

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2018 - 7:00 PM

PALMER TOWNSHIP LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM - 1 WELLER PLACE, PALMER, PA

The January meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday January 9, 2018 at 7:00 pm with the following in attendance: Chariman Robert Blanchfield, Robert Walker, Jeff Kicska and Karin Vangeli. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cynthia Carman Kramer, Ralph Russek of the Pidcock Company and Solicitors Charles Bruno and Steve Brown. Members absent: Robert Lammi and Richard Wilkins.

Blanchfield welcomed Karin Vangeli as a new member of the Planning Commission, announced that Thomas Grube has resigned due to other obligations and Andrew Rossi has moved to the Zoning Hearing Board.

1. Reorganization - Election of Officers

Blanchfield turned the meeting over to Solicitor Charles Bruno to act as Chairman. Bruno called for nominations for Chairman.

Robert Blanchfield was nominated and appointed as Chairman for 2018. Bruno then turned the meeting back over to the newly appointed Chairman, Robert Blanchfield.

Motion: Confirm, Moved by Jeff Kicska, Seconded by Robert Walker. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins

Blanchfield called for nominations for Vice Chairman. Robert Lammi was nominated and appointed Vice Chairman for 2018.

Motion: Confirm, Moved by Robert Walker, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins

Blanchfield called for nominations for Secretary. Kathleen Sciascia was nominated and appointed Secretary for 2018.

Motion: Confirm, Moved by Robert Walker, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins

OLD BUSINESS

2. Ridge Palmer Partners - Conditional Use Application - Limited Distribution Use in PO/IP District

1493 Van Buren Rd - K8-12-1

PO/IP District

Request by Ridge Palmer Partners I, LLC

DISCUSSION

Present on behalf of the applicant were Greg Boller of Ridge Palmer Partners, Attorney Blake Marles, Dave Habowski of HD Engineering and Robert Hoffman of Traffic Planning and Design Inc.

The applicant, Ridge Palmer Partners I, LLC, is requesting conditional use approval for construction of a 175,500 square foot limited distribution building with 27 loading docks, on an 11.89 acre lot. The property is located on the southeast corner of Van Buren Road and Newlins Mill Road. The property is located in the Planned Office/Industrial Park (PO/IP) zoning district. The applicant is seeking conditional use approval under the following provision of the Zoning Ordinance: §190-137.E - Limited distribution center in the PO/IP district.

Bruno explained that this request was tabled at the last Planning Commission meeting because the applicant needed to submit a subdivision plan that the application is relying upon to meet the requirements for the Conditional Use.

Marles gave a brief summary of the project. Marles voiced concerns about comment 1 of the Pidcock letter dated December 21, 2017. He stated that improvements can't be required until the land development phase. If the Township wants this shown on the plan, they can put it on the plan, but it may be modified when they do the land development plans. Bruno asked if the building location has changed. Marles said no. Habowski said these issues can be easily addressed in the re-submission.

Marles stated that they were confused about the comment regarding the 150' setback. Russek explained that they wanted it document on the plan that they would maintain a 150' setback. Habowski confirmed the setback would be 158.56'. Bruno asked about the preservation lot - how the property would be restricted, how it would be maintained and would it be used for anything other than open space. Marles said they would be willing to turn it over to the Township or the Highlands Home Owners Association. They would restrict it with a covenant running with the land.

Russek to explained the driveway issues on Newlins Mill Road as per items #4 a and b of the review letter. He stated that as shown on the plans, there is not enough room for a truck to make the turn into or out of the driveway without crossing into the other lane. Habowski said they can increase the radius and eliminate the problem, the driveway will not have to be moved. Russek then explained their concern about the building elevations. From the nearest houses in the Highlands, the line of sight would project right into the building; the proposed berm and trees would not be effective. Habowski said the berm and trees comply with the ordinance, but that they could increase the berm by 4 feet with 6 foot high trees, getting them 2 feet above the line of sight. Blanchfield asked if downsizing the building was a possibility. Marles said that wouldn't solve the problem. Blanchfield asked about lighting and noise. Marles said they would comply with the ordinance.

Bruno explained that the Planning Commission is asked to make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, but this is not the final step. The

next round would be before the Board of Supervisors in a formal setting for a final decision. Blanchfield asked if the Planning Commission denied it, if it can still go before the Board of Supervisors. Bruno said yes, the Planning Commission provides a recommendation but based on the testimony provided in the public hearing, they can decide differently. If the Board approves it, they must come back before the Planning Commission for land development review.

The Planning Commission recommended denial of the conditional use application by the Board of Supervisors.

