

CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 12, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

At 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, a regular meeting of the Planning Commission was held in Council Chambers in City Hall

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Jessica Cohen, Chair
Michael Gaynier, Vice Chair
Judith Miles
Robert Brown
Ken Surratt
Jessica Wobig

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Leonard Horowitz

STAFF PRESENT

Justin Hines Assistant Law Director
Christy Lee, Recording Secretary
Karen Knittel Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Brooke Siggers, City Planner

COUNCIL PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Cohen called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. She welcomed the audience to the March 12, 2025, regular Cleveland Heights Planning Commission meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The February 2025 Minutes from the Regular Meeting were approved 6-0.

CASES

Assistant Law Director Hines swore in all staff, the public, and applicants.

PROJ. NO. 25-09 M. & S. TOLCHINSKY, 3811 BENDEMEER, 'A' SINGLE-FAMILY

This case was withdrawn as the project no longer needs this permit. The project will be heard at the March 19, 2025 Board of Zoning Appeals meeting.

PROJ. NO. 25-10 ONE POT (1825 COVENTRY PROPERTIES, LLC), 1825 COVENTRY, 'S-2' MIXED-USE

Ms. Siggers gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the project, the request for a lot resubdivision to combine PPNs 684-04-071 and 684-04-072 per code chapters 1111 & 1121:

CONTEXT:

The primary parcel is located at 1825 Coventry Road and consists of One Pot, a Korean Hot Pot and Barbecue restaurant. The two (2) subject properties (parcel nos. 684-04-071 and 684-04-072) have a combined total area of 15,011 square feet, and are located two (2) and three (3) lots north west of the Coventry and Lancashire Road intersection. The properties are zoned 'S-2' Mixed-Use, and are neighbored by buildings with other businesses, also zoned 'S-2' Mixed-Use to their north, east, and south, and more businesses zoned 'C-3' General Commercial to their west.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Applicant requests to combine the primary parcel, being approximately 55 feet wide with an area of 7,135 square feet, with the southern portion, approximately 61 feet wide with an area of 7,876 square feet. The resulting parcels will remain zoned 'S-2' Mixed-Use and will continue to be code-conforming. The Applicant wants to resubdivide their lot in order to construct a new addition to the building to add additional enclosed all-season seating space.

REQUEST FOR LOT RESUBDIVISION:

The applicant requests a resubdivision of their parcel under 1111.06(b)(7) and 1121.04(r).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the lot resubdivision to combine the two (2) parcels as shown on the submitted and approved site plan, with the condition that the plan be signed by the Director of Law and Director of Planning & Development prior to submittal to the County Recorder.

Mr. Gaynier motioned for approval of Proj. No. 25-10 One Pot at 1825 Coventry, 'S-2' Mixed-Use, requests lot resubdivision to combine PPNs 684-04-071 and 684-04-072 per Code Chapters 1111 & 1121 with staff recommendations. Mr. Surratt seconded the motion, and it was carried 6-0.

PROJ. NO. 25-11 ARTFUL OHIO, INC., 2555 EUCLID HEIGHTS, 'A' SINGLE-FAMILY

Ms. Siggers gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the project, the requests for (a) a conditional use permit for the adaptive reuse of a non-residential building in a residential district to

repurpose the former St. Alban's Church to become a community arts center with private studios and offices per Code Chapters 1111, 1115, 1121, & 1161, and (b) a reduction in required on-site parking to allow twenty-three (23) parking spaces where fifty-six (56) are required per Code chapters 1111, 1115, 1121, 1151, 1153, & 1161:

CONTEXT:

The subject property (parcel no. 685-07-030) is located on the southwest corner of the Euclid Heights Boulevard and Edgehill Road intersection. The property previously housed the St. Alban's Church congregation. The property has an area of about 45,646 square feet. The property is zoned 'A' Single-Family and is surrounded by single-family houses, also zoned 'A' Two-Family.

The Master Plan future land use map shows this area as continuing to be used for single-family housing.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Applicant is requesting to create a vibrant, community-driven arts hub in the former St. Alban's Church. ARTFUL aims to provide affordable space to support and educate artists to help them create and display their art while making creativity and inspiration more accessible to the community at large. The Applicant expects the facility to be able to accommodate about twenty-five (25) private studios and offices for artists and creative professionals. The artists will be able to access their dedicated workspaces every day at any time.

