

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
FORT THOMAS PLANNING COMMISSION  
HELD AT THE FORT THOMAS COMMUNITY CENTER  
ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2019  
6:30 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Dan Fehler, Chairman  
Dan Gorman, Vice Chairman  
Dave Wormald, Secretary  
Jerry Noran  
Larry Schultz  
Hans Tinkler

**ABSENT:** Tim Michel

**ALSO PRESENT:** Kevin Barbian, Building Inspector & Zoning Admin.  
Julie Rice, Administrative Assistant  
Jann Seidenfaden, City Attorney  
Ronald Dill, City Administrator  
Frank Twehues, CT Consultants

Dan Fehler presided and called the business meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Minutes – November 14, 2018 and March 20, 2019**

Members reviewed the minutes of the November 14, 2018 and March 20, 2019 meetings. A motion was made by Jerry Noran and seconded by Dan Gorman to approve the November 14, 2018 minutes as written. Motion carried 6-0.

A motion was made by Jerry Noran and seconded by Larry Schultz to approve the March 20, 2019 minutes as written. Motion carried 6-0.

**Consolidation Plat**

**1437 S. Fort Thomas Avenue**

Mike Federle, Applicant  
YMCA of Greater Cincinnati, Fort Thomas Branch, Owner

Mr. Federle was present on behalf of the YMCA. Mr. Federle explained that the YMCA at 1437 S. Ft. Thomas Avenue, sits on seven separate parcels and they are requesting approval for the consolidation of the multiple parcels (lots 3 – 7 of the J.K. Stone's Subdivision) into one 2.278-acre parcel.

Following review of the proposed consolidation plat, a motion was made by Jerry Noran and seconded by Dave Wormald to approve the consolidation of lots 3 – 7 of the J.K. Stone Subdivision. Motion carried 6-0.

## **7:00 Public Hearing**

### **9 Highland Avenue**

#### **3, 15, 19, 25 North Ft. Thomas Avenue**

Developer – Greiwe Development

(In association with North American Properties and Sibcy Cline Realtors)

Owner(s) - Under contract with Developer

City Administrator, Ron Dill, welcomed the community and gave a brief overview of the evenings proceedings and the process which led up to the public hearing. Mr. Dill explained that the purpose for the public hearing is for the Planning Commission to review a Stage I Development Plan proposal. Mr. Dill noted that the developer also has a pending application for a height variance with the Board of Adjustment which will meet on Tuesday (April 23<sup>rd</sup>) at the City building. Any questions or concerns regarding the height of the proposed building should be directed to the Board of Adjustment.

The developer also has submitted an application (Certificate of Appropriateness) to the Design Review Board which will meet on Thursday (April 25<sup>th</sup>) to review design elements such as signage, outward appearance of the structure, building products, etc. Any questions or concerns related to these items should be directed to the Design Review Board.

Mr. Dill encouraged the audience to attend the Board of Adjustment and Design Review Board meetings to hear information related to the above items and voice any concerns or questions at that time. The Planning Commission cannot address those items.

Mr. Dill invited the audience to approach the podium and state their name and address for the record if they wish to be heard.

At this time Mr. Dill turned the meeting over to the Planning Commission Chair, Dan Fehler.

Chairman Dan Fehler called the public hearing to order and the Proof of Posting was read by Planning Commission Secretary, Dave Wormald.

Planning Commission member, Dan Gorman, recused himself at this time due to his affiliation with the project and requested that he be counted as “absent” for any vote on this development.

Mr. Fehler invited the developer to present his plans for the development.

Rick Greiwe of Greiwe Development was present to address members as well as Sari Lehtinen of M+A Architects, Donelle Otten of North American Properties, and a representative from Sibcy Cline Realty. Mr. Greiwe explained that during the past year, he attended several workshops held by the City of Fort Thomas as part of the visioning process for updating the City’s Comprehensive/Community Plan. Discussions at these workshops included the development of a vision for the kind of town center and housing types the City desires. Because of this engagement with the community and the consensus of the type of development wanted by the City, Greiwe Development became interested in working with City leadership and the community to accomplish this vision.

Mr. Greiwe explained that his company develops a lifestyle product which targets seniors, empty nesters and single professionals who desire a single floor plan, elevator to the garage, ability to age in place, etc. They provide high quality architecture and design and currently have a development in Mariemont, Hyde Park, Montgomery, and downtown Cincinnati. These developments are situated in these communities to help expand their town centers.

Mr. Greiwe stated that in reading through the City’s current and prior Comprehensive/Community Plans, it was mentioned 35 times that the City wants to create a new town center and new housing types. Mr. Greiwe thanked Dan Gorman for assembling a site in Fort Thomas surrounded by other commercial businesses where this type of development is possible.

