



# Butler County Planning Commission

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Government Services Center, Conference Room #1  
315 High Street, Hamilton, Ohio

## Meeting Minutes

**MEETING:** Tuesday, June 8, 2021, 3:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Bruce Jones, *Chair*  
Bernard “Buck” Rumpke, *Vice-Chair*  
Beth Surber  
Lonnie Lewis  
Amy Updike

**Absent:** Dave Baker  
Kevin Cooney

**Staff Present:** Peter Z. Acuff, Dept. of Development  
Marcia Rosado, Administrative Secretary

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Mr. Jones called meeting to order with roll call at 3:04 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the May 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Ms. Surber seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

**AYES:** Jones, Surber, Lewis, Updike, Rumpke

**NAYES:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

Mr. Jones explained the meeting process.

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### **ZONE CHANGES**

LTZ 21-07, Freedom Pointe, O-1/O-2 to MU-PUD

*Liberty Township*

Mr. Acuff described this as a request for a zone change from office districts to mixed use planned unit development. The parcel is at 8000 Liberty Way on the NE corner

of Liberty Way and Cox Road in Liberty Township. He stated that the 2020 township land use plan calls for the entire parcel to be regional mixed use. The proposed use of the property is for regional mixed use with commercial properties and high density residential apartments and townhomes, office space, commercial spaces, hotel and a big box Costco store.

Mr. Acuff reviewed staff comments with the board and recommends conditional approval subject to those comments.

***Applicant:***

Dan Wheeler for Henjur LLC  
7368 Princeton Road  
Liberty Township, OH 45044

Mr. Wheeler made a presentation to the board stating that they have come up with a \$150 million plan for mixed use with two anchor tenants, Hills Development and Costco. He stated that they approached the township and asked what they were looking for and they requested an urban style residential portion and Michael Copfer will speak about that. He further stated that they spoke with the neighbors and HOA and will probably have some negative feedback. Mr. Wheeler stated that Jose Castrejon will speak about the overall design and Steve Cross will speak about Costco, he said any questions should be directed to them. Mr. Wheeler stated that he thinks they have come up with a great plan for this mixed use property and has come to ask for approval of the zone change.

Jose Castrejon, planner with McGill, Smith, Punshon  
3700 Park 42 Drive  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Mr. Castrejon stated that there are three main areas, the Costco store, the Hills Community and the connector road Veterans Blvd. He stated that their plan tries to preserve the natural area as much as possible and minimize stream crossings. Mr. Castrejon stated that the township requested this property act as a center of commerce to promote economic development. He stated that with the anchors they have he think they can do that. Mr. Castrejon stated that while in the preliminary planning stages they took into consideration the surrounding area and decided that the Costco store should be away from the residential area before they even met with them. He stated that they sent out letters and met with the neighbors and HOA several times to get their feedback. He stated that the major concerns were the buffer, safety, location of service areas and the height of the buildings. Mr. Castrejon stated that they put 5.6 acres into the buffer in addition to the one already built in. He further stated that they are going to erect a fence the entire length of the property to address the safety concerns as they suggested. He also stated that the restaurants were moved to Cox Road except for one on the roundabout. He stated they were asked to hide service areas better and they have come up with a plan to do so. Mr. Castrejon noted 35' buildings are allowed in the

zoning right up to the 75' buffer but they have taken those buildings away from the residential side.

Mr. Castrejon stated that to comply with the open space requirement they are going to use Veterans Blvd. as a linear park with spokes with seating areas, pocket parks and a bike path that will ultimately connect to VOA Park.

Mr. Castrejon stated that their plan is right at 75% commercial and 25% residential with 41% useable open space.

Mr. Castrejon stated that they will comply with recommendations and answer all of the comments presented.

*Questions:*

Ms. Surber asked if any of the grocery/retail/restaurants have committed yet. Mr. Castrejon stated that they only have Costco and Hills and a potential doctor's office thus far.

Mr. Rumpke asked if Hills Property is on board already or will the residential area shrink. Mr. Castrejon stated that they would have to go through the process again to change the residential part but they have committed 22 acres to residential.

Mr. Jones asked if there were any objections with the staff recommendations. Mr. Castrejon stated that they know they must address them and comply but was confused on item 16, he did not think there was a lake/pond on the property.

