

## **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**MARCH 7, 2025**

**5:00PM**

Mayor Spanos called meeting to order at 5:00PM

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Roll Call: Mr. Cory Brown-present/Mrs. Ruth Spanos-present/Mr. Curt Johnson-present.

**Recognition of Visitors:** Mr. Todd Hicks, Mrs. Lynn Arnold, Mr. Pat Preston, Mr. Ken Goff, Mr. John Stoddard, Mr. Rafael Calzada, Mr. Bill Preston, Mr. Tim Reed, Mr. Gary Ott, Mr. Shawn Cadiou.

Mrs. Spanos came forward and introduced the petition for a “Zoning Amendment-Rezoning of Property” requested by Mr. John Stoddard, Superintendent for the Berkshire School District. Mr. Stoddard is requesting the present zoning classification of M-2 (Industrial) to be rezoned to a B-2 (Highway-Business). The property to be rezoned is located at 13595 West Center – which is the old Ohio Department of Transportation building which Berkshire Schools recently purchased.

This building will be known as the Berkshire Workforce Development Campus as well as the Preston Repair Garage and Body Shop. The current diesel classroom will be relocating to this facility and will give the students a hands-on experience for the real world. The Berkshire School District and Preston Auto will reconstruct another building after the old building is demolished, which will house two classrooms. There will be a main garage: half of it will be for the district transportation offices and the other half will be for the live repair shop. Mr. Stoddard stated this will also help the students obtain a better job when they graduate.

Mr. Reed who resides on Seco Blvd inquired about the new building that will be built and how close to the property line will it lie. Mr. Preston stated the new building will be in the same vicinity as the old, nothing will change. Mr. Preston voiced there will be no more trucks backing up in the early mornings for salt pickup in the winter, this will be a quiet facility which should/would be a plus for the residents on Seco Blvd.

Residents have inquired about the difference between the “zoning districts” from and M-1 / M-2 which is considered (Industrial) to a B-1 (Central Business) / B-2 (Highway Business). Mr. Hicks reiterated the difference is the “permitted uses, primary use” of such zoning. The B-2 zoning request is consistent with the other businesses in the surrounding area.

One resident questioned the hours of operation at the school's campus, which Mr. Preston reiterated the normal businesses hours will be from 7:00AM to 6:00PM, Monday thru Friday. Residents voiced concerns that they may not be able to improve their own property such as install a fence, shed or even removing trees due to the Berkshire Workforce Development Campus going in. Mr. Hicks stated those are separate zoning codes with requirements and has regulations on fences as where it could be, the height of the fence and so forth.

Mr. Rafael Calzada who resides behind the facility inquired if both entryways (located on West Center & Rapids Road) plan to be kept open during the day. Mr. Preston reiterated both entryways will be open during the day but will be closed in the evening. Mr. Preston has invited the residents to come and look at what they have completed so far as well as the visual improvements. Mr. Johnson inquired if there was going to be any property tax to the Village. The Superintendent on the Berkshire School District stated no taxes will be paid due to the fact the school district is tax exempt. Mr. Preston stated that he will be the person paying the taxes on the property. One resident inquired if this would affect his property tax and home values at all and will taxes increase? Mr. Hicks mentioned when the Auditors assess the property of the resident, this use will not impact the value of the property.

Mr. Preston mentioned Ford Motor Company will sponsor the school and put the student into a training program. This will include diesel, welding and more but will be under the supervision of the Ford Motor Company. When the students graduate, they will be given the A.C.E. Training Program certificate (Automotive Career Exploration) which states they have complied with and past a certified mechanics course.

Residents in the audience stated they had read there may be a future to house other programs for the school and are inquiring about more buildings being constructed on the property. It was noted by Mr. Preston that there are no other plans to construct any more buildings on that property.

Mrs. Spanos stated the board makes a recommendation to Council that the Planning Commission wishes to agree and move forward with the zoning change. Once the meeting is with council and they approve the zoning change, then the zoning change may move forward.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to accept the zoning change from the present classification of M-2 Industrial to the zoning classification of Highway Business B-2, seconded by Mr. Brown. All in favor? AYE! by voice vote motion passed.

Mrs. Spanos made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Johnson.

Meeting adjourned at 5:27PM.