

PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Tim McCarthy. Committee members present were Cory Kuhlman, Tim McCarthy, and Barry VanHoozen. Also present were Bridgette Kabat, City Administrator, Laura Alkire, Law Director, Brody Walters, Planning and Zoning Administrator, and Mark Easterling, Deputy Planning and Zoning Administrator.

ARBORVITAES

The Committee was provided with the rules and regulations of neighboring communities regarding natural screenings, along with a list of plantings that can be maintained at six feet provided by Service Director Rob Ross. Mr. McCarthy said that he didn't see that Maumee regulated the height of hedges or bushes at all, and Mr. Walters agreed. In Sylvania, hedges or bushes cannot exceed three and one-half feet in a required front yard but there is no mention of side or rear yards. Mr. McCarthy said that if we are out of the norm, we have to ask ourselves why.

Mr. Walters said that the language was intentionally brought forth to fix a workaround because of people that wanted to install a six-foot fence and were told they could not. He said that it is meant to protect a view or site lines. He gave the example of a resident that could see the river from their home, but then their neighbor puts in a row of bushes that blocks their view. He said that people are concerned about their view and creating a dividing line, not necessarily the material.

Kevin Rantanen, 925 Locust Street, was present and recommended that City Council delete the language. He provided pictures of examples to the Committee. Mr. Walters explained that they look at plantings and try to determine if it will have a similar effect as a fence. Mr. Rantanen also brought up some recent plantings at Zoar Lutheran Church. Mr. Walters said that he worked with Doug Williams on behalf of Zoar and they are required to screen their parking lot from adjacent residences. They have been notified about the requirement to maintain the plantings.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Committee cannot make a decision about this, and they recommended 3-0 to refer it to the Planning Commission to consider whether there should be a height limit on natural barriers.

FORT MEIGS CEMETERY FENCE

There was discussion about granting some sort of exception to the Fort Meigs Cemetery regarding their fence. Mr. Walters stated that the Code says that the City will play by its own rules. He questioned how we tell others in the St. Rte. 25 Corridor Overlay that they are required to do a masonry wall, but give an exception to the cemetery.

There was some discussion about the purpose of the fence. Ms. Kabat noted that it is not continuous, and Mr. Walters stated that concerns were previously raised about vehicle accidents. He suggested that strategically placed bollards could be just as effective.

There was also discussion about whether fences are needed. Mr. McCarthy said that he thought one or more of the Township Trustees questioned the need for fencing in one of the Joint Cemetery Board meetings.

Mr. McCarthy said that he is not inclined to change the rules for the reasons stated. Ms. Kabat said that the Administration would be happy to go to the next Cemetery Board meeting to discuss available options.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Kabat stated that at a previous City Council meeting Mr. McCarthy asked the Safety Committee to look at regulations regarding obstructions in the right-of-way. The Safety Committee discussed obstructions in the right-of-way and no changes were recommended.

Further, Section 1250.31(b) of the Planning and Zoning Code prohibits signs in the right-of-way, and there was discussion as to whether it should be modified or removed. Mr. Walters stated that this is the same section of the Code that has kept signs off of utility poles and kept the right-of-way free of political and advertising signs. Mr. McCarthy said that he sees no basis to get rid of it. Ms. Kabat said the Administration is not in favor of removing or modifying it.

Ms. Kabat noted that, in the 0 block of Maple Street, the City has installed rumble strips, flashing speed lights, and are in the process of doing a traffic study. However, the children at play signs have returned and multiplied in the right-of-way. Mr. Walters said that he was contacted by Steve Taylor Sr. of Maple Street who spoke on behalf of himself, his son, and his daughter and son-in-law, and asked that the signs on Maple Street be removed. Mr. McCarthy asked if the Administration had spoken to Mr. Goligoski. Ms. Kabat said she has not, but DGL has. Mr. McCarthy asked that the Administration reach out to Mr. Goligoski about the signs and give the residents a chance to fix it before the City threatens to move the signs. Mr. Kuhlman asked if signs in the right-of-way are common in areas with large right-of-ways. Mr. Walters said that it is more common in areas without sidewalks because the sidewalk helps delineate the right-of-way.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy G. McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tim McCarthy, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Committee

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.