

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2015 - 7:00 PM

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

The September meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, September 8, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. with the following in attendance: Robert Blanchfield (Chairman), Robert Lammi (Vice Chairman), Tom Grube, Ron Grandinetti, Jeffrey Kicska. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cynthia Carman, Solicitor Ryan Fields and Engineer Ralph Russek. Chairman Blanchfield opened the meeting by leading those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

1. Minutes of August 2015 Meeting

Lammi noted one correction. In the minutes for each vote that was taken it states Supervisors, which should be changed to Commission Members. Carman noted this is something that needs to be changed through the programming, which will be taken care of.

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

OLD BUSINESS

2. 2400 Northampton Street Medical Office - Preliminary Land Development Plan
2400 Northampton Street - L9-35-1
LI District
Request by JERC Partners XXIX, LLC

DISCUSSION

Attorney Catherine Durso, engineer Rocco Caracciolo, and Joseph Correia were present on behalf of the applicant. Caracciolo stated they have been to and received approvals from the Zoning Hearing Board to have parking within 30 feet of a minor arterial street. A 30 foot setback from an arterial street is required for lots that have 60 or more off street parking spaces. Caracciolo also noted there will be two entrances but the one on Northampton Street will be the primary one.

They will be cleaning up the area around the bike trail. Lammi stated their request for waivers for the curbing and sidewalk along Wood Avenue would have to be requested as a deferral. Lammi also stated that the curbing along this roadway usually helps with the water run-off. Caracciolo noted he has spoken with PennDOT and they have no desire for a storm water system in this area, that what they are proposing was adequate. He noted that curbing usually helps but not this situation. Russek noted they were okay with all other waivers

requested.

There was lengthy discussion about the sight triangle at the intersection of Wood Avenue and Northampton Street. The engineer's comment on this issue states that this sight triangle encroaches on five of the parking spaces and these spaces should be relocated so they are out of the sight triangle. Caracciolo stated he did contact PennDOT on this and since it is a signalized intersection they had no comments on this. He did note that they would meet PennDOT sight distance based on PennDOT criteria. If there is a violation of the sight triangle they would need a waiver request for this. Russek questioned if the embankment is actually holding up the parking spaces. Caracciolo stated the parking spaces are not within line of sight and would request a waiver if required. It was also noted that this sight triangle is a township issue not PennDOT. The engineers will work on this and get it resolved.

The pedestrian traffic along Northampton Street would need access to get to this building safely. Caracciolo noted they are planning an extension of a walkway and will have it in the final plan submission.

Lammi asked if there was an issue with the Fire Commissioner's comment regarding the address change. Caracciolo stated not at all and they would talk to the Zoning Officer and the post office as well. He also stated that the letter was received from the Township geotechnical consultant and everything was clean, there are no issues at this time.

The Commission recommended approval of the preliminary plan for 2400 Northampton Street Medical Office proposing the construction of a 40,000 square foot medical office building with 200 car parking spaces on a 5.5 acre tract of land located in the Light Industrial (LI) zoning district at the intersection of Northampton Street and Wood Avenue, subject to the following conditions:

1. Comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated September 4, 2015 are satisfactorily addressed.
2. Township Departmental comments dated September 3, 2015 are satisfactorily addressed.
3. Comments of the Township's Geotechnical Consultant's letter dated September 2, 2015 are satisfactorily addressed.
4. Waivers/deferrals, as requested, are approved by the Board of Supervisors.
5. The recreation contribution is addressed to the satisfaction of the Board of Supervisors.
6. The need for any traffic improvements or voluntary traffic contribution is addressed to the satisfaction of the Board of Supervisors.
7. The sight triangle issue is resolved to the satisfaction of the Township Engineer.

Deferrals:

- §165-69.A - Construction of sidewalk along Wood Avenue
- §165-75.A - Construction of curb along Wood Avenue

Waivers:

- Checklist Item C.4 - Requirement to show lot lines of adjacent lots and locations of buildings, open spaces, detention basins and drainage channels within 200 feet
- Checklist Item G.5.B - Requirement to show widths and locations of rights-of-way, curblines and cartway widths of streets within 200 feet.

Motion: Approve w/ Conditions, Moved by Thomas Grube, Seconded by Ronald Grandinetti. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Grandinetti, Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi
Commission Members Absent: Wilkins

3. Conditional Use Application - Medical Office Building
2400 Northampton Street - L9-35-1
LI District
Request by JERC Partners XXIX, LLC

DISCUSSION

Attorney Catherine Durso, engineer Rocco Caracciolo, and Joseph Correia were present on behalf of the applicant, requesting conditional use approval for a medical office building greater than 30,000 square feet in the LI district. The proposed building will be 40,000 square feet.. Durso noted they do meet the conditions in the Zoning Ordinance for this use. They also meet the general requirements for conditional use approval.

