

**RAVENNA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
JANUARY 30, 2024
6:00PM
RAVENNA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Frank Seman called meeting to order at 6:00PM

ROLL CALL:	Bill Barber	Present
	Tim Contant	Present
	Mark Hairston	Present
	Carmen Laudato	Present
	Frank Seman	Present
	Jonathan Jennings	Present
	Josh Smith	Present
	Bob Finney	Present

Frank Seman entertained a motion to excuse Jonathan Jennings; Bill Barber made the motion and Carmen Laudato seconded.

ALL AYES: Jonathan Jennings excused. Arrived later, no need to be excused.

MINUTES: Approval of minutes October 31, 2023.

Frank Seman entertained a motion to approve minutes, Mark Hairston made a motion to approve, and Carmen Laudato seconded the motion.

ALL AYES: MINUTES APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS: Not Presenting-Withdrawn

Fred Miavitz of 100 Romito Street Ravenna, Ohio
Requesting retracement survey for 250 S. Sycamore Street and 405 W.
Spruce Avenue. Parcel #31-361-13-00-047-000 Zoning: I-1

NEW BUSINESS: Angelo and Nick Battaglia of 455 W. Highland Ave. LLC.
-Requesting site plan approval and lot split for 451 and 455
West Highland Avenue. Parcel #31-360-04-00-082-000 Zoning: R-4

Angelo Battaglia: We are asking where the red line is between the house and bar at the Spano property, we purchased, we would like to put a fence there and separate the Spano Bar from the house. We purchased all three lots, the property is in a new LLC we started, because we wanted the liability to stay in the LLC because it is a bar. When we lot split this, the house will be in our investment company, and the bar will remain in 455 LLC. So, our plan was to demo the garage, which is in bad shape and then run a fence down the end of property and to the left would be a solid wood fence. There is a wood fence running down the west side of the property, so we would continue it over to a chain link fence that would divide the property. We had the property surveyed, it shows lot 5 and lot 4, the surveyor told me that happened years ago because this was some kind of different parcel.

Bill Barber: Could you explain the lot survey?

Angelo Battaglia: See the survey, there is a line right down the center of the bar, that is because years ago, the property was in subdivision, and that is where the lot was, but this is now all one parcel.

Bob Finney: So, Planning Commission is being asked to approve the lot split, which gives me the ability to sign the plat. The plat is substandard, meaning that setbacks and width and location of the lot, I need permission from Planning Commission to sign the plat.

Mark Hairston: Do you have any plans of changes or updates for the building the bar is in?

Angelo Battaglia: What I am planning to do is to fix up the house, it is not in that bad of shape, put a new roof on and make sure it is right and we want to rent the house. Once the weather is good, we will put a new roof on the bar, paint it and clean it up. We are removing the garage and then if allowed we want to make parking, so there is parking behind the building.

Angelo Battaglia: It will be behind the fence, it will be its own parking lot entrance and exit, probably about 8 parking spots.

Mark Hairston: My reason for the question is that I live in the neighborhood, I am familiar with the property. The fence that you want to put in is already pretty tight between the house and the bar, there is no wiggle room.

Angelo Battaglia: The fence will make it no different that where the dumpster is now. There is an old foundation on the side of the house, there must have been a room there 40-50 years ago and took it down. The foundation is across the driveway and is on the side of the house, maybe a fruit cellar

room in the past. I am going to dig that footer out, straighten it out and put stone driveway material through the whole thing.

Jonathan Jennings: Is this adjusting the lot line between 4 and 5 or just splitting the parcel?

Bob Finney: Just splitting the parcel and creating two separate parcels.

Carmen Laudato: Where is the fence going to be, on the overview where the two cars are?

Angelo Battaglia: See the dumpster? It will be here at an angle, that lands right in the middle of the dumpster, it will come straight down, right to here and even with the fence. This is all wood fence, this will continue to be wood fence, and then the fence will come up and follow this diagram to come up like that.

Carmen Laudato: So, if you lived here, where are you parking?

Angelo Battaglia: Right where the parking lot is, the parking lot will come right here, you will still have all this parking, back yard here.

Bob Finney: A couple years ago there were issues with parking and City Council discussed it at length. The city has a parking lot on Highland Avenue, where the old concrete plant was, the bar was told they could park there and walk. The Big Dog uses that for parking and Spano Bar could use that too, approximately 300 feet away. There is a lot of spill over parking if needed. I don't know how many bar stools are in there, maybe 15?

Carmen Laudato: So, the plan is to keep Spano's a bar?

Angelo Battaglia: Correct.

Mark Hairston: Yes, I know the current guy who is running it, and he is planning to be there for a while.

Carmen Laudato: The land needs to be replotted so the fence can go in?

