

# Documenters

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## City Planning Commission

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Agency: [Cleveland City Planning Commission](#)

Date: May 3, 2024

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## Summary

- It seems much needs to happen to find appropriate space for legal marijuana dispensaries.
- The city has very specific requirements for approvals of business signage.
- City-owned properties are set to be repurposed for housing.

## Follow-Up Questions

- How do the various departments work together and what are their roles? At this meeting, commissioners referenced the departments of Building, Zoning, Landmarks, etc. The City Planning director said they are looking to streamline.
- Do staff from these departments present agenda items on behalf of others? It seemed that many speakers were already known to the members of the commission.

## Notes

While watching the meeting being [livestreamed on YouTube](#) and also with additional review, it was difficult to identify the speakers. The video of the meeting itself was in the corner of the screen and was focused on the commission members and presenters but did not show additional people in the room, so attendance could not be determined. Several participants were active through WebEx, and several in-person speakers who seemed to be familiar with the commission members (and may in fact be city employees) did not introduce themselves or did so too quickly to be understood. Although members of the commission did not introduce themselves, they are listed on their [website](#), which also includes the [agenda](#) for this meeting.

Presentations and discussions were brief and efficient and included various forms of visual support. Each agenda item was addressed professionally and in a friendly manner

while remaining on topic. After each agenda item, a request for public comment was made, but there were none. Again, the camera angle did not show the audience in the room.

City Planning Director Joyce Pan Huang read the preamble, which gave information about open meeting law and the meeting rules and procedures. The meeting was called to order at 9:08 a.m. with a roll call. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

## **ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS**

**Ordinance No. xxx2024** was introduced (unknown speaker) on behalf of Council Member Kris Harsh of Ward 13, who was not present but sent a letter of support. Aerial and street views were shown of the easterly and westerly sides of Pearl Road between Germaine Avenue and Archmere Avenue, where the amendment would allow a zero foot mapped building setback from the property line to encourage more residential usage in this area, which currently includes many retail sites.

The amendment was approved.

## **ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS**

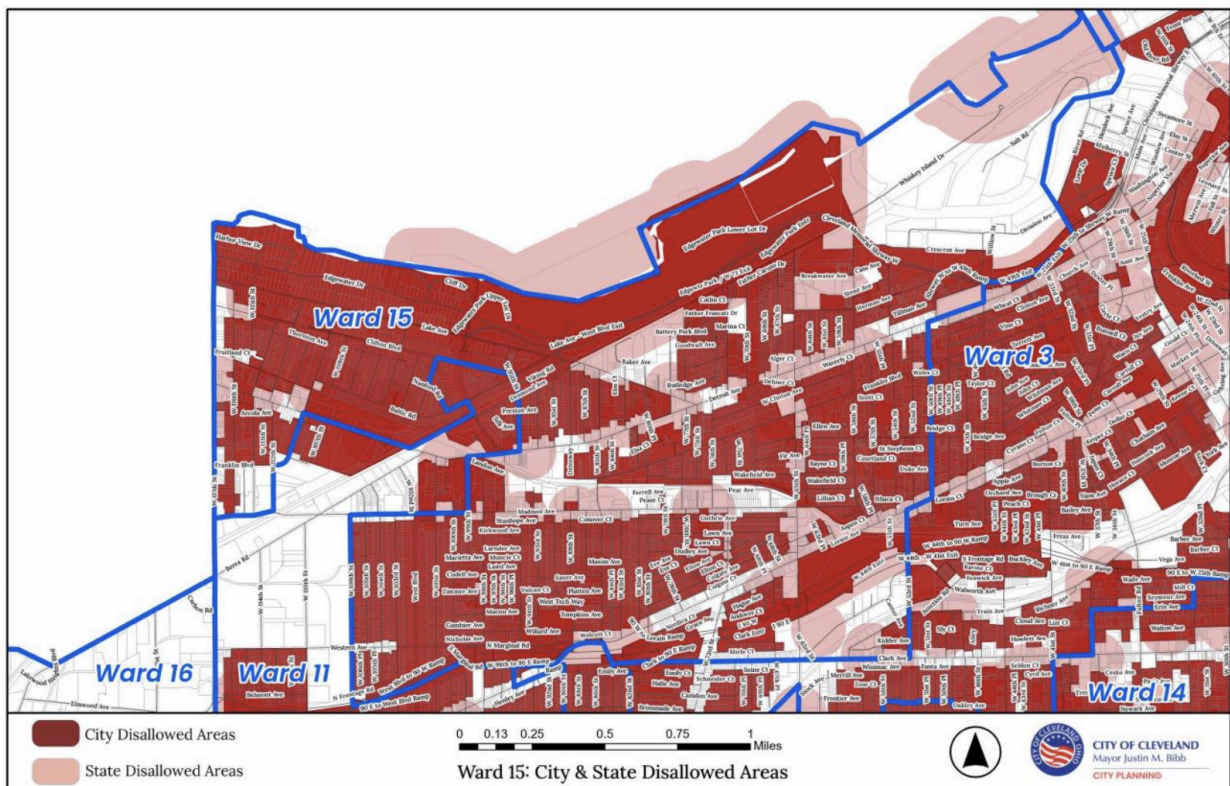
**Ordinance No. xxx 2024** (Citywide) to supplement Codified Ordinance of Cleveland by amending and adding chapters regarding marijuana cultivators, processors, dispensaries and testing laboratories for adult usage. *[Editor's note: Cleveland City Council has final approval of ordinances. This ordinance was unnumbered at the time of this meeting but has since been numbered [Ordinance 529-2024](#). Council read it for the first time at its May 6 meeting.]*

