

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

DAYTON LEGAL BLANK, INC., FORM NO. 10148

MIAMI TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION

Held

October 5, 2023

(YEAR)

The Miami Township Zoning commission met in regular session on Thursday, October 5, 2023, at 7:00 pm at the Miami Township Civic Center, 6101 Meijer Drive, Miami Township, Ohio 45150.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Baumgarth.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Baumgarth.

Upon roll call the following members were present: Jeff Baumgarth, Ed Marcin, Tim Brandstetter, Carol Turchick and Karen Wikoff. Also present: Planning & Zoning Administrator Brian Elliff, Board Secretary Lori Pegg, Township Administrator Jeff Wright, and Legal Counsel Joe Braun.

Ms. Turchick made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 7, 2023, meeting, seconded by Mr. Brandstetter. All voted "AYE," Mr. Brandstetter abstained.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case #590, Cincinnati Classical Academy, 6285-6287 Tri-Ridge Blvd. was called, and the Notice of Public Hearing was read.

Mr. Elliff noted the applicant requested a District Zone Change of 14.32 acres from "I" Planned Industrial District to "A" Agricultural District to operate a K-12 Charter School with an eventual enrollment of 1,300 students in grades K-12. The location contains two office/manufacturing buildings joined by an elevated, enclosed walkway. The buildings were formerly occupied by the International Paper Company.

Mr. Elliff reviewed the staff report for the case in detail.

Issues noted conflict with the very recent policy planning for the Location, and additional concerns include spot zoning, the inappropriateness of agricultural zoning at this location, inconsistency with other policy guidance on correct school placement, a nearby shooting range, the intermixing of school children and activity in an industrial area, limited access off of a local road, the changing of setbacks and buffering for adjoining industrial, and that there are no easements in place over a private roadway that provides the only point of access to the Location.

Mr. Elliff then recited the comments from the Miami Township Fire Department, also confirmed in the staff report.

Dr. Jed Hartings, President & Founder of Cincinnati Classical Academy gave an overview of their school and its student population. Classical is a public community (charter) school that is tuition-free and open to all Ohio residents. It was founded by a volunteer board of Greater Cincinnati residents to provide a public option for traditional, classical education. The school partners with Hillsdale College for its curriculum and for support in best practices and professional development. It is one of twenty-five Hillsdale College member schools in the nation, and the only one in Ohio.

Classical opened in the 2022-23 school year with 455 students in grades K-6 and plans to add a grade each year until it is K-12 with up to 1300 students. With 98% student retention from the inaugural year, there are 602 students enrolled for 2023-24 and an additional 450 students on the waiting list. Notably the student population is drawn from a wide geographic distribution, enrolled students hail from 60 different ZIP codes, 35 school districts and 6 counties. Mr. Hartings gave an overview of their curriculum and their core values.

Held _____,

(YEAR)

Mr. Hartings addressed some of the concerns presented by the Zoning Commission in their denial, including the proximity of the building to the shooting range, the economic benefits of the school, the impact on the local school district and traffic.

Mr. David Robertson, attorney for Classical, discussed the opportunity that the Township has to house this school. He believes there are two issues, whether this is productive reuse or not and what's the proper zoning method. He believes staff thinks that productive reuse does not exist. They are willing to adapt to any zoning method the Township recommends including a variance as was granted on a neighboring property.

Mr. Robertson shared a letter of support from the property owner, Mr. Rob Smyjunas, who is out of the country on business. Mr. Robertson also noted that Classical has received bonds to lease option to buy the property from Mr. Smyjunas.

Mr. Baumgarth asked for any correspondence. Ms. Pegg gave a summary of the letters submitted both for and against the zone change, all of which were forwarded to the members of the Zoning Commission. Noting that we received approximately 40 letters and 25% were for the zone change and 75% against.

Mr. Baumgarth asked for any public comments in opposition to the zone change first.

Mr. Alan Darnowsky, 6635 Palmer Place. He is upset that the school group is not concerned with the loss of property taxes and is not a good neighbor in their current location.

Mr. Eric Becker, 65-year resident of Miami Township, noted that the businesses around other schools did not increase because the school being located there. He also mentioned that as they have said it is a destination school, which is much different than being a part of the community.

There being no other speakers in opposition, he opened up the floor to comments in favor of the zone change. A number of parents and students spoke about the impact this school has already made in their lives and what the zone change would mean for their school.

Chairman Baumgarth closed the open portion of the meeting and asked for the recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Administrator.

Mr. Elliff noted that staff has reviewed the application and plan and recommends that the Zoning Commission adopt a motion recommending DENIAL.

The Commission discussed the zone change and the recommendation. The land use plan was discussed and the longevity of a school at this property.

Mr. Brandstetter made a motion to deny the request, seconded by Mr. Marcin and all voted "AYE."

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2023, at 7:00 pm.

Sincerely,



Jeff Baumgarth, Chairman



Lori J. Pegg, Secretary

Cc: file