

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023 - 7:00 PM
PALMER TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL MEETING ROOM, LOWER LEVEL, 3 WELLER
PLACE, PALMER PA 18045

The November meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commissions was held on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 7:00 PM with the following in attendance Chairman, Chuck Diefenderfer, Vice Chairman, Jeff Kicska, Robert Walker, Robin Aydelotte, Tom Grube, and Richard Wilkins. Also in attendance were Solicitor Will Oetinger, Justin Coyle of Carrol Engineering, Kent Baird, Director of Planning and Craig Beavers, Assistant Planning Director.

1. Approval of Minutes - October 10, 2023

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Walker, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Diefenderfer, Grube, Kicska, Walker, Wilkins
Commission Members Absent: Ruch

2. Approval of Minutes - October 26, 2023

Motion: Approve, Moved by Jeff Kicska, Seconded by Tom Grube. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Diefenderfer, Grube, Kicska, Walker, Wilkins
Commission Members voting Abstain: Aydelotte Commission Members Absent: Ruch

OLD BUSINESS

3. Zoning Ordinance

Project: Palmer Township Zoning Ordinance and Map

DISCUSSION

Diefenderfer explained the progress of the Zoning Ordinance. It is currently with LVPC to review. Once it comes back, it will be sent to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors again for a vote December 27th.

Aydelotte asked if anyone that had concerns with the Zoning Ordinance was able to come to a resolution.

Baird said that we received letters from the Chrin Real Estate Trust, regarding land on Trolley Line Drive, and landowner Harry Graack, with property on Van Buren. He said after some additional research there seem to be solutions for each while keeping with general overall goals of the updated Zoning Ordinance. Baird went on to explain how they addressed the concerns: 1) for the Trust, properties adjacent to Tatamy Borough had districts adjusted to more nearly match the Borough's district, as requested and 2) for Mr. Graack, after an in person meeting Mr. Beavers and Baird found that a specific use called

Research & Development could be added to the Township's proposed district to more nearly match Mr. Graack's interests.

Baird said the Zoning Ordinance is now under review with LVPC and the Board felt that it should come back to the Planning Commission for any further discussion.

Aydelotte asked if Graack's and Chrin Real Estate Trust's concerns were satisfied.

Both indicated they were not.

Diefenderfer asked if there were any comments from the Commission. There were not.

Diefenderfer said he agrees with the Board of Supervisors that comments have been addressed. He also noted that there are some things that may be amended or updated later. The Historic District was mentioned as something that will be expanded on later.

Diefenderfer opened Public Comment.

Bill Hartin -1375 Van Buren Rd.

Thanked the Township for all their hard work on this ordinance.

His property is currently zoned HDR with the area surrounding his property being zoned MDR which he felt didn't make sense. He said he had his attorney send the Township a letter. He would like his concerns considered.

Kicska asked if he was speaking of just his property.

Hartin said yes.

Diefenderfer asked if he could look at it in the next round of review.

Hartin agreed.

Baird said the Township originally proposed this use to be consistent with surrounding HDR districts and to protect the Township from spot zoning. Baird offered to meet with Hartin and his attorney who already heard this concern previously. Baird additionally reiterated that the zoning district designation is not an obligation to develop a property and it certainly doesn't negate the complexity of the floodplain, buffers, and historic character and national registry potential of his property. He also added that the district designation does not actually complicate the land preservation of the property, which was a requested discussion of Hartin in 2022.

Oetinger added that the zoning ordinance has an express provision for private requests for amendments to their property. He also added that any amendments will then have to be sent back to LVPC which will reset/delay the process approximately another 2 months.

Diefenderfer confirmed with Hartin that he would be ok with looking at this a little further down the road.

Hartin commended Baird for recognizing the various aspects of his property because of the unique configuration and the historical aspects. He wants to make sure the zoning fits the unique aspects of his property.

Baird said they could set up a time to meet with Hartin and his attorney.

Harry Graack - 1380 Van Buren - Graack discussed his various preferences for the zoning on his property throughout the draft process. He said he originally wanted his property to be zoned RA.

