



TOWNSHIP OF SPRING

PLANNING COMMISSION

WORKSHOP

BERKS COUNTY, PA
2850 Windmill Road
READING, PA 19608
Tel. (610) 678-5393
Fax. (610) 678-4571
Website: springtwpberks.org

MINUTES

February 3, 2022

Chairperson Ulrich called a regular Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. on Thursday, February 3, 2022 in the Public Meeting Room of the Township Administration Building. Upon roll call, Sarah Ehrlich, George Stuck, Brad Weisman and LeRoy Schannauer were present. Members Ron Keating and Jeremy Zaborowski attended via teleconference. Also present were Jim Moll, Director of Engineering and Planning Services, Dan Becker, Township Solicitor; Judy Houck, Director of Parks and Recreation, Jen Bensinger, Information Systems Manager, Michael Gombar and Aristides Otero. The following individuals attended via teleconference: Martin Grass, John Hoffert, Janene Kope, Jeff Shyk, Steve Moyer and Kevin Brown.

OPEN TO THE FLOOR: None

MINUTES:

January 6th, 2022 Meeting – *A motion was made by Ms. Ehrlich, seconded by Mr. Zaborowski to approve the minutes of the January 6th, 2022 meeting. Mr. Ulrich clarified that the minutes should reflect that he abstained from the vote on the Alcon Land Development Plan. Upon roll call, Mr. Keating abstained and all other members voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED.*

NEW PLANS:

Montello Residences – Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plans

(Review letter dated February 1, 2022 attached)

The proposed project is the division of a 1-acre parcel along Montello Road into two (2) lots, each of which is proposed to contain a two-family detached dwelling which will result in a total of four (4) dwelling units. Mr. Moll reviewed the following concerns: the lot depth vs width ratio, the “private alley” and parking area, the driveway conditions, maintenance of the parking area and the maintenance of the retention pond. Mr. Hoffert indicated that the driveway will have to be re-constructed to accommodate two-way traffic and the construction vehicles. Discussion was held regarding the waiver requests. Maintenance of the storm water facilities, the parking areas and the shared driveways were points of concern. Mr. Hoffert will relay these concerns to his client and reply back to Mr. Moll.

The applicant is requesting the following waivers from the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance:

1. Section 503 and 603 – Requesting that the plan be reviewed as a single stage plan
2. Section 503 (C)(B)(2) -Plan scale is not drawn to the required 1”=50’ scale
3. Section 1005 (C – Lot width to depth ratio is proposed at 3.5:1 in lieu of the recommended range of 1:1 to 2.5:1

NEW PLANS:(Continued)

Montello Residences – Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plans (Continued)

The applicant is requesting the following waivers from the Stormwater Management Ordinance:

1. Section 310(B)(8)(a) – Berm width
2. Section 310(B)(8)(b) – Basin outlet pipe size
3. Section 310(B)(12) – Emergency Spillway Freeboard

Great Valley Consultants recommend granting approval for these stormwater waivers.

The County Planning Commission has not yet reviewed this plan therefore, Mr. Moll is not recommending that action be taken on the plan approval.

Motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the six (6) waivers requested by the applicant be granted was made by Mr. Keating and seconded by Ms. Ehrlich. Upon roll call, all members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED.

Eberly/Fox Annexation – Final Plan

(Review letter dated February 2, 2022 attached)

The proposed project is the annexation of a 0.2-acre parcel of land from the 84-acre farm owned by Derly and Emily Eberly onto the adjoining 0.4-acre residential lot owned by Marvin Fox. Mr. Moll reviewed the application and displayed aerial views of the properties to demonstrate the amount of area that is being annexed. The applicant is requesting a waiver from the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Section 704(B)9 because the plan scale is not drawn at the required 1" = 50' scale. Mr. Moll recommends that this waiver be granted. He also mentioned that the Eberly property is currently enrolled in the Clean and Green Program and Mr. Hoffert indicated that his client is prepared to comply with any rules relating to the sale of land that is enrolled in this program.

