

**KENT PLANNING COMMISSION  
BUSINESS MEETING  
FEBRUARY 4, 2020**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**                    **Amanda Edwards  
Jeff Clapper  
Peter Paino**

**STAFF PRESENT:**                    **Bridget Susel, Director  
Jennifer Barone, Development Engineer  
Eric Fink, Asst. Law Director**

**I.     Call to Order**

Ms. Edwards called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**II.    Roll Call:**

Mr. Paino, Ms. Edwards, and Mr. Clapper were present. Mr. Bruder and Mr. Morris were absent.

**MOTION:**     ***Mr. Paino moved to excuse Michael Bruder and Chris Clevenger-Morris from the February 4, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Clapper.***

***The motion carried 3-0.***

**III.   Reading of the Preamble**

The Planning Commission operates in accordance with the provisions of the Kent City Charter, the Kent Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations, all of which establish the powers and duties of the Commission. Members of the Planning Commission are appointed by Kent City Council and serve without compensation. Certain cases such as Conditional Zoning Certificates, Special Zoning Permits, Overlay District Projects and Zoning Amendment require Public Hearings before the Planning Commission. During the Public Hearing, any person wishing to address their concerns to the Commission will be provided the opportunity. Once the Public Hearing is closed, it shall be the discretion of the Chair whether to allow any additional public comment. Cases such as Site Plan Reviews and Subdivision Projects do not require a Public Hearing. However, the Chair will allow public comment on each case as it is taken on the agenda. In each instance where the Commission receives public comments or conducts a Public Hearing, those persons wishing to address their concerns to the Commission will be required to do so under oath or positive affirmation. The oath or affirmation shall be administered to all who wish to speak at the beginning of the Planning Commission Meeting. Once a decision has been made by the Planning Commission on a case, the Case is closed for the Commission, as there is no provision to reopen a case. With the exception of cases falling under the Subdivision Code, any decision of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City's Board of Zoning Appeals in accordance with the Chapter 1109 of the Zoning Code. Anyone interested in appealing a decision of the Planning Commission is advised to seek private legal counsel.

**IV. Administration of Oath**

Mr. Fink instructed those members of the audience wishing to be heard on any of the cases presented at this meeting to rise and raise their right hand. Mr. Fink administered the Oath, "Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony that you are about to give this evening is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God? Please say "I do." The participants responded, "I do."

**V. Correspondence**

None

**VI. Old Business**

None

**VII. New Business**

**A. PC20-003 Parcel Rezoning  
500 VFW Parkway  
Zoning Code Map Amendment from I: Industrial to R-3: High  
Density Residential**

Ms. Edwards notified the applicant that because there are only three members present tonight and a unanimous vote is required to pass, they have the option to have their case continued to another meeting.

Ms. Barone reviewed the staff report as presented.

Mr. Fink stated that the application is complete.

Mr. Neil Brooks, 4386 Cherryhurst Dr., Stow stated that they are seeking the map amendment to an R-3 district so that their church, Freedom Fellowship of NE Ohio, can purchase and utilize the property as a church; they will also be separately pursuing a conditional use permit for that use. He stated that they are a nondenominational Christian church with a focus on reaching college students, discipleship, and bible study and will use this building for church meetings, bible classes, and headquarters. Mr. Brooks stated that they would be open to the neighborhood amending the map in the future to R-2: Medium Density Residential, and that they have no plans to construct residential housing but rather use for church activities and serving the public.

Joel Hughes, 4850 June Ave., Stow, church member and KSU professor, stated that he feels that the way that they intend to use the property is more consistent with a residential neighborhood and the former VFW than other uses the present zoning would allow. Mr. Hughes noted several community services that their church volunteers are a part of. Mr. Hughes explained that while the church would use the property as a place to gather, most of their work is done in the community.

### **Public Comment**

Lizbeth Justice, 211 Brady St., Love Light, stated that she would also like to purchase for a child development center.

Mike Farmer, VFW Commander, 2729 Santa Anita, Stow, stated that 500 VFW has lost their charter and was closed by the state. He stated that the Stow VFW purchased the property and they along with the Board and the veterans of Kent and Stow support the Freedom Fellowship Church. Mr. Farmer stated that any other interested party will need to go through the proper channels to submit offers.

Zach Rozler, 1072 Elno Ave., church member, stated that he lives in the neighborhood of the proposed change and feels that the map amendment would benefit the community.

Greg Morscher, 866 Atwood Dr., Tallmadge, church elder, stated that the church has a loan ready to go; they just need the zoning change to move forward.

Sherry Gideon, 619 Tallmadge Ave., stated that Tallmadge Ave., was never meant for a commercial business and is concerned about the increased traffic.

Jayne Lamp, 553 Tallmadge Ave., asked if the True North Program, which helps imprisoned youth, incarcerated and or paroled through the state and county correctional facility, and the Safe Haven for Women with Trauma, will be held at this location. She stated that she is concerned about the safety of the neighborhood.

Ms. Edwards closed public comment.

### **Planning Commission Discussion**

Mr. Clapper asked how many members are in their congregation.

Mr. Brooks stated that they have approximately 300.

Mr. Morscher stated that because they do quite a bit at Kent State, they don't all come to the fellowship meeting; approximately 200 come to the meetings.

Ms. Edwards explained to the audience the role of the Planning Commission this evening is to address the potential zoning change and not the use; other questions will be addressed when the project comes back before the Board as a conditional use.

Mr. Farmer stated that they VFW membership was 286 when it closed.

Mr. Clapper stated that he will want to discuss more if it is approved and comes back to the Planning Commission for conditional use.

Mr. Paino stated that the rezoning is for the VFW and not necessarily the church.

Mr. Clapper stated that comparing the potential uses is the issue.

Mr. Paino stated that changing the district to R-2 was suggested and would be less dense.

Mr. Susel stated that the neighborhood is considering starting a petition to have the neighborhood and this property changed to R-2, which may take place at a later time.

***MOTION: Mr. Clapper moved that in Case PC20-003, the Planning Commission recommend to Kent City Council to approve the zoning map amendment to rezone parcel number 17-011-10-00-023-000 at 500 VFW Parkway from I: Industrial to R-3 High Density Residential.***

***The motion was seconded by Mr. Paino.***

***The motion carried 3-0.***

**VIII. Minutes**

A voting quorum was not present to review the January 21, 2020 minutes.

**IX. Other Business**

None

**X. Adjournment**

***MOTION:*** Mr. Paino moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Clapper. The motion carried 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.