Sari Lehtinen, Senior Architectural Designer at M+A Architects, gave an overview of the proposed location for the development. Ms. Lehtinen stated that Fort Thomas is rich with architectural styles, beautiful houses and buildings and she drew from that as inspiration for the design of the proposed building, but most notably, the consistency of the materials of the homes in Tower Park with their red brick and stone masonry. The different neighborhoods throughout the City offer inspiration with the way

the houses line the streets and the rhythm of the gables, peaks, covered porches, and craftsman style. They were tasked with designing a mixed use building that would add vibrancy to the commercial town center area and at the same time add housing units.

The design for the proposed development includes covered walkways, beautiful landscaping, sidewalk seating areas, and large store fronts which draw from the architectural heritage of Fort Thomas. The corner feature of the building is a manufactured stone, masonry veneer tower with large windows and a plaza at the base. This is a very pedestrian friendly environment with covered sidewalks and places for the public to sit. There is a public sidewalk with a green space and trees between it and the street. The store front wraps around the building and the detailing and finish go all the way around to the back side of the building with equal quality on all sides. The portion of the building which faces Highland Avenue is 2-story, residential and steps down a full story to match the grade of Highland Avenue. An underground parking garage is accessed from Woodland Avenue and has a hidden entrance. There is a large planting strip between Woodland Place and the rear of the building. The portion of the building facing North Fort Thomas Avenue contains commercial space on the first floor and residential units on the second and third floors.

Ms. Lehtinen displayed renderings of the proposed building façade which indicate two different shades of red brick, a manufactured stone masonry base, wood trellises, balconies and brackets which tie into the neighborhood, and large windows. Ms. Lehtinen went on to explain the layout of the floor plan on each level, both commercial and residential. There are two residential entrances with elevator lobbies and a shared walkway which connects the front of the building to the back of the building and the public parking lot.

Mr. Greiwe added that the Comprehensive Plan indicates the types of businesses the City wishes to have in this district. The plan for this project is to curate the commercial space to ensure that it is compatible with the residential spaces above and meet their wants and needs as well as the wants and needs of the community. A percentage of the commercial space will be dedicated office space.

Ms. Lehtinen continued by describing the layout of the 24 residential units which are around 2,000 square feet with the corner unit being larger and the two story units on the Highland Avenue side of the building around 1,550 square feet. The secured underground parking garage serves the residents and includes a designated number of parking spaces for their guest parking. All units provide single level living with elevator access.

Mr. Greiwe stated that the project is a partnership between Greiwe Development, the City and the community and it is important to him to understand the issues and concerns of the community. To do so he met with City leaders as well as residents from Woodland Place and the adjacent property owners on North Fort Thomas Avenue and Highland Avenue. Mr. Greiwe continued by listing the issues that were brought to his attention and how he is addressing them.

The first issue identified is the overall height of the building. The current zoning code allows a building height of 50 feet and the height of the proposed building is 53'6". Mr. Greiwe explained that commercial space needs to have finished ceilings at 14 feet and condos today have finished ceilings at 10 feet. The overall building height of 53'6" is measured to the peaks of the building which are important to provide the beautiful architecture. The existing building at 19 N. Fort Thomas Avenue is 9 feet shorter than the proposed building and the building at 33 N. Fort Thomas Avenue (Schone Kitchen Design) is 12 feet shorter which provides similar scale. The building height on the Highland Avenue side of the property steps down to follow the slope of Highland Avenue.

The next issue is the impact of the development on Woodland Place. Several design elements were added to help reduce the impact on these residents which include an increased buffer zone and beautiful landscaping. The back side of the building which is seen from Woodland Place, will be finished the same as the front of the building. The garage entry is set back and not visible from the street and the existing parking lot on the Grosser property will be replaced with a beautiful landscaped hill. The garage entrance is set back so that the door is not seen going up and down during the day.

The third issue that Mr. Greiwe described is the parking garage egress. Four different options were studied for entering and exiting the underground parking garage. One option, placing the garage

doors on the rear of the building, took up too much of the required public parking. Another option was to construct a loop where the greenspace is located behind the building, but this was not acceptable to the residents of Woodland Place. The third option was to have the entrance/exit for the garage coming out on Highland Avenue, but the traffic study found this to be an unsafe option due to the slope of the street and traffic volume.

Greiwe Development has done many of these types of developments over the last 10 years and based on past use at similar condo complexes, it is estimated that the residents at this location will make an average of 27 trips per day. This volume of traffic is similar to what is currently generated by the Grosser Accounting Agency which produces an average of 14 trips per day normally and an average of 21 trips per day during their busy season.