This project will be developed in phases. The building will initially only be used for artists' studio space, and will not be used for assembly until the second or third phase of the project's development. When The Applicant reaches future phases at which assemblies and galleries will take place in the building, The Applicant will return to the Planning Commission to review the additional uses they hope to conduct on-site, and parking for the expanded uses can be reviewed again.

Daily operations will primarily take place indoors, with an expected daily occupancy of approximately twenty (20) people at a time, which may consist of about ten (10) artists, five (5) staff members, and up to five (5) visitors at any given time. Occasional outdoor workshops may be held during daytime hours as well. Special events may take place indoors and/or outdoors during daytime or evening hours, and will adhere to all noise and gathering ordinances to ensure minimal impact on the surrounding community.

In future phases when The Applicant is able to meet Building and Fire Codes required for assemblies, the first-floor sanctuary will eventually be repurposed into a community flex space, serving as a venue for art-making workshops, educational programs, lectures, and special events that invite the broader community to engage with the creative process. The lobby and hallways will function as gallery spaces, hosting rotating exhibitions that showcase local and regional artists. These exhibitions will give community members a chance to experience art firsthand and connect with the artists, hopefully encouraging dialogue, appreciation, and inspiration.

Artists will access the building using a key for the front entrance. The Applicant plans to install an electronic key fob system so that each artist has its own unique code that can be

deactivated when they are no longer part of ARTFUL. They plan to do this as soon as is practical, and will change the main entrance lock so that key access will be limited to the Executive Director and Board President. The building will also have multiple cameras set up at all entry points and key interior locations.

Executive Director Shannon Morris, a certified property manager, has previously self-performed all cleaning services at its prior location and The Applicant plans to continue using this system to keep the building clean. As additional studio spaces become available for artists, The Applicant will consider engaging professional cleaning services once or twice a month.

The Applicant is also requesting a reduction in required on-site parking spaces to allow twenty-three (23) parking spaces on the property where fifty-six (56) are required. Visitors of the building will consist of artists accessing their leased studio space, and will come on their own schedules. The Applicant does not expect to need more than the presently provided amount of parking spaces, and will make necessary adjustments when needed.

STANDARDS:

A conditional use, and uses accessory to such conditional use, shall be permitted in a residential, commercial or special district only when specified as a permitted conditional use in such district, or when such use is determined by the Planning Commission to be a similar use, and only if such use conforms to the following standards in addition to any specific conditions, standards and regulations for such category of use set forth in Chapter 1151 of the Zoning Code. Furthermore, the Planning Commission shall find:

- a) That the conditional use will be in general accord with the purpose, intent and basic planning objectives of this Zoning Code, and with the objectives for the district in which located;*

The Applicant will minimize impact on neighbors and ensure that their use will be in general accord with the single-family neighborhood. ARTFUL is currently housed in a different 'A' Single-Family District, and will continue to be respectful to neighbors throughout all operations.

- b) That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare;*

Parking for artists, nonprofit members, and daily visitors can be accommodated in the private, on-site parking lot that has twenty-three (23) parking spaces. During special events, attendees will be directed to utilize nearby city-owned and public lots and permitted on-street parking to manage traffic flow efficiently while minimizing impacts on the neighborhood.

- c) That the conditional use will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or*

intended character of the general vicinity, and that such use will not essentially change the character of the same area;

The Applicant does not plan to change the exterior appearance of the structure so the aesthetic character of the neighborhood will not be impacted. The Applicant will submit a landscaping plan illustrating how they will improve the site.

d) *That the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood;*

The Applicant aims for this conditional use to enhance the community as well as neighbors' enjoyment of their properties. By creating this space, ARTFUL is establishing an accessible, thriving arts space on the East Side of Cleveland. The project is being executed in response to the ongoing lack of space for creativity in the region. The Applicant states that Cleveland Heights and the surrounding areas have the highest concentration of working artists in the county, but a lack of dedicated arts spaces has pushed many to seek studios on the West Side, resulting in a loss of creative identity and economic vitality within the arts. ARTFUL's presence will hopefully ensure that artists can work, create, and invest in their own neighborhoods, strengthening the local cultural and economic landscape. This should benefit property values by repurposing a vacant building that has been out of use for several years and transforming it into a community-driven arts center.

e) *That the establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district;*

The site was previously established for public gathering and religious worship, so The Applicant asserts that the transition to art studios will not affect the development of any surrounding properties in the district.

f) *That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or are being provided;*

The building is already constructed and all utilities, roads, drainage, and necessary facilities are already present and established.

g) *That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets;*

Ingress and egress access points were previously installed for the church, and ARTFUL will maintain the same points of access

h) That the establishment of the conditional use should not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community by creating excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities such as police, fire and schools;

The Applicant assures that no additional public resources or costs will be required for ARTFUL's operations as it has already operated in the Cleveland Heights community and is only moving to this location.

i) That there is minimal potential for future hardship on the conditional use that could result from the proposed use being surrounded by uses permitted by right that are incompatible;

The community arts space should be compatible with the residential neighborhood, and The Applicant states that there is little likelihood for future hardship on the conditional use that that could result from surrounding uses.

j) That the conditional use shall address the sustainability guidelines of Section 1165.06.

