

Gates Mills Comprehensive Plan

Meeting #7 (3/7/23)

Discussion Notes

Distributed 3/22/23



Handouts for Meeting #7

The following items were emailed to the Advisory Committee on 3/1/23 and hard copies were distributed at the meeting.

- Discussion Questions
- Village-wide Residential Zoning Map
- Village Center Existing Conditions Maps – Zoning, Land Use and Aerial Photo
- Key Provisions of Existing Zoning Regulations for Residential Development: U1 Residential District (Ch 1163) and Conservation Development District (Ch 1160)
- Summary of Bruce Rinker's Defensible Zoning Presentation (condensed from 9/27/22 meeting summary)
- Land Use and Zoning Best Practices (updated from 9/27/22 handout)

Advisory Committee Members in Attendance

Chip's Table:

Mary Jo Schmidt
Ann Zoller
Kim Brewster (Keely Davidson-Bennett)
Scott Broome
Shane Bigelow
Sean O'Hagan
Will Krause
Linda Olejko
Elizabeth Horvitz

Sandra's Table:

Deej Lincoln
Sharon Bodker
Cynthia Zins
Sean O'Brien
Lindsay Steinbrink
Rob Galloway
Rick Marabito
Jennifer Pinto

Other Attendees

Jay "Chip" AuWerter, Village Council
Sandra Turner, Village Council
Kristin Hopkins, FAICP, CT Consultants
Sarah Sitterle, AICP, CT Consultants
Sara Carracher, Village Resident, notetaker

Meeting Introduction

An overview was provided of recent items that Village Council had authorized concerning the Village Center. A new coffee shop next to Sara's restaurant that will be open 6 days a week from 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The Village is exploring adding a second floor to the Burton Court building for Sara's bar and restaurant. It was

explained that the Village was looking for funds for the sidewalk between Gates Mills Elementary School and the Village Center.

It was mentioned that the focus of this meeting was to have the third and final set of small group discussions, and that the next step was the Town Hall forum scheduled for April 18th in the Gates Mills Elementary School gymnasium. After the Town Hall forum, the final Advisory Committee meeting will be scheduled for May, when the Committee will review the Town Hall forum results and set priorities. The draft Plan document will then be updated to note the committee's priority recommendations. The Council Co-Chairs will present the draft Plan to the Mayor and Village Council in June.

CT Consultants provided an overview of the three maps and noted how they would be referenced during the small group breakout sessions. There were questions about the 1999 Residential A1 zoning change regarding the 5-acre minimum lot size vs the status of the previous 2.5-acre requirement.

BREAKOUT TOPIC #1 – DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE CENTER:

Question #1: Do you favor maintaining the current zoning for areas located outside the Village Center?

Question #2: If yes, why? If no, why not?

Question #3: What are the implications?

<u>Chip's Table</u>	<u>Sandra's Table</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The group was asked their thoughts regarding the 5-acre lot requirement and whether the Comprehensive Plan should recommend any changes – more density/more development• Concern raised about previous failed conservation development attempt, i.e., the Lemmo proposal (781 Chagrin River Rd) from 2019.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Concern raised about the possibility of a lawsuit due to zoning◦ It was noted that some attorneys believe change to 5-acre zoning was a slippery slope.◦ It was noted that the only place the conservation development regulations could work would be on the one remaining large (100+ acres) property.◦ It was noted that the only other place dwellings with a conservation development could go was on the nursery property where existing dwellings were located.◦ It was noted there was a way to develop a conservation development if there was 25 acres and it met Village standards. It was stated that providing septic was the issue as economics did not work out.• A member mentioned that things are changing with baby boomers, etc, and people want walkable neighborhoods, example of Chagrin Falls walkable area with smaller homes.• Question asked about how to address smaller homes within the 5-acre zoning.• Question asked about allowing multi-family housing in commercial districts<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ If multi-family (MF) is allowed in commercial areas, allow outside Village Center in commercial area, such as Cedar Road by Gilmour Academy◦ With the commercial special areas, it was noted that attached dwellings in the \$500,000 range is what was meant to be feasible.• A member mentioned another area with long term potential for change - the four single family lots east of St. Francis church on the south side of Mayfield Rd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A member asked for a short explanation about the 1999 code change that increased the minimum lot size to 5 acres.• It was noted that there were development pressures at the time, interests on the part of developers to have more density in the community. The village being proactive, wanted to look at that and see what the impact would be on services. The Village created a land use plan that recommended the change to five-acre lots, went before the villagers and was voted.• Another person noted that there were also concerns about sewers: concern that even with a development with 2.5-acre lots, developers would install sanitary sewers, which would cause the Village to become part of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. Increasing to a minimum 5-acre lot would ensure new houses would be limited to an on-site septic system.• Members' raised questions/discussion noted:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ What would be the benefit? There doesn't seem to be any reason to change the current 5-acre requirement.◦ The village faces the same issues as 30 years ago related to services: infrastructure, police, fire department.• The group agreed that no changes to zoning outside of the village center were warranted:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Same considerations as 30 years ago still remain,◦ No reason to change,◦ If you start changing zoning, you must be able to support the change.• Conversation about conservation development:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ What it is?◦ What are the risks/downsides?◦ The committee members' comments ranged from - it was a good idea (keeps natural beauty), to not feeling comfortable with making a decision; it could promote development; no harm in staying silent on the topic.• One member didn't think the committee had enough information/background to consider any change;

