

Village of Ostrander prepares for growth

NEWS

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Residents of the sleepy little Village of Ostrander packed Village Hall on Monday to participate in discussions about the annexation of property into the village and rezoning 42 acres of land within the village.

The future objective for two properties in question is development contributing to the growth of the village.

Realizing that growth is a sensitive subject among village residents, Mayor Larry Crile's approach was to educate the crowd before opening up the floor of the special meeting to discussion.

"It's coming, whether you want to deal with it or not," he told the residents. "You can't stop growth, but you can control it."

The first item on the evening's agenda was a pre-annexation agreement for 61 acres of land east of the Meadows of Mill Creek development along U.S. Route 36 in Scioto Township.

"Before the Village of Ostrander can have any say, any involvement, any discussion, relative to any kind of a zoning change or proposal, that property has to be in the Village of Ostrander," Crile said. "If it is outside of Ostrander, it has nothing to do with us."

Crile said the pre-annexation agreement is that the owner and developer agree to pursue annexation into the village for the purpose of discussing the development plan.

"Once the application is presented to the village, then we can initiate the discussions on the rest of this particular project," he said.

The agreement simply defines the process and not the conclusion.

"All we're really wanting to do is say, we're willing to have the conversation," Crile said.

Council passed a resolution to enter into the agreement with five in favor and one opposed.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation of a 42-acre development within the boundaries of the village. However, the property would need to be rezoned from Farm Residential to Planned Residential and Planned Commercial.

A rezoning and preliminary development plan presentation was given by Joe Clase of Plan 4 Land.

Clase said his business is located in Ostrander. He added he grew up in the Buckeye Valley School District and lives in Radnor.

"My goal is to build communities, not subdivisions," he said.

The preliminary plan for "The Woods at Ostrander" includes 200 attached and detached residential units that would be a combination of condominiums and apartments targeted at empty-nesters. The community would include an 8,000-square-foot community facility, 84,000 square feet of self-storage units, and 16,000 square feet of commercial retail offices. He said the buildings were to be only single- or two-story buildings.

"The goal we're not making the site shovel ready," Clase said. "We want the site prepared where somebody can bring a final development proposal ... demonstrate they meet the design criteria ... so they would have the potential to be approved."

Clase said the price tag for the condominiums would be between \$200,000 to \$300,000 and cost the owner approximately \$608 in annual property taxes. He said \$17.91 of the \$608 would go to the village.

Residents asked Clase numerous questions during his presentation, however, a few in the crowd did display signs of growing pains. One such person was Erik Rieske, who said he had lived in Ostrander his entire life.

"There is something special about Ostrander. It's why we live here. It's why we love it," he said. "I live in my grandparents' home. They've lived here since the sixties. I moved back here because I hated everywhere else. I love Ostrander."

Rieske added he didn't see how apartments and condos fit into the character of the village.

"Development has to be done the right way," he said.

Rieske said he loved seeing the stars at night, but the type of development proposed in Clase's presentation would bring light pollution.

"My grandfather was a scientist. He loved to show me the stars," Rieske said. "When I moved here, I thought I could show my kids all the things that my grandfather had shown me."

On the other side of the conversation was Scott Fryman, the owner of the 42 acres of land that the proposed development would sit on.

Fryman said he is a sixth generation Ostrander and has lived in the village all of his life. He said 30 years ago there was a robust commerce in Ostrander.

"The village has changed so much. It's all gone. Ostrander is dead," he said.

Fryman added there is a local group of people involved in the community that recognize this.

"They're trying to rebuild Ostrander," he said. "I really want to good things for the village."