

Planning Internship with the City of Hilliard, Ohio

Abby Thiel – Environment, Economy, Development, and Sustainability (EEDS)

INTERNSHIP BACKGROUND

During the summer of 2022, I got to participate in the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Local Government Summer Internship Program. This program connects interns to different host governments based on their background, and it provides opportunities to engage with the MORPC organization.

I first learned about and became interested in MORPC during my freshman year of college. I applied to the internship program for the summer of 2021, but there were no openings during that time. I made sure to apply early for the summer 2022 cycle, and after an initial interview with MORPC, I was paired with the City of Hilliard and had a final interview and job offer with the city.



CITY INFORMATION

I worked for the City of Hilliard Planning Division, which is nested under the city's Community Development Department.

The City of Hilliard is a suburban community located in the northwest region of Franklin County. It was formally incorporated in 1869 and currently operates under a Council/City Manager form of government. It has a population of more than 35,000 people, and its development primarily consists of residential and commercial land uses.

INTERNSHIP ACTIVITIES

I worked under the supervision of Hilliard's Planning Director and Planning Manager. While interning, I primarily supported Planning Division staff with preparations for monthly meetings with the City's Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). I also got to accompany staff during site visits and Planning Division meetings.

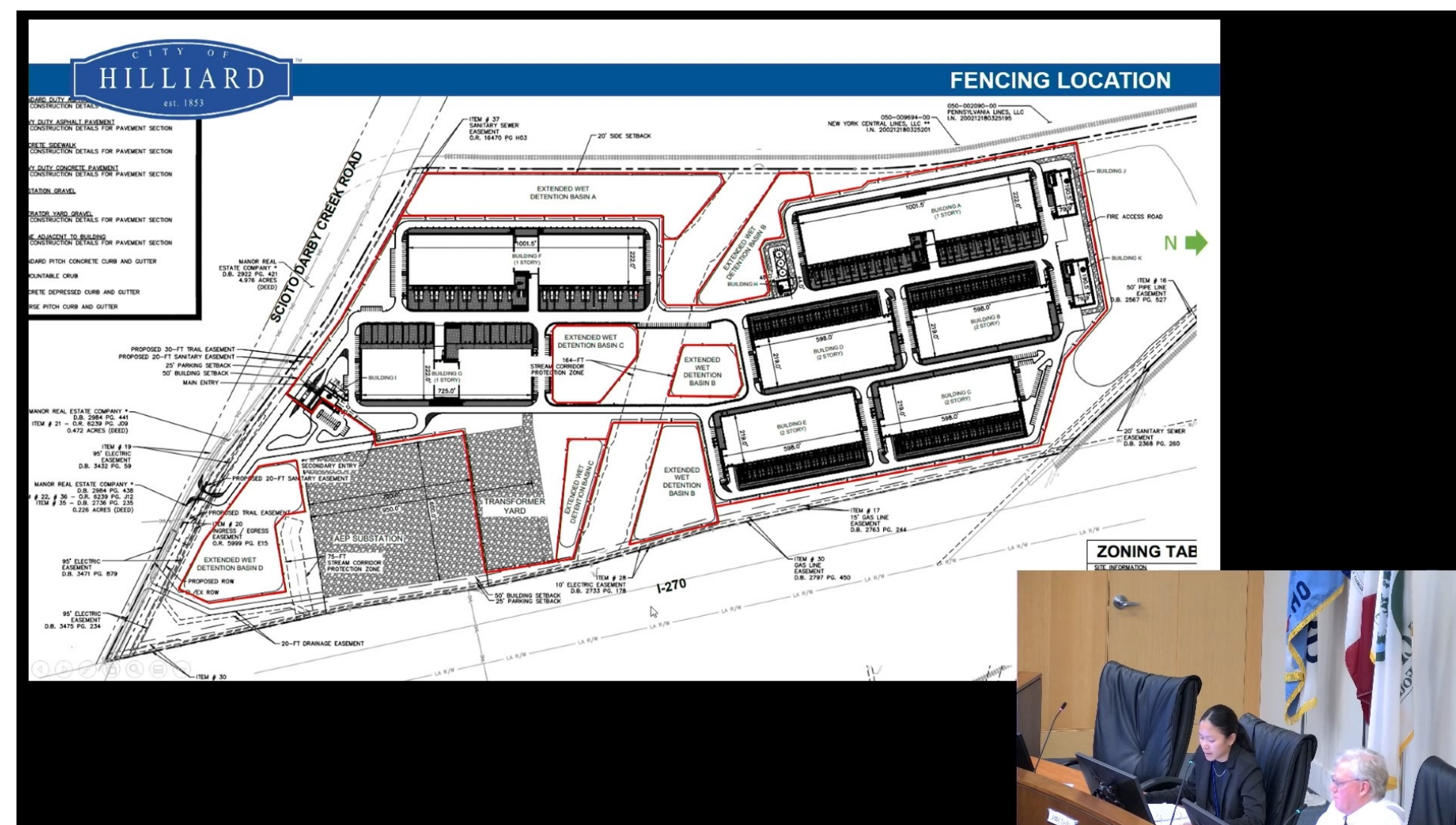


Image of my presentation for the July 2022 Board of Zoning Appeals meeting.

PLANNING DIVISION PROJECTS

I was given the opportunity to lead a full staff review of two P&Z Commission case applications and one BZA case application. Specifically, I got to review the development plans for a new Amazon Data Center and a new private dental office. Duties included the following:

- Determined whether the site plans followed Hilliard's Planning and Zoning Code
- Wrote Comment Letters that offered revisions to an applicant's development proposal
- Wrote Staff Reports to assist decision-making for the P&Z Commission and BZA
- Sent Public Notices to nearby property owners
- Presented the case applications during P&Z Commission and BZA meetings



Image of me working alongside Hilliard's Planning Manager and Code Enforcement Officer to review the site plan of a new development proposal.