The County Planning Commission has not yet reviewed this plan therefore, Mr. Moll is not recommending that action be taken on the plan approval.

Motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the waiver requested by the applicant be granted was made by Mr. Stuck and seconded by Ms. Ehrlich. Upon roll call, all members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED.

Broadcasting Square Redevelopment - Sketch Plan

(Review letter dated February 3, 2022 attached)

The applicant has submitted a request for the Township to waive the requirement that Land Development Plans be submitted for proposed changes to an existing building at the Broadcasting Square shopping center. Mr. Moll reviewed the applicant's plans to remove the former M&T Bank building and build a new building that will house two separate commercial spaces. The tenants of these two spaces are unknown to the Township at this time. Mr. Moll reviewed the parking regulations for the shopping center as well as the Township's updated regulations that require the location and the number of parking spaces be based upon the use of a facility. A high demand parking use, like a restaurant, would require more parking spaces be located immediately around the building. Since the applicant has not yet revealed who the tenants are and what types of businesses will inhabit these buildings, the Township cannot accurately evaluate the sketch plan.

NEW PLANS:(Continued)

Broadcasting Square Redevelopment - Sketch Plan

Mr. Otero, of Stackhouse Bensinger, Inc., received Mr. Moll's review comments and is under the impression that the variance that was received for parking regulations over 20 years ago, applies to the entire shopping center, regardless of the type of uses that are introduced to the site.

Mr. Moll reiterated that when a high traffic generator use is proposed, the Township looks at how the parking lot is laid out, not just the number of spaces that are required.

Mr. Becker stated that he believes this discussion is pre-mature since the Township has not been informed about the type of uses that will be placed in the buildings. He stated that if a use is proposed that doesn't comply, it will have to be reviewed by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Mr. Moll explained again that once the plan is approved, the Township doesn't have a chance to address the parking if the new use could cause parking issues.

Mr. Otero reiterated that they believe the original parking variance covers the entire site and that they submitted this plan to avoid the land development process because they consider this just a redevelopment project. He referenced Building X and the parking issues they have had. He believes that once the use is defined a zoning permit would be filed if necessary.

Mr. Moll is concerned that the Township will lock itself into a design that may be non-functioning if a particular use is put into that building. Mr. Becker replied that the Zoning Hearing Board would address it at that time. Mr. Moll believes that the Township might feel obligated to approve it at that point, regardless of the issue it may cause. Mr. Becker stated that this is the Zoning Board's decision and it is at the applicant's risk to continue. Mr. Weisman believes that it will all depend on the uses that are put in the buildings.

Mr. Ulrich summarized Mr. Moll's concerns that if the land development phase is waived, this project would just go through the Codes Department and the plan would not return to the Planning Commission for review and comment. Mr. Moll confirmed that this is what will happen if the land development phase is waived.

Mr. Becker asked if there were any other land development concerns. Mr. Moll also mentioned a few concerns that stem from the Township's past experiences with this shopping center. He discussed the access drive that leads out to North Meridian Boulevard and the number of "U" turns that occur at the traffic signal because drivers are attempting to get to Route 222. Once drivers are out of the parking lot it is too late for them to go any other direction. Mr. Moll isn't trying to design the project but he would like the applicant to look at it and see if there is anything they can do to help alleviate these issues. Mr. Stuck suggested making that an "Entrance Only" to force traffic to exit over near Wendy's Restaurant.

Mr. Otero discussed tractor trailer traffic to and through this site. Tractor trailers will be making deliveries to these locations and will enter the site between the building and Coastal Grill and exit the site on the other side closer to Wendy's because that is a wider driveway.

Mr. Moll also expressed that the applicant needs to demonstrate that there is adequate sewage capacity for whatever use is ultimately occupying the spaces.