The project includes sustainably adapting the vacant church building to fulfill a community need. The Applicant plans to utilize waste reductive practices by reusing and repurposing on-site items.

k) That the conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located as well as the specific supplemental conditions set forth in Chapter 1153.

1153.05 SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS FOR SPECIFIC USES

ac. Adaptive Reuse of Existing Non-Residential Buildings in Residential Districts. The following provisions are for adaptive reuse of a non-residential building such as a place of worship, library or school into a use compatible with the larger residential district. Adaptive reuse of non-residential buildings in residential districts is allowed by conditional use and subject to the following standards:

1. The existing building is clearly non-residential in its original construction.
2. **A non-residential building in a residential district may be converted to the following uses:**
 - A. Multi-family dwelling**
 - B. Office**
 - C. Industrial design**
 - D. Limited research and development**
 - E. Recreation and education classes such as exercise, art, writing, theater, continuing education, after-school programs, etc.**
 - F. Other uses similar to (A) through (E) that are found to be compatible with the larger residential district.**
3. Off-street parking is required in accordance with Chapter 1161 of this Code.
4. The character of the site and community amenities should be preserved, maintaining a balance between the building, green space and parking.

5. These shall be no mechanical, electrical or chemical equipment utilized in furtherance of use, except as causes no disturbances of any kind beyond the premises where the use is located.
6. The conduct of such use shall not be offensive to neighboring property owners or occupants by reason of excessive noise, late hours of business activity, the intensity of the business activity or other such reason.
7. The use must provide and adhere to a plan for minimizing negative impact of the operation on neighboring properties due to noise, hours of operation or other external effects of the operation.
8. Signage shall meet the requirements of the original use as set out in Chapter 1163.
9. For any non-residential use, outside storage or display is prohibited. All servicing, processing and storage uses must be fully enclosed.
10. Diminished setbacks due to alterations or additions shall meet the setback requirements of the original use as set forth in schedule 1153.03 unless a variance is obtained.

The Applicant is requesting to adaptively reuse a non-residential building, the former St. Alban's Church, in an 'A' Single-Family District to become space for art instruction, art studios, and gallery space. This use is compatible with Code Section 1153.05(2)(b) and (e). Twenty-three (23) off-street parking spaces are already available on the site.

Schedule 1161.03 REQUIRED OFF-STREET PARKING SPACES

(h)(2) Community center, library, museum or similar public or private semi-public building – Minimum Spaces Required: one (1) space for every four (4) seats for each 300 square feet of floor area, whichever is greater.

The proposed building has a total usable area of 16,744 square feet. In order to be code-conforming, The Applicant would need to have a total of fifty-six (56) parking spaces. The site currently only has twenty-three (23) spaces, which they expect to be more than enough to meet the needs of the visiting artists. Artists will come to and leave the building on their own volition, and it is unlikely that they will all be on-site at the same time. The building will not be used for assembly until the second or third phase of the project's development. When The Applicant reaches the phases at which assemblies and galleries will take place in the building, The Applicant will return to the Planning Commission to review the additional uses they hope to conduct on-site, and parking for the expanded uses can be reviewed again.

REQUEST FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT:

The Applicant is requesting to adaptively reuse the former St. Alban's Church to create an arts center operated by ARTFUL, Inc. Development of the building will occur in phases, and The Applicant expects to have a total of about 20-27 art studios on-site at full operation. Other areas in the building will consist of gallery spaces, hosting rotating exhibitions showcasing local and regional artists.