Motion: Deny, Moved by Robert Walker, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker
Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins

NEW BUSINESS

3. Ridge Palmer Partners - Minor Subdivision Plan
1493 Van Buren Rd - K8-12-1
PO/IP District
Request by Ridge Palmer Partners

DISCUSSION

Present on behalf of the applicant were Greg Boller of Ridge Palmer Partners, Attorney Blake Marles, Dave Habowski of HD Engineering and Robert Hoffman of Traffic Planning and Design Inc.

The plan proposes the subdivision of an existing 16.81± acre tract into two lots. The property is located on the southeast corner of Van Buren Road and Newlins Mill Road. Proposed Lot A (11.94± acres), would front on both roads. Proposed Lot B (3.33± acres) is an L-shaped lot would front on Van Buren Road only and is noted for preservation. The tract currently contains a dwelling near the intersection, with the remainder of the tract being used for agricultural purposes. The plan also proposes the dedication of approximately 1.54 acres of road right-of-way for Newlins Mill and Van Buren Roads. The existing dwelling and fence are shown to be within the right-of-way dedication area and are to be removed. The redefinition of an existing gas pipeline easement is also proposed. The property is located in the Planned Office/Industrial Park (PO/IP) zoning district.

Aspects related to the subdivision plan were discussed simultaneously with the discussion of the conditional use application.

Public comments were related to both the conditional use application and the minor subdivision plan.

Mary Jane Long, 27 Glenmoor Circle, stated air quality is a major concern, how is this affecting their air quality? Trucking is throwing off more pollution.

Charles Young, 33 Glasgow Drive, stated that creating a flag lot does not conform with the spirit of the ordinance. There is no buffering from the existing

trees. They need a bigger berm to protect the houses from the noise. They are going to encroach on them with noise. They should get rid of the warehouse and build an assisted living complex.

John Halligan, 12 Canterbury Lane, stated he had not heard any discussion about water flow and run off. The building is built on top of an unknown tributary, how is that being taken into consideration on this plan? Where is the water from the detention pond going? How can you go ahead with this without looking at all the projects that are draining into the creek? How does the Comprehensive plan interface? Do we know that the storm water studies will work?

Timothy Fisher, 68 Moor Drive, asked if the ingress and egress on Van Buren Road is just for employees. Has there been a Traffic Study done? Are there other Limited Distribution buildings?

Patrick Mcivor, 23 Devonshire, asked for an explanation of Limited Distribution vs Distribution.

Wayne Conrad, 41 Moor Drive, asked if the building would be a 24 hour operation.

Judith Dickerson, 49 Inverness Lane, disagreed about the view of the buffer. Trying to change the land will cause water issues at the Highlands. Also concerned about air pollution and 24 hour operation. Be more future focused, instead of looking at each isolated case, take into consideration future developments.

Jim Finnen, 18 Moor Drive, stated that Palmer Township gave permission to construct their 2 communities. They enjoy a great quality of life and feel many of the factors mentioned would encroach on their lives. He read the mission statement from the existing Comprehensive Plan.

Dorothy Wilson, 172 Glenmoor Circle, was concerned about quality of life issues, the number of trucks are increasing like a cancer.

Dave Wilson, 172 Glenmoor Circle, asked how the trucks would get to the site.

Andrew Brown, 107 Moor Drive, stated that somebody has to police the rules that are put in effect.

Dave Monaghan, 12 Glasgow Way, asked If the subdivision is denied,if the use can move forward. Urged denial of the plan.

The Commission voted to recommend approval of the Minor Subdivision plan to the Board of Supervisors, subject to the following conditions:

1. Comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated December 21, 2017 are satisfactorily addressed.
2. The need for a recreation contribution is determined by the Board of Supervisors. The required amount for a fee in lieu of contribution as required by ordinance would be \$3,000 per acre.

3. The need for any voluntary traffic contribution is determined by the Board of Supervisors.

Motion: Approve w/ Conditions, Moved by Robert Walker, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins

PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

4. 2017 Annual Report

Kramer stated that the Planning Commission is required to make an annual report to the Board of Supervisors, reporting on their activities for the year. The Commission voted to forward the report prepared by Kramer as their annual report.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Jeff Kicska, Seconded by Karin Vangeli. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins

5. Comprehensive Plan Review

Kramer reported that the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission had come back with a few comments on the plan. The consultants have addressed the comments. It will be before the Board of Supervisors on January 23 for adoption. The Commission voted to approve the changes and recommend adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Board of Supervisors.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Walker, Seconded by Karin Vangeli. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 9:10

Motion: Adjourn, Moved by Jeff Kicska, Seconded by Karin Vangeli. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins