

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MAY 22, 2018

Attendees: Peter Cornog, Robert Dambman, Patrick Doran, Vince Manuele, Sherri Glantz Patchen, Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning

1. Call to order: 7:00 PM by Chair Manuele
2. Announcements & Correspondence

Announcements

- Mr. Cornog attended the Ridge Pike Project meeting and gave an update on the status

Correspondence

- The members were given a copy of a revised Housekeeping Amendment

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Ms. Patchen moved to approve the meeting minutes from April 24, 2018 provided the second for the vote on SLD#04-18 Jason Catania, 249 Hillcrest Avenue, is noted; seconded by Mr. Doran. Vote 5-0

4. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals:

- ZHB#2018-08: Whitmarsh Hotel Associates, LP, 432 Pennsylvania Avenue, Fort Washington, PA; Proposed Freestanding Full Service Restaurant & Parking. Ameer Farrell, Esq. from Kaplin Stewart, was present representing the applicant, along with Charlie Houder, representative from Whitmarsh Hotel Associates; Michael Bowker, Site Civil Engineer from Momenee, Inc.; and Ken O'Brien, Traffic Engineer from McMahan & Associates. Ms. Farrell gave a brief overall presentation of the project including a recap of the previously approved plan. The applicant is proposing a 6,049-square foot freestanding restaurant adjacent to the Holiday Inn Express & Suites instead of the approximate 8,000-square foot restaurant which was approved when they did the hotel renovations. The configuration of the overall site will look much like it did when Audi came in recently to do their subdivision but it will include the restaurant in a slightly smaller version of what was previously approved. Certain relief was granted in 2014 from the Zoning Hearing Board based on the larger restaurant which expired after one year. The applicant is requesting that relief again for this plan along with parking (proposed 182 spaces). Additional parking that was previously available is no longer available because a portion of the Holiday Inn property was subdivided and sold off to Holman Automotive for the adjacent Audi dealership currently under construction. Mr. O'Brien presented the results of his parking study with Mr. Houder adding some information from an operations standpoint. Mr. O'Brien's study indicated there is a sufficient amount of parking for both the existing hotel and proposed restaurant on the site. The weekday peak is anticipated at 140 parking spaces for the restaurant and hotel; the Saturday peak is anticipated at 133 spaces for both; these numbers are conservative, no accounting for hotel guests that are also restaurant patrons. Some Commission members voiced various concerns over the conclusions and the methodology used for the parking study, and felt actual parking observation statistics should be used. Questions were raised about the type of restaurant; no chain restaurant will be considered (which could draw many patrons from the community at large), and no expansion will be requested later. Overflow parking was discussed; valet will be used in the event needed. Clarifications were also provided as to meeting space which is now very minor; previous hotel had large conference area which has been eliminated. (Note: Due to the repeat nature of the other relief requested, the Planning Commission focused their review on the parking variance requests only.) Public Comment: Linda Doll, Fairway Road, commented that she was happy that there was no additional impervious ground coverage proposed. Peter Blood, Fort Washington Rescape, Inc., is in favor of the restaurant but concerned the overflow of cars will park in his neighborhood. Mr. Doran made a motion to recommend approval to the Zoning Hearing Board with the conditions that the restaurant be a non-franchised non-chained independently operated restaurant and that accommodations be made for valet service to be available on an as-needed basis; seconded by Mr. Dambman. Vote 5-0

5. Subdivision & Land Development Applications:

- None

6. Conditional Use Applications:

- None

7. Old Business: None

8. New Business:

- Selective Housekeeping Amendment of the Zoning Ordinance—Consider Recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to Schedule a Public Hearing; Begin Review of Proposed Ordinance. This is a much abbreviated version of the Housekeeping Amendment that was discussed last year. The text amendments included in the current proposed ordinance include: some definition amendments and new definitions; removal of the conditional use requirement for front-facing roof-mounted solar panels and some minor related modifications to the solar energy section; removal of the conditional use requirement for freestanding (monument) signs in the VC Village Commercial District; adding lighting requirements in the VC District; and several other minor edits to a number of other provisions. This is on the agenda for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to consider scheduling a Public Hearing for this ordinance and to start the formal review process. Commission members had concerns about: the definition of ‘Medical Office’, options were discussed; the need to add a definition of ‘Hold Harmless Agreement’ since this term is introduced in the amendment; and light pollution to be addressed in the VC lighting amendment. Public Comment: Linda Doll, Fairway Road, had questions about contiguous lots in identical ownership (amendment proposed to Section 116-17), and asked that the proposed housekeeping amendment be put online to review. Mr. Dambman made a motion that the Board of Supervisors consider scheduling a public hearing to consider the Selective Housekeeping Ordinance; Seconded by Mr. Cornog. Vote 5-0 The Commission’s comments will be considered and a modified version of the amendment will be brought back at a future meeting.

9. Public Comment: None

10. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning

The Planning Commission is appointed as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board with respect to comprehensive land use planning, existing land use, and various land use and zoning applications in Whitemarsh Township. No formal decisions are rendered by the Planning Commission. Formal decisions are rendered by the Board of Supervisors or Zoning Hearing Board, as prescribed by law, based on the type of application.