The next issue is the commercial viability. Mr. Greiwe stated that he has been asked many times why he thinks this project will work when there has been multiple pizza parlors at this location which never seem to stay in business. Mr. Greiwe explained that these are businesses trying to run out of residential structures. He believes that if there is modern commercial space available for businesses and services that are needed in the City, this project will be successful. People want to live, work, shop, and play in the same place. There is an emerging population that is looking for the town center experience.

The final issue is traffic impact. A traffic study was performed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party which looked at trip generation, distribution, traffic volumes, capacity, access of lots and garages, turn lane analysis, and a sight distance evaluation. The outcome of the study showed little or no impact on peak travel times but visibility exiting the public parking lot needs improvement. The study showed that the proposed garage egress on Woodland Place is the safest location.

Mr. Greiwe reiterated that he is aware of the public's concerns and that he takes them very seriously, but he hopes that the citizens see the opportunity that this project presents for the city. He wants to work with the City of Fort Thomas to define new downtown landmarks and architecture, offer modern commercial space for the community to gather, and present a new housing type which is very desirable.

At this time, Kevin Barbian, Building Inspector and Zoning Administrator for the City of Fort Thomas presented the staff report and explained his role in evaluating the project from a zoning standpoint.

The proposed development is located in the Central Business District (CBD) and the Development Plan meets the requirements for this zoning district. The minimum lot requirement in the CBD is 5,500 square feet with 50' of road frontage. The Planning Commission has the authority to approve a development plan and setbacks based on the plan itself but does not have the authority to grant an exception to the height requirement. The applicant must go before the Board of Adjustment to request a variance to the height requirement. The maximum height limit in the CBD is 50' and the proposal is for 53'6". The applicant is scheduled to go before the Board of Adjustment on April 23<sup>rd</sup> to request a height variance.

Mr. Barbian explained that the Zoning Ordinance has developmental controls beginning with off street parking which has very specific requirements for how much parking must be in place. The proposal is for 60 underground parking spaces and the requirement for this amount of residential space is 48 spaces. The parking requirement for the amount of commercial space is 52 parking spaces based on the anticipated type of tenants. The proposed number of commercial parking spaces is 56 with 40 of the spaces on the rear parking lot and 16 spaces on the street. The zoning code bases the number of spaces that are located on private parking only and therefore the site offers 40 parking spaces per Mr. Barbian's evaluation. The Planning Commission does have the authority to grant latitude for parking requirements.

The next developmental control item addresses access points. The zoning code has very specific guidelines for where an access point can be located. The requirement for this development is 100' from the intersection of Woodland Place and Highland Avenue. Access is another item which the Planning Commission has the authority to grant latitude. Mr. Barbian reported that there is a deficiency in the proposed access point off of North Fort Thomas Avenue and Woodland Place. Both access points are less than the required width of 24' feet with one point being 20' and the other 22'. The plan will need to be

modified to meet this requirement as this is not an item that can be waived or altered by the Planning Commission. The access points will be further addressed in the traffic study.

Street loading and/or unloading also falls under developmental controls. Based on the proposed 19,000 square feet of retail space and based on the current zoning code, the development is required to provide three spaces for loading and/or unloading. The proposal has one area designated for loading and/or unloading. Mr. Barbian pointed out that many of the business in the City use the street for loading and unloading due to density. This is another area that the Planning Commission can grant latitude and reduce this requirement.

Other areas that fall under developmental control are trash disposal, lighting, and screening. Provisions have been made for trash disposal and a photometric study will be completed as a requirement of the Stage II Development Plan process to ensure that no one is adversely affected by the lighting. The area most impacted by the lighting from the development will be Woodland Place. When any use permitted in the CBD abuts a residential zone, a minimum yard requirement of fifty (50) feet must be in place for each side and/or yard which abuts the zone. Screening requirements may also be altered by the Planning Commission. The proposed screening area for the development is approximately 25' with the area behind the dumpster having 20' of screening. Mr. Barbian recommended that the screening behind the dumpster area be increased to a minimum of 25'.

The uses being proposed for the development are consistent with the allowed uses for the CBD. There has not been a request for any exceptions to the permitted uses. The CBD allows for first floor retail and second and third floor residential.

Mr. Barbian noted that the applicant is required to get design approval from the Design Review Board to confirm that the proposed development meets the specific design standards that the City has in place. The applicant is scheduled to appear before the Design Review Board on April 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

Mr. Barbian continued by explaining other aspects of a Stage I Development Plan review. There are 24 residential units and 19,000 square feet of commercial space proposed for this development including an underground garage. The building setback is proposed at 5' which the Planning Commission has the latitude to approve as presented on the development plan. Pedestrian walkways will be both public and private. Specific locations of utilities are not noted at this time as they are not a requirement of a Stage I Development Plan. Underground detention for surface water produced by this site is noted on the submitted plan and will be located under the public parking lot. Engineering calculations will be required to show that underground detention is adequate to accommodate water runoff from this site. Certification has been received from appropriate water, sewer, and other applicable utility agencies, that services will be available at this site.

