



TOWNSHIP OF SPRING PLANNING COMMISSION

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Meeting Minutes

November 3, 2022

Chairperson Ulrich called a Planning Commission workshop meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 3rd, 2022 in the Public Meeting Room of the Township Administration Building. Upon roll call, Sarah Ehrlich, LeRoy Schannauer, Jeremy Zaborowski and Ron Keating were present. Also present were Jim Moll, Director of Engineering and Planning Services; Dan Becker, Solicitor; Judy Houck, Director of Parks and Recreation and Jen Bensing, Director of Information Technology. No one attended the meeting in person. The following individual attended the meeting virtually: Terry Dugan, Elizabeth Pyle and Merlin Weaver.

OPEN TO THE FLOOR: None

AMEND THE AGENDA –

MINUTES:

October 6th, 2022 Meeting – *This item was tabled. A majority of the members present at this meeting were not present at the October 6th meeting.*

October 27th, 2022 Meeting – *Motion to approve the minutes of the October 27th, 2022 meeting was made by Mr. Schannauer, seconded by Mr. Zaborowski. Upon roll call, Ms. Ehrlich abstained and all other members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED 4 - 0.*

ZONING REQUESTS

St. Ignatius Loyola Church – Variance & Special Exception Request for Sign

(Review letter dated November 2nd, 2022 attached.)

Mr. Moll reviewed the application and informed the Commission that this type of sign is not permitted in residential areas. St. Ignatius Church is in the Moderate Density Suburban District so the applicant has applied for a Special Exception and five (5) variances as follows:

- Special Exception for an electronic changeable copy sign
- Variance to allow red, amber and green lights illuminating the sign
- Variance to exceed maximum sign area of 12 sq. ft.
- Variance to allow flashing, blinking, twinkling, animated or moving signs
- Variance from prohibition against electronic changeable copy signs
- Variance from 40% limit on electronic changeable copy portion of sign

ZONING REQUESTS (Continued)

St. Ignatius Loyola Church – Variance & Special Exception Request for Sign (Continued)

Mr. Moll confirmed with the applicant's representative that the plan was to use the existing monument sign. He then reviewed each of the requested variances and stated that he does not believe the applicant needs to request the variance for the red, amber and green lights because this regulation was intended for lights that would be used to illuminate a static sign, not for an electronic changeable sign with multiple colors in the actual sign.

Mr. Moll reviewed the variance request from the maximum sign size requirement. Since the sign structure already exists, Mr. Moll would consider this a pre-existing non-conformity and doesn't believe the applicant needs to request this variance either based on the grandfather clause.

Mr. Moll then addressed the prohibition of the flashing, blinking, twinkly, animated or moving signs. This regulation was adopted to prevent signs that would distract drivers as they drove past these types of signs. Mr. Moll questioned the applicant about their intentions for the sign. Ms. Pyle responded on behalf of her client stating that since they weren't entirely sure of everything they would possibly want to display on this sign they didn't want to limit themselves and not be able to post a moving image during the next holiday season. Mr. Moll informed her that the Township doesn't generally grant a variance for things that they don't have enough information about. Mr. Becker suggested the applicant speak with the Zoning Officer regarding this item.

Section 604(E) prohibits electronic changeable copy signs unless they are otherwise permitted by the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, if the applicant successfully obtains a Special Exception, the applicant would not be in violation. The applicant does not need a variance from this section.

The applicant does need a variance from the 40% limit on the electronic changeable copy portion of a sign. Mr. Moll's calculation indicates that this sign is approximately 50% of the size of the sign. Ms. Pyle indicated that depending on whether or not you consider the base of the structure as part of the sign, her calculation equaled approximately 60% of the sign structure. She also noted that the actual size of the changeable portion of the sign is not changing; it is going from a manual changeable copy sign to an electronic changeable copy sign. Mr. Moll informed her that even though the size of the sign is remaining the same, the conditions are changing – from static copy to electronic changing copy – and therefore this is a variance the applicant will need to obtain. Discussion was held regarding sign sizes and how those sizes are calculated.