Steven Cross, for Costco  
Cross Engineering  
1955 Raymond Drive  
Northbrook, IL

Mr. Cross stated that he is the engineer for the Costco project. He stated they are looking to get a positive recommendation for the Costco portion of the development. Costco is looking to purchase approximately 23 acres. He stated that Costco is a members-only warehouse store that will have a free standing members-only gas station and a tire center. He stated that Costco would like to be open by end of 2022. Mr. Cross stated that it is a unique space having frontage on three public roads but has excellent access with the two roundabouts and the right in right out from Cox Road. He stated that it is 160,000 sf with 4 receiving docks and only one entrance. He stated that there will be 786 parking spaces and code would require a minimum of 630 spaces. Mr. Cross stated that there will be pedestrian access from Cox Road. Mr. Cross stated that the service area is farthest from the residential area and that Costco typically goes above the code for landscape requirements. Mr. Cross stated that they would like to be allowed to have 10 light poles along the inner roadway at a height of 32'. Mr. Cross stated that since they have frontage on three public roads the building would have design elements on all sides.

***Questions:***

Ms. Updike asked if the fuel station has a pull off for tankers to unload or will they go into the station and turn around. Mr. Cross stated that it is a pull off. Ms. Updike asked if there was a containment pad for spills. Mr. Cross stated that there is not but they will have triple catch basins so it is designed to comply.

Mr. Jones asked if there would be foliage on the south side of the building. Mr. Cross stated that they would keep the existing trees and that all sides will be buffered with landscape.

Michael Copfer, Hills Properties  
4901 Hunt Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242

Mr. Copfer presented to the board the multi-family property proposed for this area. Mr. Copfer stated they have another property similar to this in West Chester that is highly successful and highly occupied. He stated that Hills Properties is different as they would build, own and manage the property. He stated that they are excited about this area as VOA Park should make this a successful residential area with urban mixed use properties. He says the proposed is for the “renters by choice” market who are typically millennials and empty nesters. He stated the properties are 100-200’ larger than most and have high occupancy rates. Mr. Copfer stated that he believes it makes sense to have more of an urban feel as it is on the highway not in the suburban area. He also stated that there is not enough of this type of housing and it is in high demand. He says the residents will pay a premium to have the resort style living this provides. Mr. Copfer stated that they are aware of the surrounding business and two-story residences and they would build townhomes closest to the residences in Four Bridges to be sensitive to the neighbors with a 23’ height versus the 35’ that zoning allows. He also stated that they will be 100% brick and stone with all sides finished. Mr. Copfer stated that the total density is 18.8 that is much lower than their other mixed use properties.

***Questions:***

Mr. Rumpke asked how much parking per unit. Mr. Copfer stated there would be 1.9 spaces per unit.

***Testimony in favor:*** None

***Testimony in opposition:***

Chris Jones  
7062 Larkspur Lane  
Liberty Township, Ohio 45044

Mr. Jones stated that he has spoken to approximately 25 of his neighbors and he and they feel that what is proposed would be “over-developed”. He stated he bought his \$500,000 house seven years ago and was assured that they had a plan that listed specific things that could be in the area. Those included medical and light office manufacturing space being used during work hours only. He stated that if this is allowed it is going to be a lot of traffic congestion, noise and light pollution and possible water shed problems for the residents of Four Bridges. He stated that they

are concerned also with the security of their high value properties. Mr. Jones asked that the board not approve this.

***Questions:***

Mr. Lewis asked Mr. Jones if he feels this will increase or decrease the value of his property. Mr. Jones stated that it would not help the value or lower the taxes on his property.

Todd Strausser  
6804 Oleander Court  
Liberty Township, Ohio 45044

Mr. Strausser stated he is a retired naval commander in intelligence and that his background is in security. He stated that when he saw how close the parking was to the buffer it was a red flag. Mr. Strausser stated it would only take a minute and a half for someone to go over the buffer and fence into their property from the parking lots and do a smash and grab and exit to I-75. He stated he feels that it would be a magnet for criminal activity.

Lisa Gardner  
6923 Oleander Court  
Liberty Township, Ohio 45044

Ms. Gardner stated her property abuts where the proposed townhomes will be. She further stated they purchased their home in 2016 under the same pretense, that they did research and looked at the overlay and thought they were protected. Ms. Gardner stated that the developers like to mention all the ways they are exceeding the current overlay but they fail to mention all of the ways they are asking for variances. She stated that buildings are too tall, she says that retail, grocery, restaurants are not allowed and the density of 18.8 exceeds the current vision of 12. Ms. Gardner stated that there are a lot of concerns with this mixed use PUD.

Matthew Brooks  
8115 Cherry Laurel Drive  
Liberty Township, Ohio 45044

Mr. Brooks stated that he is concerned about the security egress into the community and site lines. He indicated that at least one building does not meet the standard. Mr. Brooks also stated he feels the grocery should stay on the Cox Road side. Mr. Brooks stated that he appreciated the developers working with the community.