He sent a letter asking for a meeting with Baird and Beavers the end of September which was granted in early November. Graack mentioned that Baird and Beavers met with him and spent 2 hours discussing Graack's concerns with the zoning of his property.

Graack said he sent another letter by email. He said he wants it seen by the Board of Supervisors. He said he doesn't want to develop the property but he wants to look out for his heirs and his future. Since there is development around him, he may want his property to have the option for development. He said he has been in contact with several developers.

Oetinger added that he understands that although he may have talked to developers about uses that might be profitable for him, it doesn't necessarily dictate what zoning district he falls into.

Graack said he is agitated that the discussion didn't continue further. He said he did mention R&D and they accommodated that in the uses in the that zoning district. He said things that were in PIC didn't get carried over to POB and he wants to continue that discussion.

Baird explained that there have been a number of conversations with Graack both in public forum or meetings at the Township building. After five years of meetings with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors the sentiment was that we do not want more warehouses or an expansion of the adjacent Walmart center in Lower Nazareth. Baird said that of the many uses Graack brought up, R&D seemed to be the least impactful. He said we have always listened to Graack and took his request for R&D into consideration. However, he mentioned many different uses for his property. Baird said we can't make special accommodations for every single landowner. The POB district is a transition district between residential and industrial uses which gives Mr. Graack more options for the future of his land.

Graack continued to explain how he has spoken to several developers and what their possible uses would be.

Diefenderfer said that there won't be a resolution here tonight for the issues he has for the zoning of his property. He said we can set up another meeting with attorneys and whomever he would like to bring. However, there is no reason to

be holding up the zoning ordinance for one piece of property.

Graack said that was not his intention.

Diefenderfer asked if Baird could take Graack's potential uses to the Board of Supervisors to discuss. He said regardless of what we say here tonight, it is ultimately up to the Board of Supervisors.

Baird said he would.

Graack added he wanted both the Board and Attorney to see the letter he sent.

Oetinger added that he had seen them.

Kent said he would send them.

Tom Beauduy - 400 S Greenwood - He mentioned that changes were made consistent with their comments.

He said acreage that abuts Tatamy's NEB district and the area wedged between Palmer MSC and Tatamy MSC be changed to MSC. The revised map does that south of Main St.

However, the same was not applied North of Main St. He would've liked to same logic used to the small matching strip north of Main St.

There was some discussion regarding the zoning of the districts.

Baird said he would be open to further discussion with Beauduy on the topic.

Aydelotte asked if the residents/landowners request mentioned tonight would be included in this approval of the ordinance.

Diefenderfer said they would be considered as possible amendments later.

Baird and Beavers explained that any amendments would go through a Planning Commission vote and Board of Supervisors vote later.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Richard Wilkins, Seconded by Robert Walker. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Diefenderfer, Grube, Kicska, Walker, Wilkins
Commission Members Absent: Ruch

NEW BUSINESS

4. 2620 Kingston Road - Car Wash - Preliminary Land Development

Project Name: 2620 Kingston Road – Car Wash

Applicant: Shammy Shine Car Washes

Submission Date: October 20, 2023

Property: 2620 Kingston Road

Acreage: 0.95 acres

Parcel ID: L8 4 9 0324

Proposed: Car Wash
Existing Zoning: PO/B Planned Office Business

DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were Attorney, Steve Goudsouzian, Engineer, Eric McSeed, and the Applicant, Tom Hoffert.

Goudsouzian said they were there to review what needed to be reviewed and to receive input from the Planning Commission.

The subject property is located at 2620 Kingston Road. The existing property consists of 0.95 Acres and is agricultural with no impervious coverage. The applicant proposes to construct a 4,032± SF building serving as a carwash facility. The project is in the Planned Office / Business (PO/B) Zoning District and is a permitted use under ZO §190-61.P.