The Stage I Development Plan discusses landscaping and tree requirements. A preliminary landscape plan, list of tree removals, and planting plan has been submitted. There will be 13 street trees bordering the site with additional hedges and ground cover, parking lot landscaping in the lot medians and added plantings and screening on the Woodland Place side of the project. The plan includes decorative paving similar to what exists on the Avenue currently and shaded trellis areas. There are very few trees existing on the site currently and a plan has been presented to the City of Fort Thomas Tree Commission for review. There are two larger trees located on the corner of Woodland Place and Highland Avenue that will be removed and replaced with significant landscaping. These two trees are not significant landmark trees.

The last phase of Mr. Barbian's review was for Comprehensive Plan compliance. Mr. Barbian pulled excerpts from the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan that relate to this type of project in the City. As previously stated, many parts of the proposed Development Plan fulfill the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Although there are concerns related to the scaling of the building which need to be addressed, the intent of the project meets the finding of fact from the Fort Thomas Comprehensive Plan.

At this time, Mr. Barbian introduced the City Engineer, Frank Twehues of CT Consultants, for a report on the Traffic Study. Mr. Twehues explained that CT Consultants reviewed the Traffic Impact Study (TIS) as the City engineer. The TIS was completed by TEC Engineering, Inc., a Southwest Ohio-

based consulting engineering firm. TEC Engineering then submitted the study to Mr. Greiwe who in turn forwarded it to CT Consultants for review.

Mr. Twehues reported that the TIS indicates an AM Peak Volume of 27 trips and a PM Peak Volume of 90 trips for the entire development. Of the 27 AM peak trips, 5 are generated from the underground garage and 22 from the retail space. Of the 90 PM peak trips, 8 are generated from the underground garage and 82 from the retail space.

TEC has indicated that the exiting movements from the surface lot on North Fort Thomas Avenue will require special considerations, such as signage or additional lighting as you approach the intersection. These considerations would be reviewed as part of the Stage II submittal.

The initial recommendation from the TIS suggests that the garage access be shifted to the north on Woodland Place to provide a greater setback from Highland Avenue. After the report was issued, the developer submitted further information showing additional queuing in the driveway/garage access point. The garage door is inset into the building. Upon further review and discussion, TEC has stated that they are in agreement that the driveway/garage access point as shown in the TIS will not cause an adverse impact to queuing on Woodland Place.

The TIS does not recommend access from the underground garage directly to Highland Avenue. Highland Avenue is a collector with an average of 8,574 vehicles per day. There is also minor queuing in the morning and afternoons. Due to the queuing, it would cause an issue for vehicles exiting from an access directly onto Highland Avenue. Additionally, there are concerns regarding sight distances and grades of a garage access on Highland Avenue. The TIS recommends access to the garage from Woodland Place.

The TIS does not specifically address the median on North Fort Thomas Avenue, but modifications would be necessary to the median to provide full access at the proposed location on the north side of the development. Further, because the development would remove two curb cuts on North Fort Thomas Avenue, portions of the flush paver median could be reconstructed to add landscaping.

Any improvements or modifications made along North Fort Thomas Avenue will require an encroachment permit from the Northern Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

The applicant has indicated that in the Stage II Development Submittal, they will meet the Rules and Regulations of Northern Kentucky Water District and Sanitation District No. 1 with regards to their water, sanitary sewer and storm water. Preliminarily, they are proposing to access water off of Woodland Place, sanitary sewer in the rear of the property, and storm water detention and quality would be designed as an underground system in the rear of the building.

Mr. Twehues concluded his report by reiterating that the TIS states that there are no anticipated adverse impacts to traffic in the area not just today, but looking forward to the year 2030.

Mr. Greiwe stated that all of the issues outlined in the TIS will be addressed in the Stage II Development Plan. Egress, loading zones, signage, lighting, and additional screening around the dumpster will also be addressed in the Stage II plan.

Following a brief break, Mr. Fehler opened the floor for public comment.

Jeremy Donelan, 114 Highland Avenue, asked why a traffic study was done between 8 and 9 when most parents take their children to school between 7 and 8 unless it was to show a smaller traffic pattern.

Mr. Twehues explained that TEC placed the cameras at the site on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of March, the week before Spring break, and their findings showed more traffic between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.