Debbie McGraw  
6804 Oleander Court  
Liberty Township, Ohio 45044

Ms. McGraw stated that she moved there 22 years ago and the property was supposed to be medical offices. She stated that she wants the board to know she agrees with the previous neighbors and feels the same way.

*Neutral testimony:*

Suzanne Bruce  
4985 Snow Valley Lane  
Liberty Township, Ohio 45044

Ms. Bruce stated she is speaking as a neutral party as many in the area are excited about the development and the Costco coming to the area but they do have some concerns about the overall density and how it might affect the traffic in the area. She further stated that she hopes this is developed responsibly.

*Board Discussion:*

Ms. Surber stated that she did not know how security concerns would be any different with any other development. She further stated that while she empathizes with the property owners the township land use changed in 2020 and this board makes decisions based on that fact.

Mr. Rumpke stated that there has been three attempts at development and the land use has changed. He stated the height violation would be decided by Liberty Township, this board follows Butler County directives.

Mr. Jones stated that it seems like there was significant interaction between the applicant and neighbors and that he hopes it continues. He further stated that the security threat would be the same with a field behind your home and no lights than with a lighted parking light. He feels that the developer making a 75' buffer is impressive and the housing developer has a good reputation. Mr. Jones stated that problems with the land use overlay would be decided with the township.

Mr. Rumpke made a motion to recommend conditional approval of LTZ 21-07, Freedom Pointe, O-1/O-2 to MU-PUD subject to staff comments. Seconded by Ms. Surber. Motion carried 4-1.

**AYES:** Rumpke, Surber, Updike, Jones

**NAYES:** Lewis

**ABSTAIN:** None

**RESOLUTION#:** 21.33

WCTZ 21-04, Robert Ackerman, A-1 to R1-A  
*West Chester Township*

Mr. Acuff described this as three parcels on Cincinnati-Dayton Road that they would like to rezone to match surrounding suburban single family zoning.

Mr. Acuff reviewed staff comments with the board and recommends approval subject to those comments.

*Questions:*

Mr. Rumpke asked if it was becoming one lot. Mr. Acuff stated that it would be two lots. Mr. Rumpke asked if there was current septic. Mr. Acuff stated there is an existing house on the property.

*No applicant present*

*Testimony in favor:* None

*Testimony in opposition:* None

*Neutral testimony:* None

Mr. Lewis made a motion to recommend approval subject to staff comments **WCTZ 21-04, Robert Ackerman, A-1 to R-1A** subject to staff comments. Seconded by Ms. Updike. Motion carried 5-0

**AYES:** Lewis, Updike, Rumpke, Surber, Jones

**NAYES:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**RESOLUTION#:** **21.34**

**WCTZ 21-05, Southview, R-1A to R-PUD**  
*West Chester Township*

Mr. Acuff described this as farm property on McCauley Road between West Chester Road and Dimmick Road that the applicant would like to develop into suburban single family homes in three phases. He stated it is the same developer as Westview Meadows to the north.

Mr. Acuff reviewed staff comments with the board and recommends approval subject to those comments.

Mr. Brad Austing, M/I Homes  
9349 Waterstone Blvd  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Mr. Austing stated that this would be the same as Westview and it was very well received. Mr. Austing stated that the family would like to preserve the history so they asked that it be known as Honerlaw Farms to honor the heritage. He stated that they paid special attention on Stone Drive and left open space to the two homeowners that are next to the site.

*Questions:*

Mr. Rumpke asked what the standard lot size. Mr. Austing stated that they are 65' x 140' and the same as Westview and very popular.

*Testimony in favor:* None

*Testimony in opposition:* None

*Neutral testimony:* None

Mr. Rumpke made a motion to recommend approval subject to staff comments WCTZ 21-05, Southview, R-1A to R-PUD subject to staff comments. Seconded by Mr. Lewis. Motion carried 5-0

**AYES:** Rumpke, Lewis, Updike, Surber, Jones

**NAYES:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**RESOLUTION#:** 21.35

FTZ 21-02, Timber Trails, A-1 to R-PUD  
*Fairfield Township*

Mr. Acuff described this as is currently zoned A-1 on Liberty Fairfield Road that is on a relatively old land use plan calls for planned business and a number of the properties surrounding have developed residential in the last 10 years.

Mr. Acuff reviewed staff comments with the board and recommends approval subject to those comments.

