

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2016 - 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 12, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. with the following in attendance: Robert Blanchfield (Chairman), Robert Lammi (Vice Chairman), Tom Grube, Rich Wilkins and Jeffrey Kicska. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cynthia Carman, Solicitors Charles Bruno and Ryan Fields, and Supervisor Jeff Young. Chairman Blanchfield opened the meeting by leading those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

1. Minutes of Public Meeting of October 2015

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi, Wilkins

2. Minutes of Public Meeting of November 2015

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi, Wilkins

3. Reorganization - Election of Officers

Blanchfield wanted to recognize Ron Grandinetti who has left the Planning Commission after over 28 years of service. He was a very important member of this Commission. Other members concurred with this and wished him and his family well.

Blanchfield then turned the meeting over to Temporary Chairman Ryan Fields who called for nominations for Chairman.

Lammi moved to nominate Robert Blanchfield for Chairman for 2016, seconded by Grube. Blanchfield accepted the nomination.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Thomas Grube. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi, Wilkins

Fields then turned the meeting over to new appointed Chairman Robert Blanchfield who called for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Grube moved to nominate Robert Lammi as Vice-Chairman for 2016, seconded by Wilkins. Lammi accepted the nomination.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Thomas Grube, Seconded by Richard Wilkins. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi, Wilkins

Lammi moved to nominate Diane Grube as Secretary for 2016, seconded by Wilkins. Mrs. Grube accepted the nomination.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Richard Wilkins. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi, Wilkins

NEW BUSINESS

4. Conditional Use Application - Industrial/Distribution Use in LI District
720 Sheridan Drive - M8NE4-16-11C
LI District
Request by SARCO, Inc.

DISCUSSION

Attorney James Garrity was present representing SARCO, Inc. He noted this is a Conditional Use request to use a portion of an existing building for office and warehouse space for the order taking and shipping of firearm parts, accessories and general merchandise. This would be for a 22,600 square foot space. He believes the use should be permitted by right as a replacement of an existing use. There would be 9 employees and they have more than the required parking. They would have two trucks per day for the delivery and pick up of supplies.

Attorney Garrity introduced owner Charles Steen, who informed the Commission that this is a very quiet use and stressed that this would be for firearm parts only, not complete firearms. There would be no manufacturing, just warehousing, and this business would not have an impact on the surrounding community.

Fields questioned if there would be any type of flammables and/or gun powder stored. Steen replied no but he stated he may consider in the future storing firearms but not ammunition. This would be something to keep in mind for the future and he would come back to the Township for this. He would have to go through a lot of requirements over and above the Township's, such as the Federal ATF, in order to do this.

Lammi noted that neither the fire department nor the police department had any comments about this proposed business. Steen informed the Commission that he currently has a retail store and warehousing building in Williams Township. He also has one in New Jersey that he will be closing and moving everything to Palmer, if approved. He went through all approvals in Williams Township and he has had no problems there. Blanchfield noted that Palmer Township does not have a fire inspection program at this time but asked if he would be acceptable with having a fire department inspection from time to time. Steen replied he did not have a problem with that.

Fields asked what type of security he would have for the building. Steen replied he would probably go with a normal alarm system but he would have something for the windows so that no one could see inside the business. Fields asked if

there would be sufficient parts stored in the building that someone could go in and build a complete gun. Steen replied absolutely not. He also noted that they have not had any attempted break-ins at either the New Jersey site or the Williams Township site.

Truck traffic was discussed. Steen stated that their box truck would deliver the inventory from their New Jersey site but when that was complete they would have one or two deliveries a day, nothing more.

The Commission recommended approval of the conditional use by the Board of Supervisors, subject to the following conditions:

- That the Township will be allowed to conduct informal fire inspections from time to time;
- That the owner must come back to the Township for approval of any future change or addition to this use.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Richard Wilkins. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi, Wilkins

5. Palmer Township Zoning Map

DISCUSSION

Carman informed the Commission that in 2015 the Township adopted a new color-coded version of the Zoning Map. This was the first time the map had been updated since 2003. Township staff has since incorporated the amendments that went into effect during 2015, therefore the map needs to be re-adopted by the Board of Supervisors as the Official Zoning Map. The specific amendments to the map were the change of the north end overlay districts to be stand-alone districts due to the opening of the Route 33 Interchange, and the boundary line change between the TI-1 and TI-2 districts.

The Commission recommended the re-adoption of the Zoning Map by the Board of Supervisors.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi, Wilkins

PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

6. 2015 Annual Report

Carman distributed the annual report for the Planning/Zoning/Code department. She noted that the MPC requires the Planning Commission to make an annual report of their activity to the Board of Supervisors. Her department already prepares monthly reports so these have been consolidated into an annual report which includes the Planning Commission's activities.

Carman noted that the Commission had a busy year. Blanchfield felt the most

significant items were the 10 land development plans they had reviewed. Carman pointed out that the Zoning Hearing Board had not been as busy as some previous years. The building activity included a number of permits for new homes in the Maple Shade development. We also saw the first building in the Chrin Commerce Center Northwest Quadrant begin construction, as well as the third retail building in the Northwood Center development.

Carman noted on the last page the major accomplishments for the year. Palmer Township was again awarded by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission for the Route 33 Chrin Interchange project, along with the Chrin Companies and all the firms involved in the engineering, construction and inspection of the project.

She explained the Automated Red Light Enforcement grant application that was applied for. This would be for safety improvements at 6 locations in the township where the bike path crosses State roadways.

Lammi noted that Palmer Township is in the top 10 as far as development in the Lehigh Valley and number one as far as apartment developments. Bruno stated that the latest apartment development, Palmer Point, will be before the Board of Supervisors on January 26 and that there has been some opposition to the project.

7. Project Update

Palmer Point: Carman reiterated what Bruno stated that Palmer Point will be before the Board of Supervisors at their January 26 meeting with their plan, rezoning request and conditional use request..

Kids Co-op: Carman stated that she had heard from the Zoning Officer that they are currently looking to proceed with the use without the expansion to the building, in which case they would not have to come back before the Commission.

Werner Enterprises: Carman stated that plans had been submitted but did not include a traffic study or stormwater report. They had just held their scoping meeting with PennDOT and would probably be resubmitting for the next meeting.

Northwood Manor: Carman noted that they had held their scoping meeting with PennDOT in December and were continuing to work on plans.

Lammi asked about the conditional use approval that the Commission had recommended for Eastern Exterior Walls. The owner had stated that the building code issues would be resolved by the end of the year. He asked if these items were completed. Carman noted she would check on this.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dylan Himstedt introduced himself and explained that he was attending the meeting as

part of the requirements for obtaining a Citizenship for Community Award through the Boy Scouts. The Commission members welcomed him and thanked him for his interest.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.