Center Road**
- Additional 422 exit(s), **where possible; possibly adding an exit at Old South Miles and Chagrin River Road**
- Encourage & promote citizen participation (*i.e. electronic message board, Social media, newsletter (paper or online), Residents emails for alerts, etc.*)
- Increasing recycling programs
- Pursue green energy sources
- Expand access to existing parks; **such as Timberlake Park**
- Make city more bicycle & pedestrian friendly
- Greater regional cooperation
- Transition from development related focus to property maintenance focus
- **Redevelop Arthur Road School swimming pool**
- **Station Street—alternative connection between SOM Center & Solon Road**

Threats: (Threats were not discussed at this meeting, but they were added for record keeping purposes)

- Availability of State Funding for schools
- Development in adjacent communities
- Development of Regional impact (commercial projects)
- Residential development impact on Solon Schools
- Increasing traffic volumes from internal & external sources (Corbett's farm)
- Increasing crime
- Decreasing residential property values
- Diminishing capacity for waste removal

The meeting ended at 8:45 p.m.