

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council  
Minutes of the Planning & Zoning Committee**

**June 3, 2024**

**Members:** Susan Spinner, Chair  
Joe Siegfert, Vice Chair  
Frank Stams, Mike Brillhart, Rachel Loza

Mrs. Spinner called the meeting to order at 7:27 p.m. All members were present.

The meetings of the March 4, 2024 and April 15, 2024 Planning and Zoning Committee meetings were approved as written.

**Legislation Discussed:**

Temp. Ord. A-42

**Discussion:**

**Temp. Ord. A-42**

An ordinance approving the establishment of a New Title 5, “Merriman Valley Schumacher Code” and associated text and zoning map amendments for multiple parcels in the Merriman Valley Schumacher area, as more fully described and depicted herein and declaring an emergency.

Click or tap here to enter text. presented Temp. Ord. A-42. The Charter of the City of Cuyahoga Falls requires that all decisions made by the Planning Commission be submitted to Council. The Planning Commission considered the application for adoption of the Merriman Valley Schumacher (MVS) Code submitted by the Community Development Department through multiple public meetings.

On April 2, 2024, the Planning Commission recommended the establishment of a new Title 5, “Merriman Valley Schumacher Code” and associated text and zoning map amendments based on the Merriman Valley Schumacher Master Plan, public input, and additional associated documents and findings more fully described in Project File TXT-24-00003.

Mr. Stams asked if there is a distinction between apartments and the attached single-family dwellings. Mr. Kurtz stated that one way to think about an apartment in terms of the difference is structure attached. The most significant difference is that with single-family homes, there is a private entrance where, with an apartment, there is a common entrance and then an entrance into a unit. Mr. Stams stated a concern with the semantics when talking about apartment and town homes. Mr. Kurtz stated that it is pretty clear that attached single-family home is a defined term. Detached is a defined term. An apartment is not that. That is the distinction.

Mr. Stams stated that he does not find it a problem that the ward adjacent to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park would have different sets of rules for it. He stated that some exceptions could be made going forward. It has graduated from less than 8 units to less than 20 units under the new form code. He asked if there is a possibility of abuse with going from 8 units to 20 units. That

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seems like a lot not having to go before Council. Mr. Kurtz stated that he agrees that going from 8 units to 20 units is significant. When it is reviewed administratively, it will be reviewed the same way by the Planning Commission and Council.

Mr. Siegfert stated that he was at the third Planning Commission meeting which was quote, unquote the supplemental plan where some of the neighborhood were removed. He asked if those neighborhoods lose the protections that are in place because they wanted out. Mr. Kurtz stated that if he was referring to the intersection of Northampton Road and Portage Trail, which is currently zoned MU-1 and is proposed to be MX. He asked if, in terms of the protection, Mr. Siegfert was referring to what was allowed there. Mr. Siegfert asked what would not be allowed in the proposed plan. Mr. Kurtz stated that what is not allowed, auto-related would be significant. Auto-related could be a body shop or auto repair. From his point of view, that would be an enhancement to that area. Mr. Siegfert stated that he agreed.

Mr. Balthis stated that he is immensely proud of this proposal and it was great how involved the residents were in the process. As opposed to some people getting upset and saying you cannot beat City Hall and leaving, people stayed engaged. They communicated and produced a much better code today and the City is much better for it. It was a lot of work, and he appreciates everybody that did all that work. Someone raised a concern about potential changes of the code in the future. Given the amount of public input put into it, he does not think anyone would think about changing it if it were going to be same it would take the same level of public interaction and communication with the public. It is important to be proactive. The green space conservation and the scenic buffer will make a meaningful difference in the Valley and for the people that live and work there.

Mrs. Penta stated that she represents Ward 3, which is located in a good portion of this area. In the many meetings that she attended, the phone calls and the e-mails, it was very nice that communication was had and the Planning Commission, the Administration and the residents all listened to each other and came with a plan. She stated that she is in favor of this.

Ms. Ellen George, 2562 Third Street, Cuyahoga Falls, asked if they would be willing to adjust the removal of invasive plant species on a case-by-case basis, because many of these plants have beautiful flowers and provide food and shelter for many butterflies and birds. Mr. Kurtz stated that that ought to be looked at more closely. The goal is not to have a traditional landscape area in that buffer area. They have to balance the proper use of something that is unkept with the housing, which is a challenge.

Mrs. Spinner thanked everyone for their input. This has been a long time coming with considerable input from the public.

Mr. Siegfert moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-42 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Brillhart. Motion passed (5-0).

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The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.