



# TOWNSHIP OF SPRING

## PLANNING COMMISSION

### WORKSHOP

**BERKS COUNTY, PA**  
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### MINUTES

#### March 3, 2022

Chairperson Ulrich called a regular Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, 2022 in the Public Meeting Room of the Township Administration Building. Upon roll call, Sarah Ehrlich, Ron Keating, LeRoy Schannauer, George Stuck, Brad Weisman and Jeremy Zaborowski were present. 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; Dino DiMariano, Brynn Schaffer, Marshal Lytle and Mr. Simcox. The following individuals attended via teleconference: Jeremy Boyer, Craig Bonenberger, John Hoffert, Greg Davis and Jeff Shyk.

**OPEN TO THE FLOOR:** None

#### **MINUTES:**

**February 3rd, 2022 Meeting** – *A motion was made by Mr. Weisman, seconded by Ms. Ehrlich to approve the minutes of the February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 meeting. Upon roll call, all members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED. 7-0*

#### **NEW PLANS:**

##### **Lilyfield Mini-Warehouse Storage – Sketch Plan**

(Review letter dated February 24, 2022 attached)

The applicant submitted a sketch plan showing a proposed 32-unit self-storage facility on 2.8 acres located at the intersection of Fritztown and Wernersville Roads. This is Lot 92 of the Lilyfield Development which was a combination of 90 residential lots, 2 commercial lots and 4 annexation parcels. Mr. Schaffer explained that the proposed facility will have several sizes of storage units. Some of the units will be “pull-through” units that can store large recreational vehicles. The applicant discussed their plan for businesses to use some of these units for storage and their attempts to be good neighbors by planning for the smallest units to be placed with the backs of the units facing the residential development. The Commission questioned if the units were climate controlled and whether or not renters could use the areas as “garage” space to work on their recreational vehicles. Mr. Moll stated that the regulations for storage units does not permit renters to work on their vehicles inside the units. The following points were also discussed:

- Building setback from the residential areas is 75’; the plan shows units within this setback area
- Security fencing is required by the ordinance but the plan does not show any fencing
- Height of the buildings is shown at 14’ but the limit for storage buildings is 12’
- Planting screen needs to be shown as meeting the requirements
- Lighting –security lighting or illumination for working outside the units
- Operating hours for the facility

**NEW PLANS (Continued):**

**Lilyfield Mini-Warehouse Storage – Sketch Plan (Continued)**

- The entrances are closer together than permitted
- Mr. Moll will speak with the Fire Department regarding access for emergency vehicles
- Sidewalks along the frontage of the property were shown on the original development plans but are not shown on this sketch plan

The applicant will need variances from the Zoning Hearing Board for the setbacks, height of the buildings and the elimination of the fencing. The applicant chose the proposed layout to keep the driving areas away from the residences and the structures along the residences on that side will also serve as a buffer. Questions regarding the upper end landscaping and the installation of a gate at the entrance in lieu of fencing all around were discussed.

**SIGN WAIVER REQUEST**

**Learning Experience – 3 Meridian Boulevard**

(Review letter dated March 2, 2022 attached.)

Commercial properties located in the PRD (Planned Residential Development), often request sign waivers for larger signs because signs in the PRD are limited to 12 square feet. Mr. Moll reviewed the signs that the applicant is requesting. In the past, the Township has used one of two criteria when these requests are received – 1) If it in line with signage that has already been approved in the area and 2) Would it have been approved if it were covered by the Zoning Ordinance instead of the PRD regulations? The Township looks at one criterion or the other, not both. The total amount of signage requested is 137 square footage. The Zoning Ordinance would permit 160 square feet of signage. Although the Zoning Ordinance does not cover the PRD, the Township uses this ordinance as a guide for these types of requests. The applicant addressed the Commission’s questions regarding illumination of the signs.

*A motion was made by Mr. Keating, seconded by Mr. Weisman to recommend that the applicant be awarded the sign waiver by the Board of Supervisors at the hearing on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Upon roll call, all members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.*

**PENDING PLANS**

**Learning Experience – 3 Meridian Boulevard – Final PRD Plans**

The Tentative Plan Hearing is scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> at the Board of Supervisors’ meeting. Action on the final plan must wait until after the Tentative Plan Hearing.

**NEW PLANS (Continued):**

**Wilson School District – Building Addition & Athletic Field Improvements**

(Review letter dated March 2, 2022 attached)

Mr. Shyk is requesting approval of the Preliminary Plan based on the limited outstanding conditions.

Mr. Ulrich asked how the District was proceeding with the limited traffic study. The District has recently contracted with Bogia Engineering and anticipates having that study completed in approximately 2 weeks.

Mr. Moll reviewed the District’s request for a stormwater waiver regarding the 2-year post development peak flow rates. The reviewing engineer, Great Valley Consultants, has determined that the difference between what the applicant is able to achieve and what the ordinance requires is

**NEW PLANS (Continued):**

**Wilson School District – Building Addition & Athletic Field Improvements (Continued)**

de minimis. Although Mr. Moll received the lighting plan today, he has not had a chance to review the plan. Discussion was held on the water lines and fire hydrants as well as the bus turn-around space in the new parking area off Berks Place. Mr. Moll indicated that the Commission could recommend approval of the plan dependent upon his review of the lighting plan and any outstanding issues that Fire Marshal Hatt may have.