It was noted that the lots are at the top of the hill, with utilities available. The medical office will eventually be improved, and the location would be more walkable eventually to get to healthcare and services nearby. The member mentioned that there was probably no development pressure currently but could be in the future. A different housing option may eventually be possible in this area.

- It was discussed that there was not a strong sense to unravel the zoning for the majority of the Village, but that some areas may make sense to consider changes.
 - Members agreed they are not aware of anyone with strong feelings to change the zoning.
 - There was no desire to change zoning for small pieces of property.
 - However, it was suggested that if a thoughtful proposal is submitted to the Village, the Village should consider the proposal if there was community support, proximity to amenities, and a benefit to the community as a whole.

recommended not even broaching the subject because it sounds like a slippery slope.

- Concerned that the provision promotes development.
 - The developer could more houses via the required yield plan than what is achievable, and it could lead to too much development, especially in areas where development shouldn't occur.
 - Noted that with climate change the Village already has tree canopy and stormwater runoff issues.
 - Recommended further study.
- Another member noted that conservation zoning is thought to be a good thing for land conservation - you're not putting in all kinds of driveways nor cutting down as many trees, and you are leaving a lot more of the natural areas undisturbed. The real barrier to why the Village doesn't have any such development is that there aren't many potential possibilities because the code requires at least 25 acres. There are only a few large parcels left. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to consider reducing the project site to about 20 or 15 acres. But you would need to know how many 15-acre (and larger) parcels are in the Village.

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION TOPIC #2 – DEVELOPMENT INSIDE THE VILLAGE CENTER:

Question #1: Do you foresee or desire any new development in the area south of the bridge/west of the river beyond what is currently permitted?

<u>Chip's Table</u>	<u>Sandra's Table</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The group did not foresee development south of the bridge and west of the river.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conversation about Hunt Club homes – historically restricted.Agreement on no development there.

Question #2: Do you think development in the Village Center, north of the bridge and between the bridge and Colvin Road should be considered? If yes, what type? If no, what type?

<u>Chip's Table</u>	<u>Sandra's Table</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">It was pointed out to the group that if the residential parcels between the library and Colvin Road were consolidated, the zoning would allow 10 house lots (with 50 feet of road frontage).Glenwood Road and the potential for development was discussed.A question was asked about the property already zoned for small residential lots and whether the Zoning Code should be modified to allow attached single-family dwellings.The group discussed how new units would be put through a review process and as a result, would be expensive.A question was asked about a zoning change to allow more commercial/retail.<ul style="list-style-type: none">A member noted that there was no need to add more retail area because of proximity to amenities in adjacent communities.Questions were asked about specific areas in the Village Center that are not currently developed and the potential for development. One area had steep slopes.The group discussed Village-owned property in the Village Center.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Members have heard from residents that some areas should be more efficiently used. An example was the Post Office, which may leave in the future, and what could possibly go there for rental income. A daycare was mentioned. It was noted that the Village would have to be open to the idea.The Ohio Bell building was mentioned. The Village owns it and has been evaluating what to do with the building.Members discussed that evaluating what was best use for Village land was probably out of the scope of the plan.A member noted that converting land/buildings to more office space did not pay for the Village.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">If Gates Mills were to allow for development, this area is the reasonable place.Considerations were made for both commercial and residential development.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Residential – small, keeping same style.Worth looking into with further study-looking at the whole area.The Village would need to consider stress on infrastructure, resources, impact on the rest of the village. Also, much of the area is a flood plain.Much of the land is owned by the village; prime spots are used for trash/recycling.<ul style="list-style-type: none">It was noted that the Village's recycling and service department is using a lot of valuable land. Perhaps it is possible to move the operation.Thoughts on protecting the homes along Chagrin River Road and Colvin Rd – those are the houses that provide village charm, and they could be gone if zoning changed.<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is a slippery slope.You must have a basis for why one area is ok for development, but not other areas.Most of the area is Historic District, so changes would need to go through the Historic Review Board.Summary: Openness to explore further residential and commercial use and better use of Village Property.