- Shannan Leonard, zoning staff, reviewed current marijuana laws and regulations in the State of Ohio.
- Cleveland's zoning laws allow dispensaries only in General Retail and Industrial District locations, making the laws more strict than the state standards, which allow dispensaries in *any* Retail District.
- "Surrounding suburban communities such as Lakewood allow dispensaries in all commercial zoning districts," which may affect Cleveland's tax revenues, according to the [presentation](#).
- Changes proposed by the legislation would allow more usage of existing available structures and storefronts.
- A commission member had questions regarding density of these retailers within a specific ward, and Leonard said that other guidelines within the state law prevent

that with buffer zone requirements. *[Editor's note: Leonard said dispensaries cannot be within 500 feet of an existing dispensary or cultivator.]*

- Commission members and the speaker discussed that the proposal only provides more available places and does not affect the number of licenses that are issued. They also discussed whether the proposal would include mixed-use buildings and agreed that the specific topic needs more clarification and follow-up.
- City Planning proposes to expand the zoning districts that allow cultivators, processors, dispensaries, and testing laboratories from just General Retail to include Local Retail, Limited Retail, Shopping Center, and University (College) Retail districts.

*[Editor's note: From the [presentation](#), here's a comparison of areas disallowed by the city and areas disallowed by the state in Ward 15 and parts of other wards:]*



The motion was carried to move the change to zoning requirements forward.

## **DOWNTOWN/FLATS DESIGN REVIEW**

**DF 2024-018** Hi 5 Signage: Seeking final approval at 1052 Old River Road in Ward 3

The project representative, Jessica Ruff of [Ruff Neon Signs and Lighting Maintenance Inc.](#), was in person at the meeting and sworn in, although another person (unknown) gave most of the information.

- Request is for a 68-square-foot sign while the maximum permitted under existing code is 12 square feet, which the members agreed seems inadequate
- Issue was brought to this commission as it is able to [vary the sign code](#) for specific criteria of design compatibility, design guidelines and with minimum variation
- Photos were shared of nearby businesses that also have large signage
- Commission Chair Lillian Kuri said that it is appropriate to include this body instead of the Board of Zoning Appeals, adding that going through the commission will be a quicker process and it can use a “design lens as opposed to a technical lens”
- A cheerful discussion included another criteria regarding whether the sign is “cool” and wondering how the smaller sign allotment size was determined historically

The motion to approve was carried.

**DF2024-019** Public Square parking garage signage: Seeking final approval

This agenda item was postponed until the next meeting.

