

Application to Acquire Five (5) City-Owned Vacant Parcels for Construction of Single-Family Infill Projects

Ifeolu Claytor:

We will receive those as information in the absence of quorum, and move forward to our next agenda item.

Kyle Krewson:

Ms. Thomas will be presenting that this evening.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Go ahead and proceed Ms. Thomas.

Sharra Thomas:

Thank you. Good evening everyone. I would like to present one application that has been received for our infill development program. This application came in from K&W Ohio Construction, we have Mr. Alabsi in attendance. I believe Jesse Carver is also in attendance, as well as their architect they will be working with for this project, Gabrielle Rivera. What I would like to present this evening is the opportunity for K&W Ohio Construction to acquire five city owned vacant lots in order to complete five infill development projects of single-family homes.

I will give Mr. Alabsi a chance to speak a little bit about himself this evening about his background. I did include in the memo his past experience with the City of Shaker Heights as he did complete an intensive waterproofing project through the Shaker Heights Community Center and Library in the mid 2000's. I also included a little more information on what brought K&W Ohio Construction to the City of Shaker Heights. Would Mr. Alabsi or Mr. Carver give some more information as to why you are interested in the City of Shaker Heights for your next infill project?

Waleed Alabsi:

I'll give you a little bit background about me; my name Waleed Alabsi. I own K&W Ohio Construction, LLC. We used to own Zebco Excavating in 2000. We did a lot of projects around the Cleveland area. We did work for the CMHA for Cleveland Housing Network. We completed over 200 houses for the city of Cleveland. We do a lot of high-end homes. We own a showroom in Willoughby Hills on S.O.M. Center Road. We do a lot of high-end kitchens. We do remodeling and restoring houses and buildings. We did some work for Shaker Heights before, and we did the community center. We did all the foundation work for the City of Shaker community center. Thank you for the opportunity to give us a chance to start working with you and do more work with you. The City of Shaker is a beautiful city. The city's architecture and design may never be done again, that's sad because everything costs money. I've been doing this business for 30 years. I've been doing it very successfully. I have done work before in many places. I like what I do, and hopefully we could get some houses started with you and invest our own money to the City of Shaker Heights.

Thank you for the opportunity to give us the chance to do the work. Any question for me, I'm here for you.

Sharra Thomas:

Thank you, Mr. Alabsi. As I stated, the application was submitted to obtain five vacant parcels. As you can see in your memo, I linked the actual vacant parcels they are requesting. There are two located on Colwyn Road, located in our CRA transit village area, as well as the two Sutton Road parcels. The last is on Hildana, and that is actually in our southern Moreland CRA area. We did have a preliminary meeting with myself, Dan Feinstein, Mr. Alabsi, and Mr. Carver, to discuss some plans they presented. There were some things that needed to be added and changed. As far as the final design and layout for these properties, those are in the making.

The basic design build will be single family homes. They will have a basement. They did present a possible ranch style build that will be reviewed for location. That is a possibility, but it is basically a colonial and or bungalow style they are proposing. It will be three to four bedrooms, two and a half baths, detached two car garages, and full basements. As stated, those final design and layout will be determined and approved later as they move through the process of approval. They are looking to sell these properties that will be built on spec. The price point will range from \$339,000 to \$379,000, which is right in line with what we are basically seeing as a sales point for our current running new construction infill projects under our current developers.

Of the five lots that they are interested, there are no current plans as far as city projected projects, nor are they under review for any side lot acquisition. Once we've changed our policy for what constitutes the eligibility as a side lot for a neighboring resident to acquire. What I would like to bring special attention and light on, K&W Ohio Construction is very aware, we went into a detailed discussion regarding the requirement of a landscape plan. They are aware of the City of Shaker Heights requirements and higher standards as it relates to the retention of our tree landscapes. If there is a need to remove a tree for example, in the middle of a vacant parcel, they are aware the landscape plan will be presented to the Planning Department must lay out detail if that tree needs to be replaced, and if there are additional trees that are either damaged or in need of replacement it will be their responsibility to replace those trees specifically as it relates to the curb line. Outside of the trees and landscape plan, I went into detail in the memo on the northern block of Hildana to bring attention to the upcoming projects that will be taking place on that block. As stated in the memo, currently there are two construction projects under GLH that are moving forward this year. They have stated those projects will be completed near the end of 2025. I do want to be transparent to show all construction that will take place on that northern block between Chagrin and Hampstead. As stated, GLH has the two closest to Hampstead, I'm now referencing the map I provided in my memo. The four green boxes are reserve lots for the upcoming infill projects for YRM construction, who are currently working on a neighboring street, Pennington. He has reserved those four of the eight for his 2026 plan. The one blue block is KNez, currently 3558 Hildana under construction with a buyer, set to be completed in 2025. That would be an additional eight new construction on the northern block of Hildana near the end of 2026, or early 2027.

