

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020 - 7:00 PM
CHARLES CHRIN COMMUNITY CENTER - 4100 GREEN POND ROAD, PALMER PA
ZOOM MEETING [HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/81687675805](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81687675805)

The August 2020 meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 7:00 pm at the Charles Chrin Community Center and via Zoom with the following in attendance: Chairman Robert Blanchfield, Vice-Chair Karin Vangeli, Jeff Kicska, and Robert Lammi, attending via Zoom were members Michael Brett and Robert Walker. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cynthia Carman Kramer and Solicitor Steve Brown. Also attending via Zoom were Ron Gawlik of the Pidcock Company, Secretary Kathy Sciascia and Supervisor Jeff Young. Absent: Richard Wilkins

1. Minutes of July 2020 Public Meeting

Motion: Approve, Moved by Karin Vangeli, Seconded by Robert Lammi. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Kicska, Lammi, Vangeli, Walker
Commission Members Absent: Wilkins

NEW BUSINESS

2. Fenstermaker Enterprises LLC - Conditional Use Request - Recreational Vehicle Storage in PI/C District and Lot Line Consolidation Plan
3351 to 3371 Fox Hill Road - K8-10A-6R, K8-10A-6S & K8-10A-6T
PI/C District
Request by Fenstermaker Enterprises, LLC

DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were Attorney James Preston, Bernard Telatovich of Benchmark Engineering and Dean Fenstermaker.

The plan proposes the consolidation of three existing lots into a single 3.3 acre lot. The existing Lot 1 contains 1.294 acres, Lot 2 contains 1.005 acres and Lot 3 contains 1.002 acres. All three lots are vacant. The lots are located on the north side of Fox Hill Road within the Planned Industrial/Commercial (PI/C) zoning district.

The applicant, Fenstermaker Enterprises, LLC, is requesting conditional use approval for construction of a recreational vehicle storage lot. The facility is proposed to include 119 parking spaces for recreational vehicles and 21 parking spaces for automobiles. The applicant is seeking conditional use approval under §190-125.K of the Zoning Ordinance, Recreational vehicle storage in the PI/C District. The Comprehensive Plan designates this area for non-residential use.

Blanchfield said they need to handle this in two separate actions. We will vote for the approval or denial of the lot consolidation and will prepare comments for the

Board of Supervisors for their conditional use approval.

Preston clarified that the proposed use is a storage facility for recreational vehicles, not a parking lot. They do not feel that they should need to meet the requirements of a parking lot for lighting or paving.

Telatovich distributed copies of an alternative layout to address the comments about aisle width and turning radius. He also distributed details about the stormwater management system.

Telatovich said the previous conditional use approval for this site was for self-storage buildings. Fenstermaker would not be constructing buildings, but making a recreational vehicle storage facility. Telatovich said this is going to be a storage area with vehicles staying for months, they are not going to be coming in and moving back and forth. Telatovich talked about the waiver and deferral requests stating that there is no reason for street lights considering what is already there. There will be very few vehicles after 9:00 pm. They are also requesting a deferral on sidewalks since there are no sidewalks out there. Blanchfield said the Commission would consider these as deferrals. It makes sense since there are no sidewalks anywhere else and the area does not have street lighting now. Lammi and Vangeli agreed, Kramer stated that due to the character of the existing street, a deferral of the street lights and the sidewalks would be warranted.

Telatovich asked if the surface needs to be paved. Blanchfield said the Zoning comment was to have the area paved. Telatovich said Fenstermaker does not want to pave it now. Telatovich said we looked at this as a vehicle storage facility as opposed to a parking lot and asked if they are allowed to do this without being paved. Kramer said the comments were from the Zoning Officer and it would appear that he is considering a facility for the parking of recreation vehicles as a form of a parking lot. Fenstermaker commented that the vehicles are stored, on average they go out about 4 times a year and it is not like a parking lot where the vehicles go in and out. Blanchfield asked how they would provide lines and striping if it wasn't paved. Fenstermaker said at his existing facility he puts pins in the ground with numbers on them to mark the spaces, and numbers affixed to the fence. Blanchfield asked what surface he uses at his other facility. Fenstermaker said it is rolled stone and that it works well, there is not the wear and tear like a regular parking lot. Vangeli asked what the main concern is with paving. Fenstermaker said it is the cost. Vangeli asked how difficult it would be if the Supervisors said you would have to eventually pave it. Fenstermaker said it would be very difficult to move all those vehicles. Brown said under Section 190-210.B(28)(b) the area would be required to be paved and they may have to go before the Zoning Hearing Board. Kramer noted that that section applies to outdoor vehicle storage at a self-storage development and was referenced as a comparison. Lammi asked how they will control weeds if it is not paved. Fenstermaker said at his existing facility he has a process in place using organic weed killers and they have no problem with weeds. Brett said he thinks the gravel would help with the water runoff and asked if there are requirements for ADA. Kramer said she would have to defer that to the Zoning Officer. Telatovich said if there are ADA requirements they will look at that.