CJ Lecky, 39 Woodland Place, stated that based on a survey that was taken as part of the Community Plan, it appears that 16,955 residents live in Fort Thomas. Of those 16,955 residents, only 917 people completed the survey. Ms. Lecky feels that the survey should be null and void because nothing was mailed out to the residents. The survey was only on a website. Ms. Lecky also stated that she was representing over 100 Fort Thomas residents who submitted emails about the survey. Ms. Lecky provided the commission with a copy of the emails where were solicited through a Facebook post.

Chanelle Noble, 48 Woodland Place, stated that she feels the developer has done a good job of creating the screening between the parking lot and Woodland Place, but not where Woodland Place meets Highland Avenue. She does not believe that a parking lot can be considered a buffer.

John Noble, 40 Woodland Place, stated that he is unable to support the development for several reasons. Mr. Noble feels that it is creating commercial space based on hope rather than data, the size and scale is too much and should be redesigned, the impact on Woodland Place during the construction process, and the negative impact on traffic flow and parking on Woodland Place. Mr. Noble would like to see the development take place, just not at the expense of the Woodland Place neighborhood.

Sharon MacKnight, 62 Miller Lane, stated that she is concerned about the impact the development will have on traffic and parking on all of the side streets surrounding the development.

Lisa Adams, 5 Woodland Place, lives in the first house on Woodland Place and would be most affected by the development with regard to parking and traffic as well as the impact it will have on her property value. Ms. Adams feels the development will adversely affect the resale value of her property because the front of her property will be facing a parking garage door.

Ms. MacKnight, Miller Lane, stated that she loves the idea of the development, she is just concerned with the scale of the project.

Judy Club, 131 Highland Avenue, does not feel the traffic study is accurate and that traffic and parking will be negatively impacted.

Clarissa and Brent Niese, 33 Woodland Place, stated that they, as well as many of their neighbors, are pro-development and in favor of having the ability to walk to restaurants and businesses, but they are very concerned about the increased traffic on Woodland Place and the viability of this development without funding assistance from the City. They are also concerned that the community is losing a full kitchen, the Public House, without gaining one back from the development, only deli type restaurants. Another concern is the need for more affordable housing. Mrs. Niese praised all the work that was done over the past three years during the revision of the Community/Comprehensive plan, but funding assistance from tax dollars will be going to support very expensive condo units. The final concern Mrs. Niese stated is with the mass of the building. She feels the size and height of the structure should be redesigned.

Mr. Niese added that he took part in the visioning process for the Community Plan, and he wants to ensure that the development fits the vision that the City is looking for. The number one principle stressed in the Community Plan is Small Town Community Values. Mr. Niese feels that the current version of the development plan does not meet the number one objective of the Community Plan.

Linda Malloy, 123 Riverside Parkway, stated that she was part of the visioning committee for land use and she thanked the planning committee and developer for all the hard work that has been done. She feels that the community needs this development and single-floor living, but she was under the impression that this was going to be a 2-story building and she feels that this is too big for the center of town.

Kris Barton, 13 Woodland Place, stated her concerns related to the proposed tree plantings for the project and would like to see large trees that actually make a difference be planted. She previously served on the Tree Commission and would like to see the planting plan made public and she offered to make suggestions if needed.

Andrea Bunch, 32 Mayfield Avenue, stated that the development plan indicates that the target residents (for the condos) will be empty nesters, singles, and seniors. Because there is no way to legislate that, she feels this is not a "given" in terms of what population will live there. She feels that the size of the structure will create a dark canyon and is concerned with how this development will affect our current, long term businesses across the street. Another concern is related to school safety issues at the intersection particularly during the construction phase.

Joan Harris, 66 Burney Lane, stated that the City already has the type of businesses proposed for the new commercial space. She asked if the City is trying to put our existing businesses out of business. Ms. Harris feels that a hardcopy of the Community Plan should have been available to the community.

Ms. Harris continued by mentioning the condition of the sidewalks on Burney Lane and the need for them to be replaced.

Lori Valentine, 30 Bluegrass Avenue, has owned Fort Thomas Coffee for the past 7 years. Mrs. Valentine stated that she trusts the people who are leading our community in this effort. She trusts that the City will continue to take input and make tweaks so that Fort Thomas will continue to be an awesome community to raise kids and grandkids. Mrs. Valentine stated that the City is a ghost town during the day and she is in favor of anything that will bring business into the City throughout those middle of the day hours and she believes that every business owner in town would agree. As a longtime resident of Fort Thomas, Mrs. Valentine feels that residents who live anywhere near a school or Fort Thomas Avenue know when to leave their house so that they don't hit the school traffic. People of Fort Thomas are used to the traffic and she does not believe that the development will affect many people.

Christina Vonhandorf, 29 Woodland Place, stated that she and her husband moved to Fort Thomas for the great schools and safe neighborhoods. She is worried that her daughter will not be able to play on the street with the increased traffic due to the development.

