

Board of Zoning Appeals

Munson Township

Minutes of November 17, 2016

Chair Dennis Pilawa called the meeting to order at 6:30pm with Gabe Kezdi, Bobbie Nolan, Richard Wright, Danielle Pitcock, Alternates Don Alexander and Jim Herringshaw and Secretary Paula Friebertshouser present. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Mr. Pilawa explained that the Board of Zoning Appeals is a quasi-judicial Board which acts in the role of judges. They take facts as presented and apply certain standards of law to then make a decision. A court reporter is present so that anyone wishing to speak for or against the case must be sworn in for the record. The record is made up of testimony and evidence presented. If a case goes to court, decisions are based on what is presented the evening of the hearing. Anyone not in agreement with the decision of the Board could file with the Court of Common Pleas within 30 days after the minutes of the meeting are approved.

Danielle Pitcock moved and Richard Wright seconded to approve the October 20, 2016 minutes as written. Motion carried.

CASE 16-23: Carl Rappaport of SLS Services for University Hospital 13281 Ravenna Rd., Chardon, OH - request to install a 46'4" wide x 5'3" tall monument sign in a residential district. Violates SEC. 1004.9 Prohibited Signs - (in part) No sign shall be placed anywhere in a residential district. SEC. 1003.1 Measurement of Sign Area - (in part) Sign area shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet.

Zoning Inspector Tim Kearns was sworn in. He read the variance request and violations and presented a photograph of the proposed sign location.

Bill Holsman was sworn in. He explained they would be mounting signage on an entrance monument. At the main entrance there is an electronic sign on the opposite corner (Ravenwood). The property with the monument will have a walking path and garden. He showed plans of the park and added they would like to spruce it up by having a retaining wall (monument) with trees behind it. Mr. Wright questioned the height. Steve Moore of S.A.M. Landscaping, and hired by UH, verified it would be 4 feet in height. Todd Duncan, Facility Manager was sworn in. He explained the master plan is to have a 1/4 mile walking path on the far east side; the path would go in front of Geauga Job & Family Services and up to the area in discussion. Dan Ellenberger, Director of Emergency Services explained the walking path is part of their wellness initiative and is open to the public. Mr. Duncan approached the table and showed a diagram. Mrs. Nolan verified they owned the former sheriff's department property. Mr. Duncan pointed out all the properties owned by University Hospital. The path would be completed in phases. When asked what the proposed completion date would be, Mr. Ellenberger responded within the next calendar year.

Mr. Wright questioned the connection of the sign to the paths. Mr. Duncan responded that the design of the sign lets people know they are not walking on an empty vacant lot but instead on hospital

property. Mrs. Nolan commented that she had a problem with large signs; they already approved the large electronic one across the street. Mr. Holsman pointed out the sign with the video board and main entrance is to notify and direct traffic on the road. The monument sign would delineate that it is part of the campus and ties the property back to the main hospital. He felt the hospital was trying to be a more visible part of the community. Mrs. Nolan commented that the community knows the hospital is there. Mr. Holsman felt the general public does not know what is on the other properties. Mr. Pilawa wondered how the sign would tell people. Mr. Holsman said it would be decorative.

Mr. Pilawa stated for the record that 14 affected property owners were notified in Case 16-23. There was no public comment.

Mrs. Nolan explained that as a resident she had a problem with too many signs. Mr. Duncan provided the scenario that if she were a patient and her physical therapy was to walk and she saw the sidewalk when she got to the front and saw the wall it would identify it is part of the hospital. Mr. Ellenberger added that some of their employees do not know it is their property. Mr. Wright asked if it was their main entrance now. Mr. Ellenberger confirmed it is their main entrance on Ravenwood and the emergency entrance is at Hospital Drive. Mrs. Pitcock asked if the sign is actually 43'. Mr. Duncan responded the sign portion is 20' 7 7/8" and just under 3 feet and is their typical sign at their hospital entrances.

Mr. Kezdi questioned if the wall were built without signage would the electronic sign across the street say what they wanted. Mr. Ellenberger responded he did not think so. Mr. Duncan added that he thought if it were blank it would be more confusing. When asked about lighting, Mr. Duncan explained it would have low voltage soft lit LED's.

Mrs. Nolan asked where people park to access the walking path. Mr. Duncan responded in the hospital parking lot to the west. She suggested a smaller scale sign towards the parking lot directing people to the walking park. Mr. Duncan explained the sign's purpose is to define that the property is owned by University Hospital and is part of their campus.

Mr. Ellenberger asked if there was something that would make the Board more comfortable with the sign. Mr. Pilawa commented that he was not speaking for himself but had a sense that the size is a problem and there are too many signs. He thought they were asking for a substantial variance but did not think the sign would affect or alter the neighborhood. No affected property owners were present. Mr. Pilawa explained that in his experience the Board often feels taken advantage of when they grant Heather Hill or a golf course a variance because suddenly they are doing more and more. Historically they have been business and hospital friendly. There was a time when the Board would not allow signs bigger than township signs. Mr. Kezdi mentioned that in addition to the sign there are logos on both ends of the wall. Mr. Ellenberger commented they could take the logos off the ends and downsize the sign lettering. Mr. Duncan commented that the stone mimics that used at the Geauga Parks. Mr. Pilawa asked what the scale would be. Mr. Holsman explained they would pull the two end logos and reduce the height down of the center logo keeping the copy where it is. Mr. Ellenberger added the logo would not exceed the top of the sign. Mr. Pilawa explained the request would be amended with the proposed changes of the two end logos removed and the text reduced to be less than 20' wide and the center logo not to exceed the top of the monument.