Mr. Moll also reported that there are other requirements for electronic changeable copy signs including:

- Compliance with the static message/images only requirement
- The duration of the image would comply with the one (1) minute minimum requirement
- The brightness of the proposed sign

Ms. Pyle reported that their proposed sign is programmable and they will follow up to confirm that they can comply with these regulations.

Mr. Ulrich expressed his concern about the flashing, blinking and animation of the sign because it could be distracting to drivers. Mr. Keating added his concern about the brightness of the sign for the same reasons.

ZONING REQUESTS (Continued)

St. Ignatius Loyola Church – Variance & Special Exception Request for Sign (Continued)

Mr. Becker is familiar with similar projects from other areas where the municipalities have placed conditions on these types of signs regarding nits, lumens, scrolling images, duration that copy is held static, etc.

The hearing with the Zoning Hearing Board for this application has been set for December 7th, 2022. Mr. Zaborowski questioned if there was anything substantively different between this application and the sign at the Wilson School District campus. Brief discussion was held about the district’s sign.

Motion to recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board:

1. *Approval of the Special Exception for an electronic changeable copy sign*
2. *Granting of the variance from the 40% limit on electronic changeable copy portion*
3. *Denial of the variance to allow flashing, blinking, twinkling, animated or moving signs*
4. *Enforcement of Section 606, Subsections D, F, G and H as outlined in Mr. Moll’s review letter Item No. 4*

was made by Mr. Zaborowski and seconded by Ms. Ehrlich. Upon roll call, all other members present voted affirmatively. MOTION CARRIED 5 - 0

The Director of Engineering & Planning Services and the Planning Commission do not believe that the applicant needs the variances for:

1. Section 602(F) – relating to red, amber and green lights
2. Section 603(B)(1) – relating to exceeding the maximum sign area of 12 sq. ft.
3. Section 604(E) – relating to the prohibition against electronic changeable copy signs

NEW PLANS

Lilyfield Mini-Warehouses – Preliminary Plans

(Review letters dated October 5th and 24th, 2022 attached.)

Mr. Moll reported that he completed two reviews for this project - one for the zoning issues and one for the subdivision plan. The applicant has received copies of Mr. Moll’s review letters but they have not submitted a reply. This plan will need to go to the Zoning Hearing Board for several variances. The Commission will need to act upon this plan at the December 1st meeting unless an Extension of Time is submitted.

Juliana’s Restaurant – Waiver of Land Development Process

The Planning Commission acted upon this request at the October 27th, 2022 Workshop Meeting. The applicant has received a copy of Mr. Moll’s review letter and the Planning Commission’s recommendations.

Helping Harvest – Parking Lot Expansion – Preliminary Plans

(Review letter dated November 2nd, 2022 attached.)

Revised plans have been received and the plan indicates that there will not be any work done in the area that is currently owned by PennDOT. The encroachment of the driveway into the right of way was discussed at the Board of Supervisors’ meeting and the issue was referred to the Zoning Officer.

NEW PLANS (Continued)

Helping Harvest – Parking Lot Expansion -Preliminary Plans (Continued)

The applicant was instructed to apply for a de minimis variance from the Zoning Hearing Board. That application has not yet been received so no further action is currently needed.

ZONING REQUESTS

744 Fritztown Road – Variance Request

The Planning Commission acted upon this request at the October 27th, 2022 Workshop Meeting. The Zoning Hearing Board held the hearing for this application on November 2nd, 2022 and a decision is scheduled to be rendered on December 7th, 2022.

PENDING PLANS

Wilson School District – Building Addition & Athletic Field Improvements

The Planning Commission acted upon this request at the October 27th, 2022 Workshop Meeting.

St. Luke’s University – Medical Office Building

The Planning Commission acted upon the plan at the October 6th, 2022 Meeting. The Zoning Hearing Board held the hearing for this application on November 2nd, 2022 and a decision is scheduled to be rendered on December 7th, 2022.

Montello Residences – Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plans

Mr. Moll had nothing new to report about this plan.

R. Weller II Minor Subdivision

Mr. Moll had nothing new to report about this plan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 17th, 2022. This meeting may be cancelled unless some zoning issues are submitted that need to be acted upon.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Chairperson Ulrich adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.



Ron Keating, Secretary