Mr. Brad Austing, M/I Homes  
9349 Waterstone Blvd  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Mr. Austing stated that he thinks the board is familiar with M/I Homes and if that is good enough he would answer any questions.

*Questions:*

Mr. Rumpke asked what the lot size is. Mr. Austing stated the smallest lot is 62' x 135'

*Testimony in favor:* None

*Testimony in opposition:* None

*Neutral testimony:* None

Mr. Rumpke made a motion to recommend approval subject to staff comments FTZ 21-02, Timber Trails, A-1 to R-PUD subject to staff comments. Seconded by Mr. Lewis. Motion carried 5-0.

**AYES:** Rumpke, Lewis, Updike, Surber, Jones

**NAYES:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**RESOLUTION#:** 21.36



FTZ 21-03, Walden Springs, B-2 to R-PUD  
*Fairfield Township*

Mr. Acuff described this as property on SR 4 in between Creekside Drive and Indian Meadows Drive at the end of by-pass SR4. He stated that it is currently zoned B-2 and has been marketed for commercial use for many years with no interest, as most has moved down towards Bridgewater Falls. The applicant proposes 124 duplex lots on the property.

Mr. Acuff reviewed staff comments with the board and recommends approval subject to those comments.

*Questions:*

Mr. Rumpke asked if the duplexes will be sold as individual units. Mr. Acuff stated that each would be on its own lot.

Craig Rassi, Ryan Homes  
8622 Jacquemin Drive  
West Chester, Ohio

Mr. Rassi stated that they are the applicant that wants to purchase the property to build duplexes to sell. He stated that they have had meetings with the neighbors to the north of the property and what came through loud and clear is that they want ownership on the property and they do like the plan. He further stated that they will be leaving the vegetation buffer to the north and south of the property and the development will have private streets and all maintenance will be by the HOA. Mr. Rassi stated that the target market is for the first-level buyer. He further stated that they have 42% open space that will be maintained by the HOA. Mr. Rassi stated they have a landscaping plan throughout the community. He stated to address the questions about lots 121 and 122 that there will be a private drive to access and with it being a private drive it does not have to have the frontage. He further stated that there was a request for pedestrian access in between the two cul-de-sacs for but the feedback they got was to not have a connection point there because of safety of people walking behind their homes but have provided sidewalks on both sides of the street. Mr. Rassi stated that they would like to have parking on one side of the street so they would ask that it remain at 25' wide.

*Questions:*

Mr. Rumpke asked who maintains the non-lot area open space. Mr. Rassi stated the HOA would maintain both the lot and non-lot open space.

Mr. Rumpke asked if the HOA would still maintain the roads and keep them private if they are required to make the lanes larger. Mr. Rassi stated that they would still be private roads.

Mr. Rumpke asked if water detention was private or public. Terri Corner from Bayer-Becker stated that the detention for this development was provided in a different phase when the original development came in years ago. She further stated that

regulations have changed since then so they will be providing a water quality basin across Indian Meadows Drive that will be fully maintained by the HOA.

*Testimony in favor:* None

*Testimony in opposition:* None

*Neutral testimony:* None

Mr. Lewis made a motion to recommend approval subject to staff comments FTZ 21-03, Walden Springs, B-2 to R-PUD subject to staff comments. Seconded by Ms. Surber. Motion carried 5-0.

**AYES:** Lewis, Surber, Updike, Rumpke, Jones

**NAYES:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**RESOLUTION#:** 21.37

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## PRELIMINARY PLAT

### Callaway Place

*Section 3, Town 2 Range 3*

*Liberty Township*

Mr. Acuff stated that we saw the zone change last month and the preliminary plat is consistent with that.

Mr. Lewis made a motion to recommend approval of **Callaway Place**, subject to staff comments. Mr. Rumpke seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**AYES:** Lewis, Rumpke, Surber, Updike, Jones

**NAYES:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**RESOLUTION#:** 21.38

Mr. Jones left the meeting and asked for a reschedule later in the week.

## ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lewis made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Updike. Motion carries 4-0. Meeting adjourned 5:30 PM.

**AYES:** Lewis, Updike, Surber, Rumpke

**NAYES:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

Butler County Planning Commission  
June 8, 2021 Meeting – *Continued*

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These minutes represent a summary of these proceedings and do not purport to be the entire record. A complete transcription of these proceedings was taken from an audio tape under supervision of the Secretary and may be obtained upon written request. Any charges associated with preparing such transcript shall be borne by the person requesting.

Hamilton, Ohio  
June 8, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

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Secretary