Bob Finney: No, this is so he can separate the two lots, he is just going to run the fence down the new property line, the proposed property line, so he can separate the bar from the residential house. The house has been unoccupied for several years.

Carmen Laudato: I am familiar with Spano's, I usually park at the Big Dog and walk.

Bob Finney: Angelo is concerned that if this is occupied by a residential family, they don't want the bar to intervene.

Bill Barber: So, the fence will keep the house and the bar separate?

- Angelo Battaglia:** I don't want to rent the house and have little kids going over to the bar, we don't want that liability, so we want to straighten the whole thing out, put in a parking lot, looks like parking has always been a problem. We are going to clean it up, whatever we have to do to make it right. My first initial plan was to, if you look at the large map, was to come down here with the fence, and then continue the fence to Vine Street, then do a curb cut and put in a concrete apron, then you could have this as parking and then they would come up this way and go out. But with that plan, there isn't enough parking and no green space for the house.
- Bob Finney:** Correct, almost nothing meets the zoning code by doing it that way, the decision would be forever, but the bar may not be there forever. Angelo said if this guy is not going to run it as a bar, he will turn it into residential property. There is a Spano Bar following, so we felt this was the most accommodating for the future.
- Frank Seman:** Mr. Battaglia has been in to see us a couple of times before, and he does what he tells you he's going to do, and he does good work.
- Bob Finney:** It is not traditional in any respect of the property, and it is non-conforming.
- Frank Seman:** Yes, non-conforming, which is okay as long as it is being used, if you let it go for over a year, you lose the zoning and it becomes residential, if it is empty and not used.
- Jonathan Jennings:** So is the issue the lot size, the setback or all the above?
- Angelo Battaglia:** No, so we could rent the house as is, the bar is already rented, and we could walk away and do nothing, and let them deal with it. We want to make it better for the bar, and safer for the people we would rent the property to. The easiest would be to just rent it and move on.
- Jonathan Jennings:** I applaud you for trying to fix and make it better, I am trying to make sure I understand what we are making an exception for. Is it minimum lot size, is it the setback from the house to the fence?
- Bob Finney:** This is in the R-4 zoning district, the minimum width of the lot is 60 feet, so dividing this makes both lots substandard. The original proposal with the entrance off Vine Street and parking, the lot for the house would have been way too small, and we couldn't make anything work. In this case it doesn't meet the code, but it is fair to say the bar is going to stay operating for many years and if not, it will be a residential home. So, whether he puts up a fence or not, Planning Commission is hearing his proposal, but it is not based on the fence, but based on the property line.

Angelo Battaglia: The surveyor, Dan Stankavich, said to tell everyone that if we do this lot split, there will be 40 feet of frontage on Highland for Spano's bar property. The way the fence is angled so you don't cut any of the apron off.

Bob Finney: So, they can utilize the whole apron, and if you drew a straight line, it would cut off half of the apron.

Carmen Laudato: You know my thoughts on hearing about new rental properties, more renters, drags down people's property values. That is the holdback for me, and if I had a family, as much as I love Spano's, there is no way I would rent something next to a bar.

Frank Seman entertained a motion, Mark Hairston made a motion to allow the lot split into two parcels and put a fence dividing them.

Carmen Laudato: So, then there would be two 40-foot lots with 45-foot width? How much dimension are we losing by doing this?

Bob Finney: The bar would be 40 feet and the house would 50 feet, right now it is 90 feet wide total.

Bill Barber seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:	Bill Barber	Yes
	Tim Contant	Yes
	Mark Hairston	Yes
	Carmen Laudato	No
	Frank Seman	Yes
	Jonathan Jennings	Yes
	Josh Smith	Yes

SIX AYES AND ONE NAY: MOTION APPROVED

Bob Finney: Make sure your surveyor meets with the county to see what they need.

Mark Hairston: I really appreciate you answering my original question of what improvements you would be making to the property, and I appreciate the work you are doing in the community. Every property I have seen you purchase; you have done a nice job of cleaning up and making it look better. I do understand your concern, Carmen, about rentals, but the reality is that it is a vacant house that was going to be dilapidated, now in this case it will be improved.

Angelo Battaglia: When we cleaned it out, we found needles and homeless people had been squatting there.

Bob Finney: You could see through to the foundation and basement in spots.

OLD BUSINESS: **Reed Memorial Library 167 E Main Street-Pavilion updated information.**

Bob Finney: There are three pictures from the Library, the original Pavilion was going to be a steel structure that was going to be ordered and assembled, they have decided to go a different direction and stick frame it. It will have the exact same footprint; they have just modified it a little bit. I just wanted you to see the new renderings, this is not something the Planning Commission needs to approve, I wanted you to be aware in case the public comments that it didn't match the original picture. Function does not change, location not changing, the look is just a little different. If you have any questions, ask Amy from the Library.