REQUEST FOR REDUCTION IN REQUIRED PARKING:

The Applicant is requesting a reduction in required parking to allow ARTFUL to operate a community arts hub with studio space with twenty-three (23) total parking spaces where fifty-six (56) are required.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the (a) conditional use permit to

allow The Applicant to adaptively reuse the former St. Alban's Church to become a community-driven arts hub operated by ARTFUL, Inc., and (b) reduction in parking to allow twenty-three (23) total on-site parking spaces where fifty-six (56) are required as shown on the submitted site plan, with the following conditions:

1. This use is to not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other properties in the immediate vicinity or create a nuisance for adjacent properties;
2. The Applicant is to work with staff to resolve any complaints from neighbors;
3. The Applicant is to obtain any required approvals from the Architectural Board of Review and/or Board of Zoning Appeals;
4. The Applicant is not to hold assemblies until the pertinent requirements from the Building and Fire Code are met;
5. The Applicant is to return to the Planning Commission if any changes to the total available number of parking spaces are made; and
6. The Applicant is to submit a landscaping plan to be approved by the Zoning Administrator.

Ms. Cohen asked if the building was occupied prior and if there was a conditional use permit on file already.

Ms. Siggers stated that the building wasn't occupied.

MS. Knittel interjected stating that most of the Churches in the City of Cleveland Heights are deemed to have Conditional Use Permits but haven't actually gone through the process of obtaining an official permit.

Lee Chilcote of 2322 Delamere Drive stated that he was a very strong supporter as well as an advisor of this project, and went on to say that they're in the process of acquiring the St. Alban's Parish property and project approval would help tremendously. Mr. Chilcote explained that local artists, staff, and patrons will occupy the space. He indicated that this occupancy would not exceed the presently provided number of parking spaces. He went on to speak highly of Artful as an organization, and affirmed that this would be a great investment to not only the surrounding community but for the city as well.

Brandy Dindia of 3801 Westwood University Heights Co- Founder and Board Chair of Artful. She went on to explain the benefits of having an arts center dedicated to those who want to express creativity in a peaceful, secure, and harmonious environment. She further expressed that Cleveland Heights has a growing population of artists, both new and seasoned. Artful would allow artists to come into a creative space with other artists, allowing creativity to shine through. The location would allow for growth within the community, giving a place for those who want to express themselves, work within the walls of creativity, seeing others work and they process the world through artistry.

Shannon Morris of 3370 Meadowbrook Blvd, University Heights spoke as well. Ms. Morris is the co-founder and Executive Director of Artful. Ms. Morris echoed Ms. Dindia, explaining that Artful would be a space for artists to create, grow, and share with each other as well as the community. She also mentioned that the building will be ADA compliant to ensure that all are welcome to create. She also stated that keys will only be given to artists who intend to occupy the space, and that a security system put in place.

Ms. Cohen asked if it was correct that Artful is in the process of purchasing St Alban's Parish.

Mr. Chilcote stated "Yes, we have been working closely with Episodical Diocese of Ohio on the approval of the Conditional Use Permit along with a point of sale inspection."

Ms. Cohen asked if further down the line they may be using this location as community arts or gallery space if they feel that the available parking would be sufficient.

Mr. Chilcote stated that yes, they expect that the presently available number of parking spaces to accommodate all visitors' needs.

Ms. Cohen asked for clarification regarding the current conditional use recommendations, to understand if approval would be for the private 24-hour studio spaces excluding special events, or if that would be included in this approval as well, and what the timeframe there should there be until they are permitted to hold events.

Ms. Cohen referred to the Staff Recommendations, and stated that she'd like to add to them to make the distinction clear that they are not yet able to hold events or assemblies until required approvals from the Building and Fire Departments are obtained.

Mr. Chilcote confirmed his understanding that they are not able to use the space for assembly until a sprinkler system is established, and even then, there will only be events a few times a year. The true effort is to give artists space, make sure that they can continue to build up their livelihood, and be supported by the Artful community. After the necessary improvements there will be a second phase for this project expanding operations slightly, which will trigger a return to the Planning Commission for a revised conditional use permit.

Ms. Siggers affirmed that they would come back before the Board, and that Planning Staff will also make the needed changes to the staff recommendation language to incorporate any future additional changes.

Mr. Gaynier indicated that he was a neighbor to the location, and he was always concerned about the maintenance of the hillside landscaping on the property, and that few efforts have been made to ensure that it is mowed periodically. Mr. Gaynier suggested using the hillside for artistic landscaping to enhance the property.

Ms. Morris agreed and added that many landscape architects and artists in the Artful community are excited to plan and evaluate the site to execute creative ideas for the hillside's landscaping.

Ms. Siggers mentioned that there is a landscaping plan requirement for all requests for a reduction in required parking.