Carman asked Fields if this conditional use request should take place with the final plan approval and Attorney Durso questioned this. Carman noted we usually run them together. Durso stated they would prefer to go with the conditional use request and preliminary plan approval to the Board of Supervisors and then go back to the Supervisors with just the final plan. The Commission did not have a problem with this.

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

NEW BUSINESS

4. St. Paul's Third Lutheran Church - Minor Subdivision Plan
2561 Newburg Road - L8NE1-1-12
LDR District
Request by Third Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Saint Paul

DISCUSSION

Mrs. Kelly Aldinger, President of the church's Board of Directors, and engineer Donald Lynch, were present for the proposed minor subdivision plan for St. Paul's Church. Lynch noted there was a development plan for the church in 1994. They are now proposing subdividing the parsonage residence from the church property and selling it. They had requested waivers which will be requested as deferrals. Lynch noted there is an easement for utilities and the gas line does fall within the utility easement on lot #1. He asked if they would need a separate gas easement. Fields replied that he did not think so. Lynch noted the right-of-way that is to be dedicated is included in the lot areas. In 1994, the right-of-way was to be dedicated but he could not find anything at the County office. Carman will check on this but felt if there was not a record of it being recorded that it probably was not done. If it was not dedicated then they would need to adjust the lot line to get the required square footage for the parsonage lot.

Carman noted that PennDOT would want to be notified of the subdivision since the driveways exit onto a state roadway. Lynch informed the Commission that he has spoken with them and they had no comment on this.

The Commission recommended approval of the minor subdivision plan for St. Paul's Church, subject to the following conditions:

- All comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated August 26, 2015 are satisfactorily addressed.
- Deferrals as requested are approved by the Board of Supervisors
- The plan be adjusted if necessary so the square footage of Lot 2 meets the minimum lot area requirement.if right-of-way dedication is still required.

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

5. 3320 Fox Hill Road - Sketch Plan
3320 Fox Hill Road - K8-10A6L
PI/C District
Request by Co-Op Enterprises Inc.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Rae Greiner, CEO of Kids Co-op, and engineer Bob Bauer were present with a sketch plan for an exercise club, which is a permitted use in the PIC district. The existing building was a banquet hall and has been vacant for a number of years. There is public water and sewer on the premises. Bauer noted the usage for the utilities would be remarkably less than with the banquet hall. They are proposing the construction of a 9,600 square foot building in addition to the existing 9,600 square foot building, to be connected with an enclosed corridor, to be used for a private gymnastics training center. The building is proposed on an existing 2-acre lot. There is a small mechanical building which will be demolished. There will be a teaching and training area and

an open gym. They will have 25' ceilings and a small tot lot and wading pool in the rear of the property. They will cut down the impervious area by converting the rear parking to green space. This will not be an open membership type establishment. Client traffic will be controlled so there will not be a lot of overlap with other businesses. Their classes will be the type you sign up for, not a drop-in type. Ms. Greiner has an existing business in the Bethlehem area and they do have special events when there are no classes being held.

Kicska noted that at the last meeting of the Commission there was recommendation for approval to allow daycares in the LI district. There was a concern about any chemicals in the area and the effect to the children. The corner of this property touches Wilson Products which is a chemical gas company. This is something to discuss.

Carman noted the main concern she would have with this would be the proposed wading pool and playground. Bauer stated everything else is inside. The pool/play area will all be fenced in and the area will be protected.

The Township engineer's letter was reviewed and Bauer stated there are no other sidewalks in the area and they would be asking for a deferral for this. He was told that they should show it on the plan for later reference if needed. Truck parking on Fox Hill Road was discussed. There is an existing problem with this even though it is posted for no overnight truck parking. It was suggested that it be a no truck parking restricted area 24 hours a day. Greiner stated that she has a small bus for the business but would not be parking it on the street.

Lammi questioned the zoning district and what type of use this would fall under. Carman noted that the zoning officer had determined that the use meets the definition of an exercise club, which is permitted by right in the LI district. The zoning officer is comfortable with the number of parking spaces shown but for this use the ordinance requirement would be for 12 additional spaces. Carman asked if they could show the spaces on the plan, and show that they could be put in since that is the requirement. Bauer stated that if they put more spaces in they this would require storm water management. Carman suggested that maybe where they are creating the pervious area they could put in some type of pervious parking. Russek stated all around this sounds like a zoning matter more than engineering. Carman suggested they discuss it further with the zoning officer.

Because this was a sketch plan, no action was required by the Planning Commission.

Motion: Other, Moved by , Seconded by . Other. 0-0. Commission Members voting
Commission Members Absent: Wilkins

PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

On October 1, 2015 there will be a Lehigh Valley Awards Banquet hosted by the

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. Carman noted there has been an application submitted for the interchange project and it is a very nice event if anyone was interested in attending.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Motion: Adjourn, Moved by Thomas Grube, Seconded by Ronald Grandinetti. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grandinetti, Grube, Kicska, Lammi
Commission Members Absent: Wilkins