

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING – APRIL 8, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.
PALMER LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM

The regular monthly meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. with the following in attendance: Bob Blanchfield, Virginia Rickert, Ron Grandinetti, and Robert Lammi. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cyndie Carman; Solicitors Charles Bruno and Ryan Fields, and Engineer Ralph Russek. Supervisor Dave Colver was also in attendance. Chairman Blanchfield opened the meeting by leading those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 2013 MEETING – Action on the Minutes from November 2013 meeting was held until the next meeting.

MINUTES OF MARCH MEETING – On motion by Grandinetti, seconded by Lammi, and agreed by all, the minutes of the March meeting were approved.

1. Chrin Commerce Centre NW Quadrant
Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plan
Main Street & Van Buren Road – J8-14-6, J8-22-2, J8-23-1 and J8-23-2
TI-1, TI-2 and MSC Districts
Request by Charles Chrin Real Estate Trust

Paul Szewczak of Liberty Engineering, Robert McCormick and Elky Wetherill of Verus Partners were all present. Szewczak highlighted the plan stating it is a subdivision of five lots and the first land development plan within the subdivision is Verus Partners. The developer of the subdivision is Charles Chrin.

Blanchfield commented that there were many issues in the Township Engineer's letter and Szewczak stated they did not have an issue with most of them. He explained that with some of the changes they were proposing some of these issues will go away. They have a few waivers they will be asking for such as the length of cul-de-sac which is between 2,400 and 2,500 feet long. This far exceeds what is allowed. He discussed the gravel emergency access roadway and noted that when

an actual paved roadway is put in there it will bisect the cul-de-sac, reducing its length. That roadway should wait until the retail lots are developed, which will probably be after the interchange is completed. This permanent roadway is very important for the other lots. They discussed the flow of truck traffic on Van Buren Road and Szewczak explained that the trucks like to travel counter clockwise and so they will enter at the northern driveway, travel around building and exit at the same location.

The entrance to Lot 5 is through Lot 1. The owner will have to go onto Lot 1 where there will be truck traffic to get to their lot. The developer of lot 5 will be responsible for their public improvements.

Szewczak noted they will be requesting a deferral for the construction and installation of the sidewalk along Main Street and the installation of the street trees until such time as the road is built out. This will be a Chrin deferral request as he is the owner of the subdivision. A waiver will also be requested for the street trees on the east side of Van Buren Road due to the location of the electrical poles. He also requested that they be allowed to plant the street trees on the west side of Van Buren beyond the grass strip. He can only get a 2½ foot planting strip to be able to have the full cartway width in the right-of-way. A 4 foot planting strip is required but if the trees could be planted beyond this grass strip it would be better placement of these trees and be better for truck traffic.

Szewczak noted they are asking for a waiver for the slope of the flat bottom basins. Russek stated they were in agreement with this waiver request. Szewczak also noted there would be a similar waiver request for the land development plan.

There was discussion on the zoning district boundaries and Carman noted that these were put in according to the developer's original proposed layout. Before any development is proposed on the other lots, the owner should request zoning amendments so the boundaries line up with either the lot lines or street centerlines. Lammi felt this should be discussed with the owner, engineers and township staff. Wetherill will talk to the Chrin personnel on this.

Blanchfield noted the pavement information and Szewczak noted they would have their Geotechnical Engineer run figures for the pavement. Russek stated there are inconsistencies with this and they should be checked.

Commission members asked about the sanitary sewer and where the waste was going to be distributed. Szewczak stated the entire parcel was going to flow into Nazareth. Russek noted that it was their understanding that the dividing line would be Van Buren Road. Szewczak noted there was going to be a temporary connection to the Nazareth manhole. The permanent one and all the other lots can hook into the Palmer manhole. There is a sanitary sewer line that can handle the entire subdivision.

Colver noted that everything on west side of Van Buren Road went to Nazareth and the remaining lots/lands went to the Easton Area Joint Sewer Authority. There is not a plan for where the sewer is going for everything left that is not being developed by Verus. Township Engineer wants them to prove now what can be done. Szewczak noted the temporary and permanent lines will be on the plan but they probably will not use the temporary lines.

Blanchfield asked about the issues with the storm water and Szewczak stated he felt they are in line with the engineer's comments on this issue. The engineers will work together on this issue. He also noted that they are not discharging into other right-of-ways, that all water is directed to the creek.

