

Minutes of the City of Vandalia Planning Commission
February 14, 2023

Members Present:	Mr. Ron Atkins, Mr. Kevin Keeley, Ms. Kristin Cox, Mr. Dave Arnold, Ms. Claudia Turrell
Members Absent:	None
Staff Present:	Amber Holloway, Asst. City Manager Michael Hammes, City Planner
Others Present:	Patrick Valerius, Ken White, Clayton Schrey

Call to Order

Mr. Atkins called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Attendance

Mr. Atkins noted that all members were present.

Approval of Minutes of the Planning Commission

Mr. Keeley made motion to approve the December 13, 2022 minutes. Ms. Turrell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Swearing in of Attendees Wishing to Speak at Meeting

The attendees were sworn in.

Old Business

Mr. Atkins noted that there was no Old Business on the agenda.

New Business

PC 23-01 – Site Plan Review – 6415 Miller Lane – Aldi, Inc.

Mr. Atkins introduced the item and asked for Mr. Hammes to proceed with his report.

Mr. Hammes presented the application to the Commission. Aldi, Inc, the applicant, had requested Site Plan Approval for a proposed 20,664 square foot retail establishment, to be operated as a grocery store. The property is located south of Culver's, on Miller Lane. Mr. Hammes noted that the property is in the Gateway Business district and the Miller Benchwood Overlay.

Mr. Hammes described the property and its surroundings, noting the presence of Culver's to the north, a church to the west, two restaurants and a vacant property to the east, and a vacant property to the south.

Mr. Hammes described the proposed site plan. In describing the required parking, Mr. Hammes noted that a portion of the parking at the north end of the site was shared with Culver's. Further, Mr. Hammes indicated that the front yard parking would require additional landscaping islands, which the applicant had provided.

Mr. Hammes noted that the proposed structure had a truck dock on the south end of the property. While it is located on the side of the building, it faces toward the roadway and the front of the site. Mr. Hammes observed that the screening alongside the dock and the fact that it is recessed below grade satisfies the screening requirements of the code.

Mr. Hammes described the provisions for access to and from the site. He noted that there is one curb cut at the southeast end of the site. The property will also be able to access both curb cuts on the Culver's property, one of which accesses Benchwood Road, and the other of which comes out on Miller Lane.

Mr. Hammes described the exterior of the building. He noted that previous applications in the Miller Benchwood Overlay had proposed metal cladding, which is prohibited in the MBO. While the Aldi building does have metal elements, the proposed materials are not cladding. Rather, the aluminum surface is integral to the structure elements of the exterior, and as such are permissible under the code.

Mr. Hammes described the Landscaping proposed for the site. He indicated the landscaping islands in the front parking lot, and the roadway screening along the east side of the site. On the west, Mr. Hammes noted that utility access prevented some areas from being used for landscaping. To the north, Mr. Hammes explained that the cross-access easement did not require landscaping under the code.

Mr. Hammes indicated that the Vandalia Fire Department had reviewed the application, with an eye toward access to the site for fire apparatus. Mr. Hammes showed a schematic of the parking lot and noted that the Fire Department had approved the proposed traffic pattern in so far as their equipment was concerned.

Mr. Hammes described the proposed signage for the site. He noted that the proposed Wall Signs were permitted despite the fact that the northern side of the property did not front along Benchwood Road. The code refers to side of the building that *face* roads, not front along roads, and thus the northern sign is permitted. Mr. Hammes noted further that the proposed signs meet all other code requirements for size, height, placement, and so forth.

Mr. Atkins invited the public to step forward and address the application.

Patrick Valerius, Project Manager with Aldi Inc., spoke as and on behalf of the applicant. He thanked staff for their cooperation during the preparation of the application. Mr. Valerius

emphasized that Aldi was excited to be in Vandalia, and that the proposed development would be a benefit to the area.

Mr. Atkins asked the applicant about their proposed timeline. Mr. Valerius indicated that they planned to begin construction in May 2023, with an eye to a grand opening in November 2023.

Ms. Cox asked a question about the proposed monument sign. Mr. Hammes pointed out the location, orientation, and required landscaping for the monument sign. At the request of Ms. Turrell, Mr. Hammes pointed out the existing sign for the Culver's site.

Mr. Atkins asked about the shared access, and any required easements. Mr. Hammes noted that the proposed conditions for approval would require the applicant to combine the parcels into a single record plan, and that that record plan would include the precise dimensions of the shared easement. Mr. Valerius pointed out that there is already an agreement between the owners of the Culver's property and Aldi that laid out the maintenance and use of the shared access easement area.