We are requesting this evening is recommendation of approval. The developers have stated they are looking from six months from execution date, understanding that they must still receive the City approvals through the Planning Commission, Architectural Board of Review, as well as follow all Ohio building codes, to move forward to acquire the requested five city owned vacant lot parcels for a dollar to move toward a new infill development project within, not only the southern Moreland area, but also our transit village CRA area. Currently, although the map was not provided, the transit CRA area only has the MEWS development going on at this time. There are no other current under construction projects underway in that transit village area.

At this time, I would like to open up for any questions. I've never attended when it wasn't a quorum, I will give it to you Mr. Claytor. Do I request an approval or what is my next step?

Ifeolu Claytor:

We can't formally give approval because we don't have a quorum. Our minutes can reflect that the Committee is in support or is not. That's how we can proceed.

Sharra Thomas:
Okay, thank you.

Ifeolu Claytor:

It might have to go to finance because we're selling something. Is that proper Kyle?

Sharra Thomas:
Correct.

Ifeolu Claytor:

It will still go to another Council committee that hopefully will have quorum and will be able to vote to move forward to Council. I believe even if it doesn't have a quorum in Finance, which I don't know if that ever happens, Council, I believe, can still consider and move forward on this proposition from the administration.

Sharra Thomas:

At this time, I will request and open the floor for questions, as well as for approval for K&W Ohio Construction to enter a D&U with the City of Shaker Heights to acquire five vacant parcels for \$1 to infill develop five single family homes, one within Southern Moreland, and four within Transit Village of the Moreland neighborhood.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Thank you, Ms. Thomas. I have a few questions but would like to open up to my fellow council people who are here this evening and allow you all to ask your questions first. Councilwoman Bixenstine.

Kim Bixenstine:

Thank you Chair Claytor. I'm supportive and I'm just wondering, it was a little unclear, is the design for all five of the proposed homes the same or will there be different designs depending on the location?

Waleed Alabsi:

The design for the houses, they're not going to be the same. You can't make copy houses on the same street. We are going to make them look great for the city. And they will look very good for a long time. It will match the structure of the other houses and give them a different look for all of them. I could even do a different layout inside to make the houses look unique, I am not copying and pasting designs.

Kim Bixenstine:

Thank you.

Sharra Thomas:

I would also like to add to that. In our meeting with Mr. Feinstein, Dan did inform K&W that the houses must be unique and not look identical. Shaker Heights is not a cookie cutter community.

Waleed Alabsi:

We are not going to that.

Kim Bixenstine:

Thank you.

Ifeolu Claytor:

I'm curious what our communication to residents in the neighborhood looks like? Particularly as a lot of construction and abutting neighborhoods, curious about what that conversation has been. How and if residents have given input on the amount of construction so far, if it's been distracting, if there's a way that we can mitigate that. And another, is there coordination on timing with these projects? I recognize they are different owners and different developers, I'm curious about this timing to make it more convenient for residents who live in this neighborhood.

Sharra Thomas:

Thank you Chair. We did do a pre-construction meeting notification letter. The letter went out to the entire northern block of Hildana. Our requirement is really five to the left, five to the right, five to the rear. But being that the number of projects that will possibly take place specifically this block, I did do the entire northern block of Hildana to notify them of not only this meeting, but the upcoming finance meeting, the council meeting for public comment, and also provide information for not only myself, but also Theo, to provide a platform to give feedback of any concern with the upcoming projects. That letter was also provided to the residents on Colwyn and Sutton. For the Hildana Block there will be a street meeting that will take place.