Ben Reynolds, 9 Woodland Place, resides on Woodland Place and also leases office space at 9 Highland Avenue. Mr. Reynolds asked the commission how the development plan fulfills the vision stated in the Community Plan regarding preserving a buffer zone between commercial and residential.

Mr. Barbian stated that he is researching the information and should have a response by the end of the meeting.

Helen Hlebiczki, 2516 Memorial Parkway, stated that she lives 2 houses up from Highlands High School and her rear yard abuts Death Valley. Ms. Hlebiczki thinks that some kind of development would be nice in town but she does not think the center of town is the right spot for this development. Her main concern is the ability for emergency vehicles to get through the traffic which has already been increased in the center of town due to the temporary housing of Johnson Elementary School on Highland's campus.

Heather Zoller, 112 Hawthorne Avenue, asked the commission to postpone a decision on the development plan until an independent traffic study is performed. She feels that the study was based on the people they hope will purchase these properties which cannot be enforced and would be breaking Kentucky Fair Housing laws in trying to do so. The study was also performed based on what businesses they assume will rent the retail spaces. Mrs. Zoller stated that she and her husband heard about the buying up of these properties about 9 months earlier and were told "it's a done deal". She feels that in this particular instance, there is the appearance of a potential conflict of interest. In her opinion, the conflict of interest of the people who are putting this together who are also on this (Planning Commission) committee is a problem. A development this big, with this much impact on the community, should be accountable to people like "us". Mrs. Zoller believes that the plan does not meet the height and parking requirements so therefore, the commission is not in a position to say "yes" to the development plan.

P.J. Weidner, 60 Porters Lane, loves Fort Thomas and the community and he thanked the commission for the job they are doing as well as Mr. Greiwe for an excellent presentation. Mr. Weidner feels that you should look at a project like this and ask if it has been done before and was it successful and best for the community. Other Greiwe developments in Mariemont, Hyde Park, Downtown Cincinnati, are all success stories in fantastic communities. This is a once in a lifetime deal for the City of Fort Thomas to invest in the infrastructure of the community.

Eileen Bunch, 32 Mayfield Avenue, stated that the thing that troubles her the most about the development is that she keeps hearing that one of the main goals for this development is creating a new Fort Thomas. Ms. Bunch stated that she likes Fort Thomas the way it is. She understands that the City needs new developments to move into the future, and asked why does it have to be achieved by bulldozing the houses in the center of town that she has walked past every day of her life.

Chris Lecky, 39 Woodland Place, stated that no one from Woodland Place is against the development just the size of the development. They have had very good meetings with Rick (Greiwe) and Mayor Haas where they sat down and discussed the plans but they feel the building is too big.

Richard MacKnight, 62 Miller Lane, stated that if you want to live in Hyde Park, go live in Hyde Park. This is the City of Beautiful Homes not the City of Beautiful Businesses. He is not in favor of a structure like this in the center of town.

Steve Myers, 22 Highview Drive, stated that he has a great deal of empathy for the residents of Woodland Place but he has no opposition to change and he feels that the traffic will be a non-issue. Although in favor of the development, he still feels the size of the building should be scaled back and maybe set back further from the street.

Michael Mason, 8 N. Shaw Lane, feels that whatever is approved at this corner will be a templet for whatever happens next going North on Fort Thomas Avenue.

Bob Heil, 1 Greene Street, stated that he served on the Planning Commission from 1995 until 2015 during which time he was involved in four Comprehensive Plan updates. In 1999 our Comprehensive Plan stated that our Central Business District could use some improvement. Very specific ideas were identified to make that happen through new structures containing retail on the ground level and residential on the upper levels. The Kentucky State Statute requires cities to update their Comprehensive Plan ever five years. This proposed development is taken directly from the script of our Comprehensive Plan and the citizens of Fort Thomas wrote the script. Mr. Heil hopes that the citizens of Fort Thomas are open minded, not to creating a new Fort Thomas, but to creating a different Fort Thomas and perhaps better one in some respects. We need to keep the dialogue open with a man (Ken Greiwe) who has invested millions, sees the vision, knows his product, and knows who his buyers are. For non-real estate professionals to question his credentials is rather foolish. Mr. Heil asks for everyone to work together on the final edits of this script.

Tiffany Huber, 26 Hawthorne Avenue, thinks that Fort Thomas is desirable, beautiful, and charming *now*. She doesn't think we should say we love Fort Thomas the way it is, but we're definitely not disappointed with Fort Thomas the way it is. She is concerned about the loss of the historical buildings and landscape as well as the greenspace. The scale, size, and design of the building does not fit this quaint, charming town. Fort Thomas is not necessarily a destination. It is a family, community oriented center. Ms. Huber asked the commission to preserve what is great about the city.