Blanchfield asked if anyone had any further comments or questions. Seeing none he called for a vote. Lammi motioned to table action on this plan. Grandinetti seconded the motion. Blanchfield asked if there were any questions on the vote and, seeing none, he called for a vote, which was approved by all.

2. Verus Partners at Chrin Commerce Centre (Lot 1)
Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan
Main Street & Van Buren Road –J8-22-2, J8-23-1 and J8-23-2
TI-1 District
Request by Verus Partners

Blanchfield noted the storm water was the major issue. Szewczak noted that the runoff from lot one is being managed by five storm water management basins. There will be two basins on lot 5, two basins on Lot 1 and one basin on Lots 1 and 3. The engineers will get together to work on the issues for this land development plan. There being no further question or comments, since most of this was discussed during the subdivision plan, Blanchfield called for a motion. Lammi motioned to table action on this plan. Rickert seconded the motion. There were no questions on the motion and the Chairman called for a vote, which was approved by all.

3. Mellow Lounge LLC
Conditional Use Application
3351 Nazareth Road – L8-6-1B
PO/B District & 248 Overlay
Request by Kenneth Janowicz

Mellow Lounge – Ken Janowicz, owner of the Mellow Lounge was present with a conditional use request. He stated he had been before the Zoning Hearing Board last week and in 1997 it was determined by the township that when Kasper Pool Supply Company went into this building any use for the lower level would need to be re-examined for anything other than an office use. Site and floor plans were submitted.

This lounge would be a Hookah Lounge which is a fusion between a coffee and cigar lounge. He now has two other lounges and the interest is overwhelming for this type of place. There will be hot drinks, coffee/teas, served but no food. He would allow food to be brought in as well as a BYOB. This is an alternative night time destination for college age young adults. There would be retail sales for such items as e-cigarettes and hookah supplies. Patrons must be 18 and over to enter. They will not sell to anyone under 18 years of age. The big room would be the lounge and consist of many couches and chairs. There will be entertainment on weekends. Hours would be – closed on Mondays; Tuesday and Wednesdays 6 p.m. to midnight; Thursday/Friday/Saturday noon to 2 a.m.; and Sundays Noon to 8 p.m.

Members asked about entry charges as well as the hookah itself. A hookah is a tobacco vessel with hoses connected. The patrons would use the hoses to “smoke” the steam stone or flavored tobacco which is smoke free. He stated a customer buys a hookah which has up to three spaces available on each. The retail sales would be the flavored tobacco or the stones to use in the hookah. He may have a cover charge on entertainment night.

Parking was discussed. He noted that they would be opened at night and there are more spaces available in the front of the building for the pool business which is closed at night time. He stated a customer’s average stay is about an hour.

Lammi asked if the Fire Commissioner reviewed the plan. He has a very big problem with there being only one exit. What would happen if there is a fire and there isn’t another exit? The Fire Commissioner definitely needs to review this and advise the Board of Supervisors of his findings. Carman stated he reviewed the application and he noted due to the size of the building they did not have to have sprinklers but he will do a fire inspection when and if needed. Janowicz noted they need to revamp the HVAC system and asked if they would like to see a second exit. Lammi responded absolutely.

Carman informed the Board as to why the application is before the Planning Commission. It is located in a P/OB District as well as the Rt. 248 Overlay. The ordinance does not specifically cover a service such as this one so the zoning officer used the closest similar use and classified it as retail sales, which is a permitted as a conditional use. There is time for this application for a public hearing before the Board of Supervisors this month yet.

Rickert motioned to recommend approval by the Board of Supervisors for the hookah lounge on Rt. 248 conditioned upon the plan being reviewed to the satisfaction of the Fire Commissioner. Blanchfield asked if there were any questions and Colver wanted to verify if there was alcohol allowed. Janowicz noted that alcohol would not be served but BYOB was allowed. He also asked about handicap parking. This will be reviewed. There being no further questions or comments Blanchfield called for a vote which was approved by all.

Planning Director's Comments – Carman commended the Commission for a great job done tonight. There were some tough questions and reviews.

On motion by Lammi, seconded by Grandinetti, and agreed by all, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Diane Grube, Secretary