**DF2024-020** Oswald Co. signage: Seeking final approval

Project representative: Laura Higgins-Woyma from [Brilliant Electric Sign](#) was sworn in remotely. She deferred to John McRae, who presented the information via WebEx

- [Oswald](#) is one of the nation’s largest independent insurance brokerage and risk management firms. It has been in Cleveland for 131 years
- The company is moving to the building at 950 Main Street
- They are asking for three replacement skyline signs on the east, west and south side of the building and an addition of their name to an existing ground wall with the names of other companies
- Photos were shown of the building at different vantage points
- They went through the relevant Design Review Committee yesterday and included revised drawings for today’s meeting
- Another (unknown) speaker indicated that variances will be needed and exact

calculations were not available today, but they do meet the eligibility for the variances due to having 55% to 60% of the floor space in the building

- Aesthetics were discussed regarding spacing of the signage on the building, and McRae explained the constraints due to the building itself. One of the commissioners described the signage on the ground wall as “a real mess,” while noting it is not their fault and it is best to work this out for this important company

The motion to approve was carried.

### **MANDATORY REFERRALS**

**Ordinance No. 406-2024** (Introduced by City Council Members Stephanie Howse-Jones, Anthony Hairston and Blaine Griffin and by departmental request): Authorizing the mayor and the Commissioner of Purchases and Supplies to sell certain city-owned properties no longer needed for the city’s public use

- Properties at 1848 East 101st St. and 9910 Woodward Ave. to be sold to Gordon Crossing Land Co., LLC for [purposes of future development](#)
- A slide presented at the meeting included the following; “Gordon Crossing will be a new construction 4-story general occupancy building with 54 units to add to Cleveland’s much needed workforce housing”
- Anticipated construction start is July 2024 and being placed in service by the fourth quarter of 2025
- Will provide mixed-income housing in the historic Hough Neighborhood

This motion to approve was carried.

**Ordinance No. 407-2024** (Introduced by Council Members Kerry McCormack and Kevin Bishop and by departmental request): Authorizing the mayor and the Commissioner of Purchases and Supplies to sell certain city-owned property no longer needed for the city’s public use located at the southeast corner of Grovewood Avenue and East 164th St. to Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity, or its designee, for purposes of future development. *[Editor’s note: The commission [previously delayed](#) a decision on this.]*

- One of the commission members said that Ward 8 Council Member Mike Polensek was taking the lead in a partnership with [Habitat for Humanity](#) in using its model to build single-family homes and that the director of Cleveland Public Works said that he would sign off on it
- The Parks and Recreation Plan Manager presented information including aerial and street-level photos of the lots as well as a map of the parks in the area

- Existing parks, playgrounds and an indoor pool at the Collinwood Rec center provide a lot of amenities and there are city-owned spaces that continue to be in partnership with Metroparks, a rep from the Mayor's Office of Capital Projects said
- The space to be used by Habitat for Humanity is the site of a former pool and has been determined to be best used for housing
- Bob Whitney from Cleveland Habitat for Humanity joined the meeting via WebEx, sharing that the plan is for 10 homes, each with a 1.5 car garage, and affirmed that the location matches their mission of green space and parks spaces for families to use
- Polensek was not at the meeting, but a member of the commission, the city's Parks and Recreation Plan manager, and Whitney gave him credit for finding this property and directing it to Habitat for Humanity.

This motion to approve was carried.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS**

See the meeting [agenda](#) for details. A member of the commission asked the others to quickly review them in their notes. Nothing was read or discussed, and all motions to approve were carried.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Huang gave the following updates:

- A person hired to be a senior planner in the zoning section will begin on May 13.
- Xavier Bay was promoted to the role of city planner from senior assistant.
- They are working through evaluation of the Design Review process and have about 100 people across different design review committees providing feedback
- She gave a shout-out to Michael Bosak, a staff member, for taking the lead to help clean the 6th floor attic at City Hall, which has planning records from the last 60 or so years. Cleveland's operations chief mandated that this occur, and the city will be working with the Cleveland Public Library to determine what should be archived.
- An internal analysis of the city's permitting process has finished. Members will be sharing their PowerPoint soon. They are trying to streamline the various departments
- She attended the [National Planning Conference](#), which ties into the Cleveland 2040 citywide plan. They want to send a pre-survey to the public and hire consultants to gather information on topics, engagement and process

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

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