Mr. Simcox indicated that he met Marshall Hatt earlier today and that the District exceeded the fire protection requirements and will be installing an 8” water line down through the entire area planned for redevelopment.

Mr. Zaborowski questioned the off-site sidewalk improvements and Mr. Moll indicated that the traffic study will not directly address this issue but the Board of Supervisors addressed the issue of installing sidewalk on Howard Street with the School District. Mr. Simcox received an estimate from Construction Masters Services for this project and the amount was \$158,000.00.

Mr. Moll reminded the Commission that this body has already recommended granting a waiver for the traffic study. Mr. Simcox has implemented a master schedule for major events at the campus which will eliminate the parking concerns that were discussed at previous meetings.

*Motion was made by Mr. Keating, seconded by Mr. Zaborowski to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the Revised Preliminary/Final Plan be approved conditional upon Mr. Moll’s review and approval of the lighting plan and the Planning Commission’s comments this evening and that the requested stormwater waiver be granted. Upon roll call, all members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.*

**Eberly/Fox Annexation – Final Plan**

(Review letter dated March 1, 2022 attached)

Mr. Moll reviewed this project which involves the annexation of a strip of property around the Fox Property.

*Motion was made by Mr. Stuck, seconded by Ms. Ehrlich recommending to the Board of Supervisors that the Eberly/Fox Annexation Plan be approved. Upon roll call, all members present voted affirmatively. Motion Carried 7-0*

**PENDING PLANS (Continued)**

**Montello Residences – Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plans**

Mr. Hoffert reviewed the driveway plans and the difficulty of relocating a utility pole. He plans on submitting a request for a time extension so that they have time to obtain a Zoning Variance for the driveway width.

**NEW PLANS (Continued):**

**Chick-fil-A – Revised Land Development Plans**

(Review letter dated March 1, 2022 attached.)

This plan has already been recommended for approval by the Planning Commission and has been approved, with conditions, by the Board of Supervisors. One of the conditions requires the plan to be revised so the plan will be coming back to the Planning Commission at a future date. Mr. Ulrich questioned if Marshall Hatt’s comments regarding the height of the drive-thru canopies was

**NEW PLANS (Continued):**

**Chick-fil-A – Revised Land Development Plans**

addressed. Mr. Moll reported that the recent plan submittal did not show the increase in height from 9' to 12'.

**PENDING PLANS (Continued)**

**Broadcasting Square (West) Redevelopment - Final Plan**

This is the area of the shopping center where Babies R Us used to be located. Mr. Moll reported that the approved Final Plan was never recorded because the applicant did not meet all of the conditions as listed on the plan. Since then, the applicant has changed the plan slightly. The area where Panera Bread was to be located is now the future site of an Outback Restaurant. Mr. Moll indicated that the Township is waiting for a Revised Final Plan but has not received the plan as of this date.

**ZONING REQUEST**

**2125 Portland Avenue – Special Exception for Auto Body Repair Shop**

(Review letter dated February 28, 2022 attached.)

Mr. Moll explained that this area is a unique mix of industrial and residential uses. The applicant is requesting permission to convert an existing building which used to serve as the offices for a local contractor to an auto body repair shop. A clause in the Zoning Ordinance indicates that if an applicant has a location with a non-conforming use, it can be converted to another non-conforming use through a Special Exception as long as the new use is at least as good or better than the existing use was in regards to its impact on the neighborhood. Discussion points included: was the existing use truly non-conforming, how does a contractor's use compare to an auto body repair shop and did the previous use still have its non-conforming status. If a non-conforming business ceases to exist for one year, it loses its non-conforming status.

Mr. Moll also reported that although past paperwork indicates that the property has public sewer and water, staff have determined that the property is not serviced by public sewer. This property, like several others in the neighborhood, processes its sanitary sewer in a cesspool. Ms. Bensinger reported that the Township believes the cesspool drains into fractured rock. Mr. Moll discussed the existence of apartments on the second levels of several of the commercial buildings on Portland Avenue including this one. Discussion was held regarding the Fire Marshall's comments, the types of sewage processing systems that exist in this neighborhood and the condition of the alley.

*Motion was made by Mr. Stuck, seconded by Mr. Keating to recommend denial of the zoning relief. Upon roll call, five (5) members voted affirmatively, two (2) members voted negatively. MOTION CARRIED 5 - 2*

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Liquor License Transfer – Texas Roadhouse**

(Review letter dated March 3, 2022 attached.)

Mr. Moll explained the request to transfer the current joint liquor license which lists both Homewood Suites and Texas Roadhouse as the holders of the license to Texas Roadhouse. It is the Township's understanding that Homewood Suites is in the process of being sold.

*Motion was made by Ms. Ehrlich, seconded by Mr. Weisman to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the liquor license transfer. Upon roll call, all members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED 7-0*

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Chairperson Ulrich adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

  
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Ron Keating, Secretary