<u>Chip's Table</u>	<u>Sandra's Table</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A question was asked about the dump along the river and if there was a better place for it. Members agreed that more could be done with that area and that the river experience was affected because of the dump.• Members discussed a need for asset management.• The following was summarized:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There should be no changes to the zoning in the Village Center, but if a change were proposed, the location and benefit to the Village should be evaluated.• More should be done with Village-owned property in the Village Center.• Additional retail/commercial in the Village Center on current commercially zoned property.• ADUs - if they exist, they can remain, but no new ADUs allowed. A question was asked if the code should be changed to allow new units.• Initially, the summary on attached units noted there should be more residential opportunities in the Village Center with the current zoning. It was noted that the Village could consider allowing houses to be attached while maintaining the same number of units otherwise permitted, provided the new units are architecturally compatible. However, after further discussion, the group noted that there was no consensus on allowing attached dwellings in the Village Center.	

Sandra and Chip provided a summary of their table's discussion at the conclusion of the breakout session. The report-out summaries are found in the addendum on page 7.

NEXT STEPS

The next meeting will be the Town Hall Forum at Gates Mills Elementary School gymnasium on April 18th. The Advisory Committee will meet one additional time in May for refinement of the goals and to set priorities. The draft plan will then be presented to the Mayor and Village Council in June.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ADDENDUM – REPORT OUT SUMMARIES

Sandra and Chip provided a summary of their table's discussion at the conclusion of each breakout session.

BREAKOUT #1: Development Outside the Village Center

Chip reported that among the group members there was no strong sense to do anything that would change the zoning. The group noted that a change could be made to the special development districts to allow residential, and a change could be made to allow for a concentration of homes. He stated that the group thought there was no strong desire to change and to be mindful of development. He noted that the group thought development should be consistent with what was nearby and that it should have a benefit to the Village as a whole.

Sandra reported that her group was more consistent in the belief to keep zoning the same. She noted that the group referenced the Growth Plan from 1997 regarding the infrastructure and the limitations to development. The group had discussed that not every property outside the Village Center was 5 acres. The group had discussed conservation development and possible edits to remove the “speed bump” for the applicant to provide a yield plan, but decided to leave the regulations alone.

BREAKOUT #2: Development Inside the Village Center

Chip reported that the group did not see any changes to the area south of the bridge and west of the river. He noted that the group saw three points of significance with the area north of the bridge. He mentioned that the group encouraged the Village to put their property to better use. The group discussed what would happen to the Post Office if it left, and what more could be done with the property if that were to happen. The group noted no strong desire for more commercial and retail in the Village Center. He noted that the group discussed the potential for 10 lots and 10 houses allowed with the current zoning along Chagrin River Road between the library and Colvin Road in the Village Center. The group noted that due to the Historic District, historic homes could not be demolished. The group did not reach consensus on whether 10 units could be attached or close together with no increase in density. The group was open to thinking about what housing could be allowed. The group showed more support for housing along Glenwood Road.

Sandra noted her group had the same considerations about not focusing on the area southwest of the bridge. The group had an openness to consider other types of housing and retail in the Village Center. The group discussed the type/density of building allowed by zoning, noting some burden was lifted with water and sewer service available. The group mentioned some residents desire to downsize. She noted there was agreement that Village owned land should be used more efficiently and there was openness to additional study for that purpose.

A member commented on the parallel thinking of the two groups and mentioned the idea of putting additional housing on Colvin Road out of view of Chagrin River Road. Discussion continued briefly about the historic nature of the Village Center and that the entire area was within the Historic District.