MEETING TOPICS

I was able to join a wide variety of both public and internal staff meetings during my internship. Some of the topics included the following:

- Hilliard Recreation and Wellness Campus
- Western Hilliard Greenbelt
- Planning and Zoning Code additions and revisions
- Hilliard Comprehensive Plan updates
- One-on-one development project consultations

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER PROJECTS

I got to take on three small projects for Hilliard's Assistant City Manager that were outside of my typical Planning Division responsibilities:

- Made final revisions to and submitted the city's SolSmart Designation application
- Compiled financial information about other Central Ohio cities for use in an online database
- Contributed to a public campaign strategy that would educate residents about an upcoming electric aggregation ballot measure

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Gained direct experience working in the city planning profession
- Learned about the administrative and decision-making processes that guide development and land use planning in Hilliard
- Got an insider perspective about the work that goes into city planning and zoning enforcement, city management, and planning for large community investment projects
- Learned how to read and apply Planning & Zoning Code and other master development texts to development proposals

FINAL THOUGHTS & LOOKING AHEAD

My internship experience has made me more interested in a career in the public sector, and it has introduced me to new professions that are relevant to my interests in sustainable infrastructural development and community building. After I graduate, I hope to stay in Central Ohio and hopefully get involved in the exciting work that is currently going on in the region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the City of Hilliard and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission for sponsoring this internship.

I learned so much from this experience, and I got to meet and learn from many wonderful people.

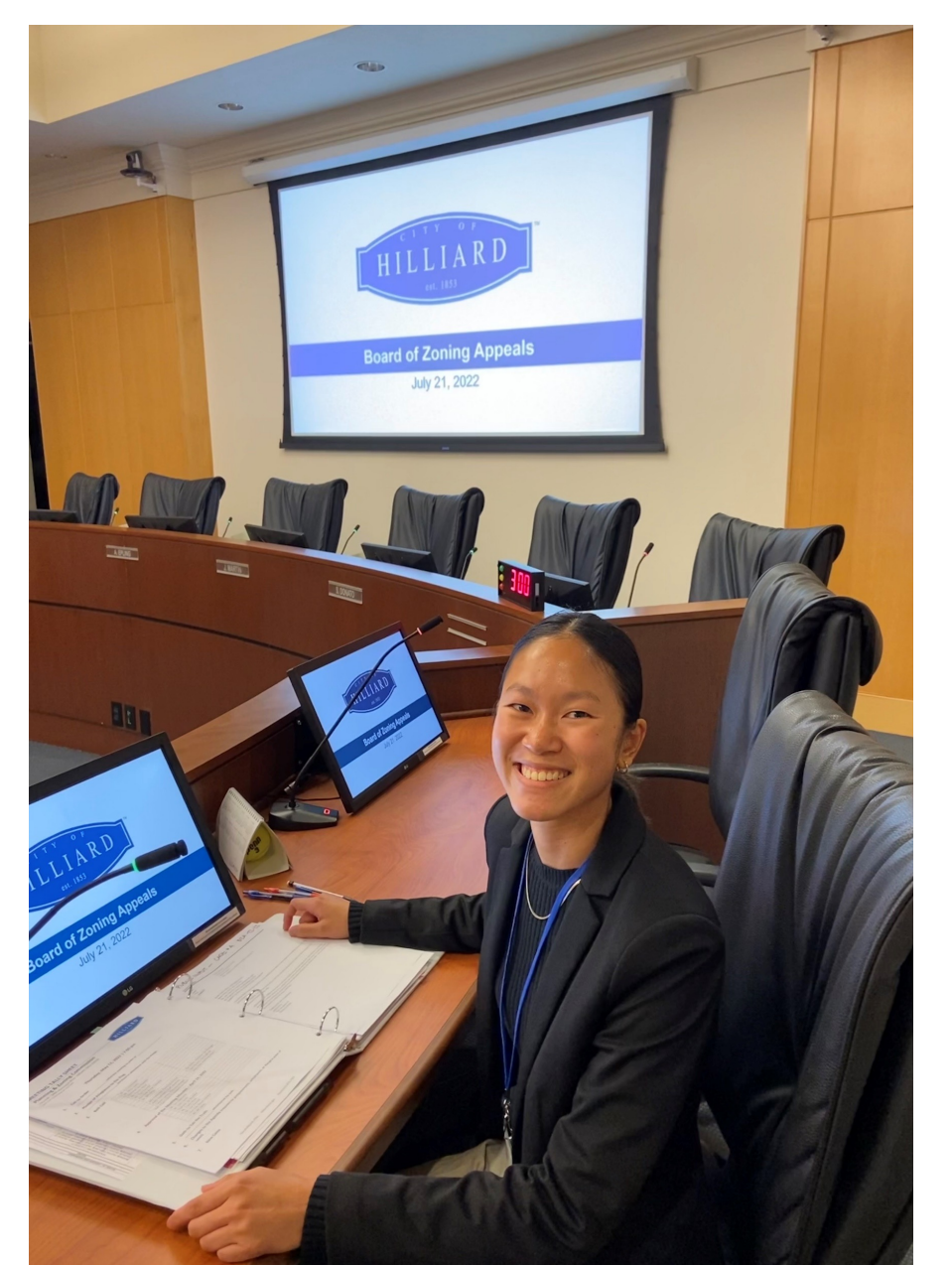


Image of me in the Municipal Building Council Chambers



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES