

ROCKY FORK-BLACKCLICK ACCORD
MEETING MINUTES - Approved
Thursday, November 21, 2024

I. Call to order.

The Rocky Fork – Blacklick Accord Implementation Panel held a regular meeting on November 21, 2024 in the New Albany Village Hall. Chair Smithers called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and asked to hear the roll.

Those answering roll call:

Mr. Brubaker	present
Mr. Sellers	present
Mr. Siebenaler	present – arrived at 4:21 p.m.
Mr. Paul	absent
Ms. Boni	absent
Mr. Smithers	present
Mr. Herskowitz	present
Mr. Chappellear	present
Mr. Harper	present

Having six voting members present, the panel had a quorum to transact business.

Staff present: Columbus Department of Development Planner Nolan Harshaw, New Albany Community Development Department Planner Kylie Blackburn, New Albany Clerk of Council Jennifer Mason.

II. Record of proceedings. June 20, 2024

Chair Smithers asked whether there were any corrections to the June 20, 2024 meeting minutes.

Hearing none, Panel Member Sellers moved for approval of the June 20, 2024 meeting minutes. Panel Member Herskowitz seconded the motion.

Upon roll call: Mr. Sellers abstain, Mr. Herskowitz yes, Mr. Chappellear yes, Mr. Harper yes, Mr. Brubaker yes, Mr. Smithers yes. Having six yes votes, the motion passed and the June 20, 2024 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

III. Old business.

Chair Smithers noted that the meeting was not a public forum. He then asked whether there was any old business.

Planner Harshaw answered no.

Chair Smithers introduced the first and only case and asked to hear from staff.

IV. New business.

(Review procedure: staff report; applicant presentation; panel comments; public comments)

1.

Premier Storage: 6955 Harlem Road

Conceptual review regarding a Columbus application to rezone, with variance, parts of parcels 010-278013 and 2200001876 generally located on the west side of Harlem Road and north of Central College Road.

Acreage: 4.3 +/-
Current Zoning Rural
RFBA District: Village Residential
Proposed Zoning: Limited Manufacturing
Applicant(s): Colliers/Premier Development Partners
Property Owner(s): Norman Singer

Planner Harshaw delivered the staff report.

Chair Smithers administered the oath to the applicants and invited them to speak in support of the application.

Applicants Tom Gustafson, Matt Davis, and Ross Farro spoke in support of the application. The proposed self-storage facility is intended as an amenity to the community. These facilities assist people in keeping recreational vehicles and other personal property items out of the public eye while also keeping the property safe. These facilities assist renters and homeowners. Self-Storage has determined there are 50,000 residents within a three-mile radius of the site. The applicants believe this is a high-quality build. At 50,000 residents there is a demand of over 200,000 square feet but the proposed facility is under that square footage. This facility will have a drive through lane and unloading will take place inside. Most self-storage clients are women, and safety is of primary importance to them. Mr. Gustafson explained the layout of the buildings and the different types of units. He explained that each lessor will be given an access code, and the only people with codes will be admitted. Mr. Farro continued that he is a cofounder of Premier Development in Cleveland. Observers will not see much activity around the facility. It was designed to look like an office building, and not a storage building. It will have white fencing in front. Mr. Farro asserted that this concept will be well-received and will offer convenience to the residents.

Chair Smithers opened the application for discussion from the panel.

Panel Member Brubaker clarified that it was two parcels owned by the same person and the lot would be split and the owner would continue to live on his portion.

Mr. Gustafson explained that was correct. The lot was annexed into Columbus. The owner would retain the northern parcel as his man land and the lower portion would become the location of the storage facility. The actual division was presented at the prior meeting.

Panel Member Chappellear stated that he would like to see the proposed division of the property. Across the street is Plain Township and there are approximately seven older homes there.

Panel Member Brubaker stated that the panel's issue is that the residents with homes that back up to the building will not be happy, he also noted the possible increase in traffic and that a traffic study was not required.

Mr. Gustafson stated that they have thought through the lighting on the property, they have talked with the neighbors. He continued that the surrounding property was changing and was ripe for development. He further noted that traffic associated with this facility was minimal.

Panel Member Herskowitz noted the mounding and asked if that was permitted.

Planner Harshaw answered yes, if the setback was reduced then mounding was permitted.

Panel Member Herskowitz noted that 95 feet was on the rendering and asked whether the required setback was 100 feet and if so, would a variance be required.

Mr. Gustafson responded that they were told the required setback was 50-feet from the minor arterial right of way.

Planner Harshaw confirmed that 50 feet was correct.

Mr. Gustafson stated that the building could be moved if needed.

Panel Member Herskowitz asked about storm water management.

Mr. Gustafson stated that they would be tying into the storm sewer and no further action was needed but would install a retention basin if needed.

Panel Member Herskowitz stated that they may need to work with an engineer.

Planner Harshaw continued that the neighboring property had a retention basin.

Mr. Gustafson stated they would install a basin if needed.

Panel Member Herskowitz asked whether a caretaker would be living on-site.