Telatovich explained the stormwater management system. Gawlik said Pidcock has no objections to the design, but would like to review what is being proposed with the Public Works Department. Documentation needs to be provided confirming that the subsurface infiltration bed will be able to withstand the loading. Blanchfield asked where the water discharges. Telatovich said it is very minimal. It is distributed on a rock riprap area and goes about 100 feet down along the property line. Blanchfield asked about erosion from any water discharge. Telatovich said the discharge rate will be reduced on heavy storms and near zero on small storms. Gawlik said they will need documentation of discharge rates. Blanchfield asked if there is any stormwater benefit to having a gravel area instead of a paved area. Gawlik said there is an infiltration benefit with gravel. Blanchfield asked about the geotechnical review letter. Telatovich said they have no issues with the letter. Young asked Fenstermaker if his property on Tatamy Road was stoned. Fenstermaker said yes, the main parking area was stoned and paved around the buildings. Young said if the Zoning Officer is saying paved why are we debating it, should it be sent to the Zoning Hearing Board. Brown said if that is the Zoning Officer's interpretation, if there is any kind of challenge to that interpretation they would have to go before the Zoning Hearing Board. Kramer said she was assuming the Zoning Officer's interpretation was that this is a parking lot. His comments point out sections of the ordinance, one of which says the surface material is up to the approval of the Township. He was not aware of instances where stone was used before. Preston read from the ordinance Section 190.168 E which states that: "Except for areas that are landscaped and so maintained, all parking facilities, including parking access aisles and driveways, shall be graded, surfaced with asphalt, concrete, decorative paving block or other appropriate material approved by the Township." Kramer said the question is whether stone would fall under a material that is acceptable to the Township. We need clarification from the Zoning Officer before it goes before the Board of Supervisors. Telatovich said if the Planning Commission says stone is OK they will move ahead with that, if the Zoning Officer says it's not OK, they will move ahead with paving. Lammi said he was in favor of the stoned area.

Telatovich said they could put the gate 50 feet in from the road to avoid stacking. The layout for parking may change putting the parking at an angle. Blanchfield said this seems very logical. Telatovich asked if the Planning Commission would be acceptable to less footcandles on the lighting. Lammi said the neighbors would not want to see a lot of light coming off this storage area. Gawlik suggested the Zoning Officer can look at this per the Zoning Ordinance. Brown said these issues should be cleaned up before coming before the Board of Supervisors.

Diane Brodsky, via Zoom, asked if the stormwater management system has been analyzed for any adverse impact on neighboring properties to prevent flooding damage to those properties. Gawlik confirmed that his office has thoroughly reviewed the stormwater management system and that the Commission had adequately discussed their comments.

Seeing no further questions or comments, Blanchfield called for a motion on the

plan and the conditional use request.

The Commission voted to recommend approval of the lot line consolidation plan by the Board of Supervisors, conditioned on the comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated August 6, 2020 being satisfactorily addressed.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Karin Vangeli. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Kicska, Lammi, Vangeli, Walker
Commission Members Absent: Wilkins

DISCUSSION

The Commission voted to recommend approval of the conditional use application and associated site plan by the Board of Supervisors, subject to the following conditions:

1. Comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated August 6, 2020 are satisfactorily addressed.
2. Township Departmental comments dated August 7, 2020 are satisfactorily addressed.
3. Township Geotechnical Engineer comments dated June 12, 2020 are satisfactorily addressed.
4. Township Lighting Consultants comments dated April 14, 2020 are satisfactorily addressed.
5. Any comments of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission are satisfactorily addressed.
6. Requested waivers or deferrals are approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the requests as deferrals.
7. The need for a recreation fee contribution is determined by the Board of Supervisors. Per the Township fee schedule, the required amount would be 3.3 acres x \$3,000 per acre = \$9,900.
8. The need for a voluntary traffic contribution is determined by the Board of Supervisors. The requested amount would be 4 peak PM trips x \$1,000 per peak PM trip = \$4,000.
9. Clarification is received from the Zoning Officer regarding the acceptability of stone base as opposed to paving. The Planning Commission was in favor of the stone base.
10. Clarification is received from the Zoning Officer regarding the lighting requirements for the use. The Planning Commission was in favor of reduced security lighting as opposed to full parking lot lighting.

Waiver/Deferral Requests:

§165-70.A - provision of streetlights on Fox Hill Road

§165-69 - construction of sidewalks on Fox Hill Road

Motion: Approve w/ Conditions, Moved by Karin Vangeli, Seconded by Robert

Lammi. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Kicska, Lammi, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members Absent: Wilkins

PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Kramer had no comments.

Young stated that the Board of Supervisors had decided to go back to online only meetings on Zoom as the hybrid meetings were not working. It is too difficult for people at home to hear and follow what is happening at the meeting. He suggested that the Planning Commission should do the same.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Motion: Adjourn, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Karin Vangeli. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Kicska, Lammi, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members Absent: Wilkins