Jason Wilson, 25 Sadye Court, stated that he feels like there has been a distinct rush to push this development through and perhaps that is why there has been a lot of pushback. But, progress is inevitable or we die.

Dan Gorman, 159 Tower Place, explained that he is a real estate investor. Mr. Gorman stated that when he first started investing in real estate, and he would drive through towns such as downtown Hamilton and downtown Middletown, he would notice storefronts that sat empty forever, people living in storefronts, properties for sale that wouldn't sell and then he would come home to Fort Thomas where he would notice some of these same conditions in our own Central Business District. What he also noticed is that once these conditions occur, if you don't change the trend it is very hard to fix it. When you look at our Midway Business District, to the left of the Midway Café you have someone living in a storefront and until recently you had someone living in the storefront to the right of the Midway Café. Mr. Gorman believes that this is a symbol of a negative trend happening and nobody doing anything about it. People move into a storefront and then you can't do anything about it. People have been living in those storefronts for 50-60 years. The only reason that Grass Roots and Vine and the ice cream store are no longer apartments in storefronts is because the woman who owned the building died and she didn't have any heirs. Mr. Gorman added that he rents to Colonel D's and others in town and he knows how difficult it is to keep businesses going in town.

Mr. Gorman noted one thing very different between the Midway Business District and the Central Business District is that the Midway was meant to be a business district. There are storefronts that are all connected together and critical mass that begets success from their neighbors allowing the whole district to succeed. What you have in the Central Business District is a bunch of houses along the west side of the road that were converted to business which has made it very difficult for the businesses to succeed. Nineteen North, to the left of BB&T Bank, has been vacant since before 2010. The Art House was in there for one year because they got free rent and as soon as the rent was raised to \$500 they couldn't

afford it so they left. Our Comprehensive Plan talks about the need to redevelop our Central Business District and if we don't do it on that corner, where else would we do it? We call that corner our Central Business District but it's not conducive to business, it's houses. We don't accept anything but excellence from our schools, our parks, our events, and Mr. Gorman can't believe that when we drive by this corner and we see what has been happening, that this is acceptable. This is the reason he became interested in this project over 10 years ago. Mr. Gorman does not believe that our CBD has the critical mass to help businesses succeed, but feels this project will help achieve that.

Tony Agin, 27 Linden Avenue, asked where he could go to find information on the economic impact and if any public money that will be used for this project.

Mr. Fehler explained that the Planning Commission has nothing to do with the funding of the project.

Mr. Fehler announces that public discussion will be put on hold at this time to allow Planning Commission members a period of discussion.

Mr. Barbian followed up on the questions from earlier related to the buffer zone. The particular area in question, the Woodland Place side of the project, is actually adjacent to a public right-of-way and not adjacent to a residential zone. Therefore, the development plan complies with the language of the Zoning Code.

Mr. Twehues noted that there are many variables that affect a Traffic Impact Study. The TIS submitted for this development was created by a third party, it was not created by the company that he works for nor was it created by someone the City hired to create a traffic study. Also, regardless of any discrepancies in time, it was created using standard practices for doing a traffic impact study. The TIS points out that there are already traffic issues at this intersection and the traffic that is proposed with this development has a small or negligible impact.

Mr. Noran stated that he is uncomfortable proceeding with the meeting and cutting off public comment if the public still wants to talk and he asked the City Attorney if this can be done.

Mrs. Seidenfaden, City Attorney, stated that any resident who wishes to speak should have the opportunity to do so. It was her understanding that when Mr. Fehler interrupted the progression of the meeting, it was to allow commission members a period of time for discussion and then they would go back to hearing public comments.

Mr. Fehler confirmed Mrs. Seidenfaden's statement.

Mr. Wormald asked if there has been any consideration as to where the construction access to the development would likely be located.

Mr. Greiwe stated that construction access would be on North Fort Thomas Avenue and the construction staging area will be located at the rear of the property. Construction on the project is expected to take 18 months to complete with the garage portion of the project taking the longest. The price of the condos ranges from the mid \$600's to \$1.2 million dollars. The cost per square foot for the retail space has not yet been determined. The average rate per square foot for retail space in new construction is \$26 per square foot. The current average for retail space in Fort Thomas is \$14 per square foot but Mr. Greiwe explained that they cannot go that low on this project. He is currently researching existing programs such as IRB and other tools to make this project happen. The total cost for this project is \$23 million dollars.

Mr. Fehler asked if the development could be made smaller and still be viable.

Mr. Greiwe could not answer that question directly. He explained that they have all of the parcels under contract with an option to buy and an agreed upon price for the land, which is very expensive. He is quite sure that the project would not be feasible if it were cut back to only 2-stories.