NEW PLANS:(Continued)

Broadcasting Square Redevelopment - Sketch Plan

Mr. Moll reiterated that the request before the Commission is for the Township to waive the Land Development Process. The applicant is changing the building and changing the parking lot and the Township clearly has the right to require the applicant to go through the Land Development Process. If the Township grants the waiver, Mr. Moll strongly suggests that the applicant be required to provide and record an "As Built Plans" to memorialize what was done to the site.

Mr. Otero was agreeable to confirming the sewage capacity and recording "As Built Plans".

Motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the waiver be granted subject to a Part Two review by staff to confirm that the uses are compliant and that there is adequate sewage capacity and the recording of "As Built Plans" by the applicant was made by Ms. Ehrlich, seconded by Mr. Weisman. Upon roll call, all members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Moll displayed drawings of the other end of the Broadcasting Square shopping center where the former Babies R Us building was located. Originally Panera Bread was planning to occupy a free-standing building in this area. The original plan went through the planning process and was approved by the Board of Supervisors with conditions. These conditions have not yet been met and therefore the plan has not been recorded.

Panera Bread has decided not to move from their current location and the applicant is now proposing a different restaurant in the same area where Panera Bread was supposed to be located. The square footage of the proposed Outback Restaurant is actually smaller than what was proposed for the Panera Bread Restaurant. Since the plans had already been approved there was some question about the next steps.

Mr. Otero submitted a sketch plan to demonstrate the differences between the Panera Bread layout and the Outback layout. Some of the utilities are slightly different but in general the plan is very similar. Grease pits have been added to the plan due to the menu differences between the two restaurants. Mr. Otero is seeking direction regarding how the Township would like them to proceed since an original plan was already conditionally approved.

Mr. Becker stated that the applicant should review the parking, sewage capacity, fire/rescue review, pay any outstanding Township invoices and confirm that the original plan is still adequate for the needs of the new restaurant. The applicant needs to revise whatever drawings need to be updated Mr. Becker believes that since the original plan was approved but not yet recorded, the applicant should still update the plan and re-submit it through the Engineering Department.

Mr. Otero was hoping to just be able to revise the plans and not have to re-submit it to the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Moll asked if the Planning Commission had any issues with the proposed changes and although no one had any concerns about the project, the applicant was directed to make the necessary changes on the plans and re-submit them to the Planning Commission.

NEW PLANS:(Continued)

Learning Experience – 3 Meridian Boulevard – Final PRD Plans

(Review letter dated February 3, 2022 attached)

The subject property to which the project pertains is a 1.1-acre area which is part of the parcel identified as One Meridian Boulevard and is within the overall Spring Ridge PRD. The original Tentative Plans for the PRD had designated this area as an office. Mr. Moll updated the Commission on the status of this project. A Tentative Plan Amendment Hearing has been scheduled with the Board of Supervisors for Monday, March 14th, 2022.

PENDING PLANS

Wilson School District – Athletic Field Improvements

(Review letters dated January 18, 2022 and February 3, 2022 attached)

Mr. Moll provided his plan review of this project. He is waiting for a response to his January 18th, 2022 review letter and they are still working through the traffic review process. Discussion was held regarding the Traffic Study. The Engineering Department and the Township's Traffic Engineer were directed to review the plan and develop a list of information that they would like to see from the School District to evaluate the traffic flows and the parking. That letter has been sent to the District. Mr. Shyk attended the meeting just to answer any questions the Commission might have. They are working on revising the plans and hope to be on the March 3rd agenda and Mr. Shyk asked when the submission deadline would be. Mr. Moll would like to have the plans 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Transportation Advisory Committee is seeking a representative from the Planning Commission. Their meetings are scheduled on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. Both Mr. Weisman and Mr. Keating volunteered to serve as the Commission's representative on this Committee. A brief discussion was held about the Committee.

Motion to recommend appointing Mr. Keating to the Transportation Advisory Committee was made by Ms. Ehrlich and seconded by Mr. Weisman. Upon roll call, all members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Chairperson Ulrich adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.



Ron Keating, Secretary