

## **PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2020 - 7:00 PM**

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

The January 2020 meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday January 14, 2020 at 7:00 pm with the following in attendance: Chairman Robert Blanchfield, Michael Brett, Jeff Kicska, Robert Lammi, Karin Vangeli and Robert Walker. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cynthia Carman Kramer, Secretary Kathleen Sciascia, Ronald Gawlik of the Pidcock Company and Solicitors Charles Bruno and Steve Brown. Absent was Richard Wilkins.

### 1. Reorganization - Election of Officers

Blanchfield turned the meeting over to Solicitor Bruno to act as Temporary Chairman.

Bruno called for nominations for the position of Chairman. Robert Blanchfield was nominated as Chairman. Hearing no further nominations, nominations were closed. Blanchfield was appointed Chairman for 2020.

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

Bruno then turned to the meeting back over to newly appointed Chairman Blanchfield.

Blanchfield called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman. Karin Vangeli was nominated as Vice-Chairman. Hearing no further nominations, nominations were closed. Vangeli was appointed Vice-Chairman for 2020.

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

Blanchfield called for nominations for the position of Secretary. Staff member Kathleen Sciascia was nominated and appointed Secretary for 2020.

Motion: , 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

### 2. Minutes of September 2019 Public Meeting

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Jeff

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

3. Minutes of October 2019 Public Meeting

Changes were made regarding Carson Lot 4 West stating that Roadway Y will be offered for dedication to Palmer Township as a public street.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Karin Vangeli, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker

Commission Members voting Abstain: Lammi Commission Members Absent: Wilkins

OLD BUSINESS

4. Strausser Enterprises - Conditional Use Application and Site Plan - Mid-Rise Apartment Building in HDR District

1400 Bushkill Drive - L9-9-1

HDR District

Request by Strausser Enterprises, Inc.

DISCUSSION

Present on behalf of the applicant were Jeffrey Beavan of Bohler Engineering and architect Mark Zgoda.

The applicant, Strausser Enterprises, Inc., is seeking conditional use approval for a mid-rise apartment building in the HDR district, pursuant to the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance: §190-51.I - Mid-rise apartment and §190-56 - Area and bulk regulations for mid-rise apartment buildings.

The plan proposes the construction of a mid-rise apartment building on an existing foundation, consisting of 4 stories with 23 units, on a 10.58-acre tract which already contains 22 units. The plan also proposes construction of a 12-foot wide paved path that will provide a means of emergency access to the site and complete a portion of the Township bike path that currently ends behind the site.

The site is located on the south side of Bushkill Drive, with portions of the property located in Forks Township, Wilson Borough and the City of Easton. Bushkill Creek runs through the property. The property is the site of the former Binney & Smith manufacturing use. The majority of the surrounding properties are undeveloped, forested land.

The portion of the property within Palmer Township is located in the High Density Residential (HDR) zoning district. The requested use may be permitted by conditional use approval in the High Density Residential zoning district, subject to the area and bulk provisions found at §190-56. The applicant had previously been granted approval by the Zoning Hearing Board and Board of Supervisors to build 10 units in this building. More recently, the applicant was

granted approval by the Zoning Hearing Board to construct 23 units along with a reduction in required parking spaces.

Bruno summarized why the applicant was in front of the board for Conditional Use and the various hearings, approvals and variances they have been through.

Blanchfield asked if the entire trail was to be paved. Beavan said west to Edgewood Ave would be paved. Lammi asked the size of the trail and if it could hold the weight of a fire truck, to be sure they can get an emergency vehicle up to the back of the building. Beavan said it would be 12' wide and the part to the parking lot will bear the weight of an emergency vehicle.

Blanchfield asked Kramer if she would go over the decision letters from previous meetings. Kramer reviewed the dates and content of the Zoning Hearing Board approval letters from September 13, 1999, September 23, 1999, November 20, 2001 and January 25, 2018. Blanchfield asked for clarification on the letter from Attorney Bruno dated August 3, 2015. Kramer said the Board of Supervisors approved an extension of time on the previously approved land development plans, provided all previous conditions of approval were met, including the required construction of a 12' path behind the buildings.

Blanchfield asked if emergency vehicles could make the driveway turns. Beavan said they could, and truck turning plans were provided in the plans but they did not run it along the back of the building. Lammi asked what the weight limit was for the bridge and if it is private. Beavan said he didn't know the weight limit since it is an existing structure and the bridge is private. Lammi said the weight should be determined. Blanchfield asked about impervious coverage for the purpose of storm water management. Beavan said they are looking at the reduction of impervious coverage. Gawlik said they will have to get together to clarify this. Blanchfield asked when a floodplain permit is required. Kramer said it is required for any work in a floodplain. Blanchfield asked about the LVPC letter. Gawlik said depending on the impervious coverage, the plan may require additional LVPC review. Blanchfield asked if a PennDOT HOP exists. Beavan said it does not, it is in the scoping process and he does not know if PennDOT will require a traffic study. Kramer said the driveway itself is actually in Easton and they could also have comments. Lammi asked if they had concerns about flooding on the first floor of the building. Zgoda said no, the first floor would be raised out of the floodplain. Bruno asked if the path behind the building has been improved, has it been inspected by Palmer Township and is it being used. Beavan said he did not know. Bruno asked if a plan has been recorded. Beavan said he didn't know, but it is their intention to have it recorded. Bruno said the Township will require a land development plan to be recorded in order for them to follow through on the land development requirements. Bruno also strongly recommended that Mr. Strausser be present when the conditional use and plan come before the Board of Supervisors. Kicska asked if the path would be gated at the end of Edgewood. Beavan said there would be removable bollards. Brett asked since the site spans multiple municipalities, which emergency department responds, and if there is an agreement. Lammi said that should be taken care of through existing mutual aid agreements.

Seeing no further comments or questions, Blanchfield called for a motion to table the application since the Commission still needs clarification on some items.

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

#### PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

5. 2019 Annual Report

Kramer presented the 2019 Annual Report of Planning Commission activities and asked for approval to forward to the Board of Supervisors.

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

6. 2020 Meeting Dates

Kramer presented the 2020 Meeting Dates to the Planning Commission. She noted that the September meeting would be on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 because of Labor Day.

7. Update on Zoning Ordinance Re-write

Kramer said that the zoning ordinance re-write committee is getting back on track. A draft ordinance will come to the Planning Commission members and there would be a public meeting before it will go to the Board of Supervisors. Lammi asked if the changes would be highlighted. Kramer said a lot of the text will be taken out completely but they will discuss how to highlight what has changed. Blanchfield asked if the draft would be available online. Kramer said they would make the draft available to the public. Lammi asked if we are considering putting together an official map. Kramer explained that an Official Map, like a Zoning Ordinance, is a tool that can be used to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. It is something that the Township could do said it is not part of the Zoning Ordinance Re-write.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Teri Sottosanti-Rice, 1109 Keane Street, stated that she was there on behalf of her son who is a university student interested in becoming involved in local government affairs. She took interest in the previous discussion about the fire trucks because the newer hydraulic ladder trucks have a lot of added weight and pressure, and the roads need to be strong enough to support them. Blanchfield said she made an excellent point and that is exactly why they are concerned with the strength of the bridge and

path.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

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

Commission Members Absent: Wilkins