Mr. Gustafson said no, nobody would be living on the property. Staff would be present during business hours. And that no access to the facility would be permitted after 10:00 p.m.

Panel Member Harper noted that staff's recommendation seemed to be impactful to the design and asked whether they had considered the staff's recommendations.

Mr. Farro responded that they had never done a pitched roof on an industrial building and there was no benefit to a pitched roof. Regarding the glass, Mr. Farrow explained that the glass will be reflective, persons outside will not be able to see into the building. Reflective glass increases privacy, customer security, and energy efficiency.

Panel Member Brubaker confirmed the security measures at the facility, that access would be controlled by a closed gate which would only open with a valid security code.

Mr. Gustafson continued, regarding the village appeal – there is a split rail fence on the front. Finally, regarding the deciduous trees – planting those trees would hide the beauty of the building. Mr. Gustafson stated that there will be trees that are retained, and further that the building material would be pre-cast and high-quality but not work well with natural materials.

Panel Member Chappellear remarked that the RFBA includes Plain Township, New Albany, and Columbus, and one of the purposes of the accord was to promote one visual in the three jurisdictions. As development on the Columbus portion of the property continues, variances are requested and setbacks are decreased. Homeowners are selling and apartments are being built. For the prior storage facility in New Albany, he suggested making the facility look like a barn, and everyone is pleased with the result. With the storage facility on Hamilton Road, many were unhappy and did not want their homes in the shadow of that building, which is exactly what happened. He appreciated all of the testimony but did not see how this building fits in this environment.

Mr. Gustafson appreciated Panel Member Chappelear's remarks, but added that the nature of business and the look of these facilities is changing and developing in response to the services required.

Panel Member Chappelear confirmed the square footage of the building frontage. One of the problems they had was the length of the building fronting the road in a residential area, a long blank building did not fit in that area of the community. Despite the fact that this facility might be needed and would offer convenience, it did not fit visually. He also mentioned that the size of the parcels in the accord area was getting smaller and the owners of those properties were stuck. He recommended modifying the look of the buildings so that they blend with the surrounding community. He was unwilling to say yes to this on this piece of property. As a panel over the years, they have been interested in how many trees will be saved and how will the storm water be managed. It was a nice building but it did not fit in this area.

Mr. Davis noted that adjacent properties were three stories tall, and that residential garages would be backing up to the subject property. He understood Panel Member Chappelear's concern. He noted Broadway Bound Dance Centre looked like a barn. This is an underserved area, the applicants are open to recommendations.

Planner Harshaw added that one of the main points in the checklist was aligning the development with the existing structures. The existing structures are brick, and staff felt that this building would be improved if it was also brick.

Panel Member Chappelear stated that he might be more agreeable if the building fit more with the ambiance of the drive.

Mr. Farro asked whether it would be more agreeable if the building was moved further back from the road.

Panel Member Chappelear responded that pre-cast cement slabs were visible and although some look like stones they did not quite fit.

Panel Member Brubaker agreed that there was a need for a storage facility and that this building looked good, however he agreed with Panel Member Chappelear that this is not a good fit in the community.

Mr. Farro responded that they were not married to pre-cast and could modify their plan.

The panel thanked the applicants for making the trip from Cleveland and recommended that the applicants look at the service complex, and the schools for reference.

Panel Member Harper recommended they look at the rendering for the facility on Walnut.

Mr. Davis noted that that location was much more rural than this location.

Panel Member Chappelear remarked that new construction was underway in that area. He further referenced prior meeting minutes indicating that there was no development on the land for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Gustafson stated there were no plans for a bank and that the owner wanted to retain his portion of the land for his recreational use. He also asked whether the application could move forward if modifications were made.

Chair Smithers recommended that the applicants look at the four staff recommendations for guidance moving forward. The panel would be examining those when the application was scheduled for review and action.

Mr. Farro responded that the building can be modified as recommended by the panel and staff, to include brick, to include a retention pond, and the building could be moved back. He asserted that the building can be redesigned.

They can give a first-class product, they want to be in this community and want to give the community what they want.

Panel Member Chappellear recommended that the applicants return with graphics that will be projected on the screen and included the surrounding properties.

Mr. Gustafson asked about the timing of their return and then a presentation to Columbus City Council.

Chair Smithers responded that there are submittal deadlines and the panel meets on the third Thursday of the month.

There was discussion of scheduling and submittal deadlines.

Panel Member Brubaker stated that if the applicants returned with a conceptual review, the panel has the discretion to proceed to a vote on the application.

Chair Smithers encouraged the applicants to revisit the four staff recommendations, and to work with staff.

There was some discussion of the reliability and the merits of particular professional football teams.

V. Other business.

Chair Smithers asked if there was any other business.

VI. Adjourn.

Hearing no response, Panel Member Sellers made a motion to adjourn.

Without objection Chair Smithers adjourned the November 21, 2024 meeting of the Rocky Fork Blacklick Accord Implementation Panel at 5:22 p.m.

Submitted by: Deputy Clerk Madriguera, Esq. with gratitude to Clerk of Council Mason for clerking this meeting.