Ms. Cohen asked if there were any questions for staff at this time, and if there was any public comment at this time.

Robin Craig of 2524 Edgehill affirmed the oath. Mrs. Craig expressed her support for Artful, and the benefits of having such an establishment in the community.

Deborah Newley of 2528 Edgehill affirmed the oath. She, too, echoed her approval and excitement for this project. She mentioned that she would like some reassurance that with the twenty-four (24) hours of operation she will still be safe living next to the site as a single woman. Ms. Morris asserted that the hours of operation are intended to not limit artist creation abilities or creativity, allowing them to create before and/or after work. Very few artists came late at night at the previous location, and the previous Artful building has historically always been empty past about 10:00 P.M. They will also have security cameras at all points of entry.

Don Seabenon of 2544 Euclid Heights Blvd affirmed the oath. He voiced his approval of the project, and asked how many spaces will be allowed for Artful so that it will not cause any issue for the surrounding area because he has noticed that many Artful events at the prior location drew in significant traffic that would fill the parking lot.

Ms. Cohen stated that there will be twenty-three (23) total parking spaces. She added that the Conditional Use Permit is only for studio and office space use at this time, however the parking will be re-evaluated once the assembly area has been approved by Fire and Building.

Shannon Morris interjected regarding the safety of the community, ensuring that those who will have twenty-four (24) hours access have a clear understanding of the rules, regulations, and standards that need to be upheld while using this space. Access is only granted through the front door. There will be key access twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week for artists, however they anticipate that people will only access the building during normal business hours. They offer the space for all hours in order to avoid limiting artists' creativity and so that they are free to execute ideas on their own time whenever ideas surface.

Ms. Cohen closed public comment, and asked for a motion with additions to the staff recommended conditions.

Mr. Gaynier moved to approve Proj. No. 25-11 ARTFUL Ohio, Inc., at 2555 Euclid Heights, request for (a) Conditional Use Permit for the adaptive reuse of a non-residential building in a residential district to repurpose the former St. Alban's Church to become a community arts center with private studios and offices per Code Chapters 1111, 1115, 1121, & 1161, and (b) a reduction in required on-site parking to allow twenty-three (23) parking spaces where fifty-six (56) are required per Code chapters 1111, 1115, 1121, 1151, 1153, & 1161, with the staff recommendations, including the amendment clarifying that only art studio space is permitted at this point.

Michael Gaynier moved to approve the project. Ms. Miles seconded the motion, and it carried 6-0.

STAFF REPORT ON PLANNING ACTIVITY

Ms. Knittel gave a brief, in-depth report regarding the Places of Worship language regarding zoning amendments on the Cleveland Heights website, which allows the public to view and provide public comments on the drafted legislation. She highlighted the primary purpose for this website will be for public comment, allowing for those who are interested to know how Code amendments work behind the scenes and how the legislation can become a reality for the betterment of the City. This gives the community the opportunity to engage in the process.

Ms. Cohen asked if it will be returned to the Planning Commission for additional input and a vote if this is accepted by Council.

Ms. Knittel stated that typically the complete process will take thirty (30) days.

Ms. Knittel also gave additional updates on Park Synagogue, stating that there has been a website dedicated to the project to keep the public aware of the progress and upcoming meetings and events. This information will also be mentioned in the Cleveland Heights Newsletter. Ms. Knittel also mentioned that she's encouraged the Park Synagogue to have their own personal website as well. She added that the Doan Brook restoration will come before the Commission in May of 2025 for review. There will also be a virtual meeting on March 31, 2025, that will have additional information. On April 1, 2025, an in-house meeting at the Cleveland Heights/University Heights Library Main Campus with a detailed presentation of the project. It will at some point come before the Planning Commission for approval of the coming plans for restoration.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Siggers gave an update on Ms. Dixon's case, reporting that she is only waiting on final parking plan and that she will be able to issue a new Conditional Use Permit by the end of the week. She also added that there are no current cases for April 2025.

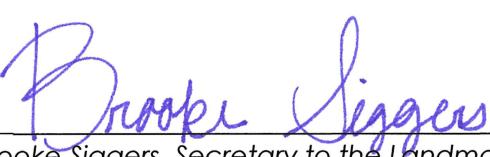
NEW BUSINESS

None

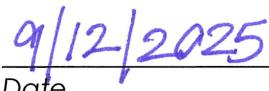
ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Siggers, Secretary to the Landmark Commission



Date

Approved,



Jessica Cohen, Planning Commission Chair



Date