General discussion ensued related to options for reducing the height of the building and minor aspects of the geotechnical report.

Mr. Wormald reminded the audience that the height and the architectural design of the development are not under the purview of the Planning Commission. He also noted that there seems to be a perception in the community that the City is somehow contributing funding toward this development and asked if Mr. Dill could address this issue.

Mr. Dill stated that this is a private development and as the developer mentioned, he will be approaching the City with incentive bases such as IRB's. No formal discussion has taken place in regards to this at this point in the development process. If it occurs, the appropriate body to make a decision related to this would be our City Council.

Additional discussion took place related to potential parking and traffic issues created by the development.

Tiffany Huber, 26 Hawthorne, asked that if this development is approved, will it set a precedent for other developments similar to this one, to be added and replace everything we recognize about our Central Business District?

Mr. Fehler explained that each development is handled on an individual basis.

Mr. Wormald added that regardless of whether this particular development is approved or not, a different developer could come in this collection of properties or the adjacent collection of properties and propose a similar development.

Ms. Huber asked if anyone has heard of any plans for additional development on North Fort Thomas Avenue, north of this development?

Mr. Dill stated that any other development proposal would go through this same process. A decision on one development plan does not influence a decision on any other development proposal and each development proposal is considered on its own merits. There is nothing precedent setting on any decision the Planning Commission makes.

Andrea Bunch, 32 Mayfield Avenue, asked how the community will be notified when Phase I (Stage I) is complete and what the result is.

Mr. Dill explained that when the Planning Commission takes action, it will be done at a public meeting.

Allison Murphey, 15 Miami Parkway, commended everyone on all of the work that they have been doing and she personally thanked Dan Gorman for what he is trying to do for the community. She is concerned that this is a "build it and they will come" project and she would like to see data that seniors and empty nesters will be able to afford the price tag on the condos. She also stated her concerns with the scale of the building.

Mr. Greiwe explained that before they take such a big risk, they do presales. Potential purchasers sign a contract and put 10% down on a condo and potential tenants for the commercial spaces sign a letter of intent. They do not go into a project blindly without testing the market for both their residential and commercial space. If their research shows that a development would not be viable, they do not build.

Mr. Wormald reiterated that the risks that a private property owner or developer take on whatever they choose to build on their property is their risk and not under the purview of the Planning Commission. The only thing that the commission has charge of is the land use and its compliance with the building code. Whatever risk a property owner wants to take is part of the private enterprise system.

Francis Hoffman, 285 Military Parkway, stated that she is a business owner in Fort Thomas in the Highland Plaza and when she hears that retail space is going to go for \$26 per square foot she wonders who is going to rent that space.

Mr. Greiwe agreed that they cannot rent the space for \$26 per square foot so they are exploring options for getting the rent closer to \$16 per square foot. People will value coming to a newly constructed space.

At this time, Mr. Fehler called for a motion to continue the public hearing until the May meeting.

Mr. Noran stated that he would like to continue to hear public comment while everyone was present.

It was the general consensus of the board to continue to hear public comment.

Bonita Frentzel, 35 Bonnie Lane, stated that she is not totally against the development, but being an empty nester herself, she can't afford to live in these condos and she questioned how many others could afford it either.

Mr. Greiwe stated that there are several types and price points of empty nester homes in Fort Thomas, but there aren't any other flats that have elevators to an enclosed garage that is in a walkable

setting. This is a new product type for this community. There are other product types for the empty nesters that are less expensive which Ms. Frentzel may want to look in to if she is worried about the price point. There are many levels of empty nester housing.

Neil Leyshock, 43 Woodland Place, asked the developer if he would come back next month and show that some concessions were made by taking the garage access off of Woodland Place. They have small children on the street and they don't need the extra traffic.

Melany Powers, 13 Pearson, asked if, during the traffic study, it was taken into consideration that St. Andrews Church is planning to construct a parking lot next to their church and as part of that, they are going to take out a large part of the median on the Avenue so that cars traveling north on the Avenue can turn into their new parking lot? She feels this will add to parking and traffic issues in the area. Ms. Powers asked Mr. Twehues if he took that into account?

Mr. Twehues reiterated that he did not perform the Traffic Impact Study. The study was done by a third party and the parking lot at St. Andrews Church is outside of the scope of the study.

Mr. Barbian announced the dates and times of the Board of Adjustment meeting and the Design Review Board meeting at which time the developer will present a request for a height variance and design review respectively.

With no further public comment at this time, a motion was made by Jerry Noran and seconded by Dave Wormald to table the public hearing until the May meeting. Motion carried 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dan Fehler, Chair

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Wormald