Mr. Arnold compared the proposal with an existing Aldi in the City of Huber Heights. He noted that the existing location he saw had the dock door closer to the building, which assisted with screening. He also expressed concern about a dumpster without dedicated screening such as an enclosure or swing door. Mr. Arnold also asked about additional landscaping that might be employed to screen the truck dock.

Mr. Valerius agreed that some landscaping might be possible. He discussed the layout of the south end of the site, and noted that the drive approach was placed as it was to provide some screening for the dock. Mr. Arnold asked if rotating the dumpster might be possible.

Mr. Ken White, P.E., with DLZ, and on behalf of Aldi, addressed the Commission. He noted that the trash truck that empties the dumpster would need to approach it directly, and a skew would make that impossible.

Mr. Valerius agreed that a swing gate would be feasible. Mr. Arnold stated that such a gate would be beneficial for screening the dumpster as Miller Lane continued to develop.

Mr. Valerius noted that trees being placed in the mulch area would be at risk, given the turning radius of the trucks serving the site. Mulch had been proposed because it would be undamaged if a truck went over the curb at that location.

Mr. White and Mr. Valerius explained the manner in which trucks would access the site.

Mr. Atkins noted that the blend of proposed trees would give the site a nice look.

Mr. Keeley asked a question about the proposed landscaping on the south end of the site. He then asked where the proposed swing gate would be located. Mr. Arnold and Mr. Valerius explained that the proposed gate would go directly in front of the dumpster.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Atkins closed the public portion of the meeting for Case PC 23-01.

Mr. Atkins explained the process for approving the review criteria. He then proceeded to read the Review Criteria into the record.

- (1) That the proposed development is consistent with this code, and other related codes and ordinances enforced by the City;

Staff Comment: Staff feels the proposed development is consistent with the Code.

The Planning Commission agreed with the Staff Comment by a vote of 5-0.

- (2) That the proposed development complies with the applicable zoning district regulations;

Staff Comment: Staff feels the proposed development will comply with the Miller/Benchwood Overlay and Chapter 1228 Architectural Standards with the recommendations proposed by Staff.

The Planning Commission agreed with the Staff Comment by a vote of 5-0.

- (3) That the proposed development adequately provides for emergency vehicles access and circulation; and

Staff Comment: Staff feels this development will adequately provide emergency vehicles access and circulation, as shown.

The Planning Commission agreed with the Staff Comment by a vote of 5-0.

- (4) If the project is to be carried out in successive phases, that each stage of the proposed development shall comply with the foregoing criteria.

Staff Comment: Staff feels this criterion does not apply. This is not anticipated to be a multi-phase project.

The Planning Commission agreed with the Staff Comment by a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Atkins noted that Staff recommended approval of the proposed Site Plan, and asked for a motion. Mr. Keeley made a motion for approval, with the proposed conditions noted in the staff report, and with the additional condition of a swing door for the dumpster.

Mr. Hammes explained the proposed conditions for approval of the application. As initially proposed, the site plan approval was subject to one condition.

1. All parcels included in the proposed site plan must be consolidated before any building permit is issued for this site. Said consolidation shall preserve all existing and proposed easements, including the northern access easement.

Based on the discussion during the meeting, Mr. Hammes proposed adding a second condition.

2. The dumpster shall be screened in accordance with the applicable provisions of the zoning code by way of a swing gate, or by similar means.

Mr. Atkins restated Mr. Keeley's motion to approve the application with the two conditions as articulated by Mr. Hammes. Ms. Cox seconded the motion. The motion was **approved** by a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Atkins stated that he looked forward to seeing a new grocery store in the city.

Communications

Mr. Hammes wished the Commission a Happy Valentine's Day.

Mr. Hammes stated that PC 22-21, a Major PUD Amendment tabled at the previous meeting, had been withdrawn by the applicant. While they may come forward at a later date, they are not prepared to proceed at this time.

Mr. Hammes noted that there were now no pending cases for calendar year 2022.

Mr. Hammes described upcoming cases to the Commission, including a potential text amendment involving Solar Panels. Mr. Atkins noted that the existing regulations were somewhat restrictive. Mr. Hammes observed that many cities have different approaches, and that he looked forward to presenting his recommendations.

Ms. Cox asked about a presentation on the Downtown Overlay District. Mr. Hammes indicated that the case schedule had delayed the presentation. Assistant City Manager Amber Holloway noted that the presentation could be given at any time and would take 20 to 30 minutes with questions.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Atkins asked for a motion to Adjourn. Ms. Turrell made the motion. Mr. Arnold seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Atkins adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Chairman