Site features will include one (1) two-way driveway connecting with Kingston Road, a parking lot with two (2) employee parking spaces, six (6) vacuum vehicle cleaning stalls including one (1) ADA parking stall and six (6) wash bays, two (2) Underground Detention Basins, Landscaping, Lighting, Public Water, and Public Sewer.

McSeed explained that the project was stand alone and not to be in conjunction with the tunnel wash location already there. He said there will not be a connection between tunnel service and self-serve. All stormwater BMPs will be discharged into the existing basin to the east of the site.

Oetinger asked if they could go through the Carroll Review letter for any questions they might have.

In going through the letter, they understood the Engineers' suggestions. They asked for more clarification on number 6 under SALDO of the review letter regarding curb radius.

McSeed thought the comment on curb radius may be a PennDOT issue for roads more than driveways.

Coyle said he would investigate it. He didn't have the SALDO in front of him. He asked what the proposed radius is.

McSeed responded 15 ft on both sides.

Coyle said they would look into it to see if the 15 ft is satisfactory.

They moved onto the 7- site triangle. They said they would comply with the 100 ft.

They submitted plans to the LVPC at the same time as to the Township. They will address any comments from either when the review from LVPC comes back.

The traffic and policy comments will be addressed before they come back before the Planning Commission.

Goudsouzian said they are willing to address the issues that exist and will address the zoning with the Zoning officer. He said they will come back with a cleaner plan.

Kicska asked about the spacing of the Arbor Vitae from the STC letter. He said it mentions 30 feet. He asked for clarification whether it meant 30 ft or 30 inches?

Beavers mentioned a utility easement that would restrict what could be planted.

Goudsouzian said the utility easement also borders the other site and they would anticipate doing what was required for the original site.

Baird said there is quite a bit that needs to be addressed.

Goudsouzian said they don't want to delay the project but are open to hearing about extensions if needed.

Goudsouzian said the biggest hurdle they anticipate is parking, but he wanted them to keep in mind that this is not traditional parking.

Kicska asked if there were any employees on the site.

Hoffert said there are no employees on the site, The employees next door would provide the maintenance to the site.

Kicska asked about the 2 parking spots designated for employees.

Hoffert added that they may be used for deliveries or maintenance people that may come by.

Diefenderfer mentioned concerns about runoff and salt, noise, and oil and water separator. He said the Fire Commissioner expressed concerns about any chemicals on site.

Wilkins asked if there is a dryer.

Hoffert said no and the vacuums only have a 2-horsepower motor. He said the can put an oil separator in. Each bay has a pit where everything (soap, water, dirt) collects, and they have a pump truck that pumps it out.

Diefenderfer asked for building drawings.

They agreed to submit them.

Beavers went over a few things that are included in the zoning ordinance such as

signage, parking, traffic patterns, and lighting that would need to be met.

Motion: Tabled, Moved by Richard Wilkins, Seconded by Tom Grube. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Diefenderfer, Grube, Kicska, Walker, Wilkins
Commission Members Absent: Ruch

5. Component 3m Review - Norma Street Sewer Extension

Project: Component Sewage Facilities Planning Module for Minor Act 537 Plan Update Revision

DISCUSSION

The Planning Commission needs to authorize/accept the revision to Act 537 known as Component 3M - Norma Street Sewer Extension.

Motion: Authorize, Moved by Tom Grube, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Diefenderfer, Grube, Kicska, Walker, Wilkins
Commission Members Absent: Ruch

PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Baird said since he has started, he has worked on improving communication between the Township and residents or landowners in matters that pertain to Planning.

The addition of Beavers to a very busy department has helped immensely.

He feels the current team of engineers, solicitors, etc is working together for quality development in the Township.

He said they've made themselves available to address residents concerns while looking out for the best interest of the entirety of the residents/landowners of Palmer Township.

Commission Members Absent: Ruch

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment was given during the discussion of the Zoning Ordinance. There was no additional comment at the end of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm

Motion: Adjourn, Moved by Jeff Kicska, Seconded by Tom Grube. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Diefenderfer, Grube, Kicska, Walker, Wilkins