

OXFORD PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes – June 3, 2014

MEMBERS: Mike Ready, Chair; Jonathan Eady, Vice-Chair; Shawn Gaither, Secretary, Penny England and Ron Manson. Vivian Harris was absent.

STAFF: Bob Schwartz, city manager and zoning administrator.

GUESTS: Jim Patrick, former chair of the Planning Commission. Marguerite Abd El-Shahid, Jen Fabrick, James Johnson, and Kendra Mayfield with Oxford College and Emory University. Also Tyson Curcio with EYP Architecture and Engineering of Boston, MA joined on the speaker phone.

OPENING: Mr. Ready called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Upon motion of Mr. Manson, seconded by Mr. Eady, the minutes for the meeting of May 13, 2014 were approved.

Minutes and applications: Mr. Eady brought up the question of how the minutes were being filed along with the applications. Mr. Schwartz noted that both the minutes and a copy of the applications were filed with the city clerk. Mr. Eady suggested that the applications be attached to the minutes for the meeting during which they were discussed. Mr. Schwartz reported the applications were maintained within the same electronic folder that is, one folder per meeting date. However, he would meet with the city clerk to see if there was a better way of filing the information. Usually, the Planning Commission only has one or two applications per meeting. The May meeting was an exception with so many applications.

Oxford College (pre-application for Science Building) – Oxford College has submitted a DRAFT of the Application for Development Permit Approval for the new 57,720 square foot Science Building. Marguerite Abd El-Shahid introduced the representatives from Oxford College and Emory University, along with Mr. Tyson Curcio with EYP Architecture and Engineering of Boston. Mr. Curcio joined the meeting on the speakerphone. Jen Fabrick, Emory University Architect, presented a brief history of the development of the program and plans for the science building. Emory University is a research institution and Oxford College needs a place for pre-nursing and pre-medical students to begin their scientific training. The building also includes research space. The teaching laboratories are larger spaces than most classrooms and have higher ceilings to suit the purpose of the laboratory. The building has been scaled to fit within the campus. The original plans were modified to give the fire department additional access to fire lanes in front and on the side of the building. The building includes fire doors which close automatically in the case of a fire alarm.

Jim Patrick, former chair of the Planning Commission, was invited by the Planning Commission to review the plans because of his expertise in civil engineering. Mr. Patrick asked about the

plans for the construction access road. James Johnson noted that the long-term plan is to turn it into a service road. However, there are some storm drainage changes that need to be made before that happens. Mr. Patrick discussed the erosion control that was planned during construction. James Johnson referred to the sediment traps that will be filled in after the construction is done. There was a discussion about the nature of the chemicals which might be poured down the sinks in the labs. Jen Fabrick and Tyson Curcio noted that hazardous chemicals will be stored in the lab and disposed in a separate facility and not the sinks.

The plans are to have the building completed by October, 2015. James Johnson discussed the grass pavers which were being used to provide a wider hard surface for the fire lanes. Marguerite Abd El-Shahid reported that the building currently qualifies for an LEED Silver certification, but the final results will not be known until the building is completed.

The height of the building was discussed. Height is limited to 45 feet in the IC zone. Jen Fabrick reported that using the methodology in the zoning ordinance, the height of the building is approximately 55 feet. Therefore, she presented the Planning Commission with a variance request of 10 feet. Mr. Eady noted that he remembered the reason for the 45 foot height restriction was a limitation on the height of the ladder truck owned by the fire department. Back then, Oxford was served by volunteer fire department. Now, Oxford is served by the Newton County Fire Department. Marguerite Abd El-Shahid stated that the college had reviewed the building with the Newton County Fire Department and that the Fire Department had no objection to the height. She did not have this in writing with her, but promised to forward it to Mr. Schwartz the next day along with the contact information for the fire marshal.

Upon motion of Mr. Eady, seconded by Mr. Manson, the Planning Commission recommends to City Council that the 10 foot variance in height be approved subject to confirmation from the Newton County fire marshal that the fire marshal has approved serving this building. All members voted in favor.

Oxford College (Moore Street sidewalk) – This application was first discussed during the May 13, 2014 meeting of the Planning Commission. At that time the Planning Commission asked James Johnson to make some revisions to the plans and return to the Planning Commission. Mr. Johnson presented a revised plan to construct a sidewalk along the north side of Moore Street from Haygood to the parking lot at Williams gymnasium. Mr. Johnson’s plan included a sidewalk along the north side of Moore Street, along with curb and gutter along a portion of the north side. Mr. Eady questioned if it would be possible to include curb and gutter along the entire section where the sidewalk is being installed and the possibility of including curb and gutter on the south side of the street.

There was more discussion, including Mr. Manson, Ms. England, and Ms. Gaither involving the safety of Moore Street and whether or not it needed to be widened. It was felt that curb and gutter on the south side would help demarcate the boundary between the road and the athletic field. Sometimes, cars swerve onto a portion of the athletic field to avoid oncoming traffic.

Upon motion of Mr. Manson, seconded by Mr. Eady, a development permit was approved for the portion of the sidewalk on Moore Street which is on college property and the Planning Commission recommends to City Council that it approve the portion of the sidewalk on the right-of-way. The Planning Commission attached a caveat to this motion that City Council should evaluate the possibility of including curb and gutters along the entire section on the north side of Moore Street where the sidewalk is being installed and the possibility of curb and gutters along the south side of Moore Street, along with additional speed controls (speed bumps) on the street. All members voted in favor.

City master plan: Mr. Ready noted that Mayor Roseberry has asked the Planning Commission to appoint a member to a city master plan committee. The purpose of this committee is to review all of the plans which have been prepared in the previous years and come up with a plan of action. There was considerable discussion among the members of the Planning Commission about the utility of such a committee. The Planning Commission determined that Mr. Ready should be its representative on the master plan committee. Mr. Ready stated that he would serve but that all members of the Planning Commission would be notified about meeting times in case they wanted to attend any of the meetings.

July 4th parade: Mr. Ready reminded the members of the upcoming July 4th parade and recommended they try to attend or participate in some way.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Ready adjourned the meeting at 9:10 PM.

Submitted by:

Shawn Gaither, Secretary