OTHER

NEW BUSINESS: **Lighting**

Carmen Laudato: I have noticed this in other communities, the vape/smoke shop places, I have seen that they have the ultra-bright white lights that you probably can see from space. Does Ravenna have something in place where people can have electronic signs and lights but have a restriction on the brightness? That Auto Hub place has a flashing bright white sign and there is a house right across the street. In a lot of communities, I have seen the vape/smoke shops use that white trim on the whole store front, I think if we don't have something in place that we address it.

Bob Finney: Yes, I have seen that and the Auto Hub flashing sign, tonight actually, at the Auto Hub at Main Street and Diamond, Battaglia's property. Our sign code does state that "signs shall not blink, flash or intermittently display" I tell folks it has to hold a message for 8 seconds and the sign cannot build, like a stick of dynamite running across because it is distracting to drivers. At one point we asked Dairy Queen to turn their sign down because it was so bright. I did see that sign tonight, and it is bright and annoying and shouldn't be doing that.

Carmen Laudato: My concern is that if we get any more smoke/vape shops, they are all using the bright lights not just on a little sign but the entire store front, is

there anything we can do to restrict that, is that done here at Planning Commission or is that a Council action?

Frank Seman: I think that is something Council would get behind that, I don't think that would be a problem.

Bob Finney: I am not a lighting person, but I am guessing that it is a 6K light, that is how bright it is, and standard wall packs are 2K.

Josh Smith: Are you talking about the LEDs they line their windows with?

Carmen Laudato: Yes, a lot of them are springing up in Kent.

Josh Smith: In Cleveland it is beauty supply stores, liquor stores, convenience stores, anywhere you want attention, and it is crazy bright.

Carmen Laudato: Yes, that is the concern to me is the brightness, and you can see it from anywhere in line of sight.

Bill Barber: Even the light that is at the Quick Med on Chestnut and Spruce.

Carmen Laudato: This is even brighter, brighter than daylight.

Bob Finney: Yes, I have been told about that too, we can discuss it with the Planning Committee next month and see if they would like to move something forward to Council. I would have to research and understand how we could enforce it, and let folks know you must turn it down.

Carmen Laudato: If we don't have something in the code then it is hard to enforce, I don't think it will deter the right kind of businesses.

Bob Finney: Correct, and we don't have anything in the code yet, but we should put that in.

Frank Seman: It would not deter business, we already have some limitations we can enforce for loudness, that went out and measured when we got some complaints, and if it is over a certain level, we told them to turn it down, I think it would be an easy transition to lighting.

Carmen Laudato: Can we put that on for the next meeting?

Bill Barber: It is also frustrating when we gave the okay for the convenience store on Chestnut and Highland, and that is bright, and they have all the banner signs. It does not fit into a transition from a residential neighborhood to a downtown neighborhood.

Bob Finney: The tricky part with that location is that Chestnut is all C-1, I spoke to the architect he said that was only a 2K light, standard wall pack light that is

very bright. If someone was to come to Planning Commission with a plan, that is something you can discuss and require a different type of light, maybe one that points down instead of out.

Jonathan Jennings: Is there something we can do or does that fall into someone else's area?

Bob Finney: From a plan review, Battaglia is going to receive a letter stating that Planning Commission approved his proposal to separate the lot as submitted. Sometimes Planning Commission has approved based on these limitations or criteria, that could be something Planning Commission when approve the light shall not be deemed too bright or they will have to turn it down or lose the approval.

Frank Seman: That is for when they come in here and ask us, I think we are looking for something that stops it, whether they come in or don't come it, and we will pursue that with Council.

Carmen Laudato: Thank you, I think that it has to be quantified, because too much or too little is so subjective.

Frank Seman: These are probably some questions we can ask Perspectus, because a lot of these lights are in the Historic District, and we are doing an analysis of that, and a meeting with them.

Bob Finney: Yes, and Planning Commission should be invited as well, and we are trying to get it scheduled. It looks like it will be on February 13th, the Design Review guidelines are being reviewed by a company that Council hired, and we would like input from committees, commission, Regional Planning, Main Street Ravenna, Chamber of Commerce, City Council, Design Review, Planning Commission and Board of Zoning. We will be sending a Zoom invite, knowing that not everyone will be able to make the meeting at 5pm. We will most likely have one more meeting and invite the public. I think the groups that we have already invited will be interested in attending.

Bill Barber: One question on rentals, and the gentleman with the house on Lincoln, has that ever taken off?

Bob Finney: No, it hasn't, and it has almost been a year and his permission will expire and he will have to come back to Planning Commission.

Mayor Seman entertained a motion to adjourn, Carmen Laudato made the motion and Josh Smith seconded the motion.

ALL AYES: MEETING ADJOURNED

Next meeting: February 27, 2024 @ 6:00PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Tiffany Holloway, Planning Commission Secretary