

Cory Johnston Comments (January 8, 2024, City Council Meeting)

From: Cory Johnston

Sent: Saturday, January 6, 2024 8:33 PM

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Cc: City Manager Jonathan Smith <smithj@villageofclarkston.org>; Karen Delorge <DeLorgeK@villageofclarkston.org>

Subject: January 8, 2024 Council Meeting Item

You can consider this public comment, or simply information for your consideration.

FYI, the council contact information needs updating as Eric Haven is still listed as Mayor and councilmember Roth is not listed although it has been updated on the Government>City Council page.

The meeting agenda for January 8, 2024 has item 5a for a ZBA public hearing on the matter of a shed on vacant property located on Pinehurst Court. While I do not know the specifics of this issue, I am aware of a similar condition at 63 Clarkston Road which is between the houses at 59 and 6640 Clarkston Road. There is a small garage and several trailers and vehicles stored on this lot, as they have been for many years. I lived only two lots away until moving, and still drive by on occasion, so I am familiar with the area and condition. According to Oakland County Property Gateway site, this is still a separate lot, with no primary residence or building.

If the city is going to address what appears to be a similar situation on Pinehurst, it would be advisable to address all such conditions to avoid an accusation of arbitrary enforcement, especially since the condition on Clarkston Road is easily visible to all but to the best of my knowledge has never been addressed while openly in violation of the city's zoning ordinance.

With regards to the zoning ordinance, and the discussion of Mill Street and Placemaking at the last council meeting, there is nothing in the draft meeting

minutes about this discussion even though it took up a third of the meeting. There is nothing in the present meeting information about what was done, if anything. I raise this issue because there was no action taken during the meeting to create a committee, involve the Planning Commission, or the Historic District Commission with what is being proposed, whatever that may be. In fact, it is unknown what is being proposed and at what cost regardless of whether a grant is received or not. Good plans should be in place so that they can be implemented when the opportunity arises.

I mention this as Rudy's has always used Mill Street for their trash and it is my understanding that they now do so in cooperation with The Fed restaurant which has no known provision for trash and waste. While this is required to be screened in accordance with zoning ordinance section 21.08, this has never been done and, to the best of my knowledge, never required or enforced for anyone within the city such as the Woodshop, Honcho, and The Union. This is something to consider if placemaking is to be seriously addressed, as well as the more general requirement of zoning ordinance review and enforcement.

In addition, The Fed has wood storage only accessible from Mill Street and a delivery and accessible access lift from Mill Street. Both are obviously required for their operation and with the addition of another restaurant, Rudy's, they will undoubtedly require a greater area for combined trash and restaurant waste.

Then there are the issues of traffic flow, emergency accessibility, the entrance to the Clarkston Mills Mall at the west end of Mill Street, and no doubt many other technical and aesthetic planning issues.

Personally, I think the idea of using Mill Street for something more productive and entertaining than parking and trash is a wonderful idea that is long overdue. As noted at the December 11, 2023 meeting, this has been discussed in the past, but rejected by the city. In addition to the proposals from Rudy's and The Fed that were previously made, Clarkston Arts considered placing a mural at the end of Mill Street in cooperation with the DIA and the adjacent businesses. The mural ended up at the alley adjacent to the Woodshop, but the plans and reasons for using Mill Street for these purposes are as valid today as they were back then. This can all be done to enhance and convey the historic character of Mill Street and the Village of Clarkston.

Cory Johnston