Not only does YRM has those parcels under reserve, but this K&W proposal as well will be a component of that street meeting. Not only will the residents be fully aware of what's to come, they will also have the opportunity to meet the developers that will be on their block providing the new housing in their neighborhood. We are always working directly with the Economic Development department; they will provide outreach that is required in order for us to get those residents informed. We want to be as transparent as possible so we are not causing any additional concern. The purpose of our infill projects is to revitalize the streets that unfortunately were hit hard by demolitions due to the housing crisis to bring back these vacant parcels as well as adding to our Shaker base, not only tax base, but our residents to build back up the streets that have kind of this jagged look and feel because of the missing housing. A notification was mailed out to all of the neighboring residents, not only on Colwyn and Sutton, but specifically a lot of detail was sent for Hildana. Being that there will be multiple projects on that block, a street meeting will take place before YRM, K&W Ohio, before they even break ground. As stated GLH and Knez, those projects are currently underway.

Kyle Krewson

If I can expand on that. As Ms. Thomas explained, we do take a comprehensive approach in our communication strategy with residents before imminent construction. We typically will send out a letter as well notifying neighbors, that letter comes from Ms. Thomas and she's the primary point of contact during construction. There generally are issues, whether it's noise, debris, deliveries, concerns, she will be the interface for the residents to mitigate any of those concerns and work for the developer directly to make sure that they're adhering to the standards that our residents have come to expect.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Wonderful. Two more quick questions. I'm curious if there were developers who were interested, and I recognize that our goal is to have a developer, if we're doing the program where we are working with developers to revitalize our neighborhoods and replenish our housing stock. I know that the goal is to also have the new homes be owner occupied. I'm curious if our processing or ordinances allow for the possibility of a two-family home to be built with the intent being one of the floors being owner occupied? If we've been approached for any proposals that include those?

Kyle Krewson:

I can speak to that. We would entertain a proposal that would seek a two-family home that's owner occupied. However, our current CRA, our tax abatement doesn't allow for that to get tax abatement. They could build it, they would just wouldn't get that tax abatement. That being said, that is one of the things that we are looking at. We hope to be bringing forward to Council soon in this Committee soon. That changes our CRA programs, that is one of the things that we're looking at including. One of the proposals that we're including would be allowing for a two-family with an owner occupant to qualify for a CRA. So that's something we're exploring and actively considering. We haven't had any proposals seeking that. I think probably principally because our tax abatement policy doesn't apply in those situations so we aren't getting that sort of interest from developers. Certainly, changes to that policy would kind of change that calculation for many developers.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Understood, and my last question for the administration, Director Krewson and Ms. Thomas. I'm curious what this process would look like if an individual owner resident or hopefully soon to be resident, wanted to initiate this process that wasn't a developer, if I want to buy a lot in one of these neighborhoods and work with the developer to build a home in this neighborhood, I'm curious what that process would look like if there's a shorthand version that can be given.

Kyle Krewson:

There's a couple. Folks approach us from time to time, sometimes we connect them with a developer builder who already has gone through the approval process and has the lots reserved. We make that connection and it moves forward in that way. Other times they will build themselves on a lot. We've had one such instance on Hildana. The owner occupant that built specifically on a city lot, worked with a builder to build on a lot. But she approached the city, our contract was with her. She then contracted with her own builder to build a house to her specifications. Either approach works, we have a precedent for either direction, working with what the developer already has, a reserved a lot, or approaching us with a lot specifically in mind.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Wonderful. Are there other questions from the Committee that is present? Even though we cannot take a vote because we are without a quorum, I'm curious, are my colleagues that are here in theory supportive of this? Of this moving forward to the Finance Committee to Council?

Group:

Yes. Yes.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Wonderful. I want that to be reflected in the minutes even though we are unable to vote this evening. We will receive all this as information and assuming this moves forward, we wish you the best of luck. Mr. Alabsi.

Ifeolu Claytor:

I believe that is our last item of business this evening. If there are no other matters to come before the Committee we will adjourn. Thank you all so much. Have a great evening.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m. The next meeting will be September 10, 2025.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair
Neighborhood & Economic Development Committee