

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OCTOBER 23, 2018

Attendees: Dave Shula, Sherri Glantz Patchen, Patrick Doran, Vince Manuele, Peter Cornog, Bob Dambman, Scott Quitel, Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning, Jim Sullivan, Township Engineer, T&M Associates

1. Call to order: 7:00 PM by Chair Manuele

2. Announcements & Correspondence

Announcements: None

Correspondence: None

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Mr. Doran moved to approve the minutes from the October 9, 2018 meeting; seconded by Ms. Patchen. Vote 7-0

4. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals:

- ZHB#2018-23 Conshohocken Land Development LLC, 252 Roberts Avenue, Conshohocken, PA; Conversion of former Lincoln Fire Company building into 3 single-family attached dwellings. George Ozorowski, Esquire, the applicant's attorney, was present. The Planning Commission reviewed the original application for this project at its September 25th meeting and recommended that the Zoning Hearing Board not look favorably upon it. With the addition of a second floor, the applicant originally proposed to use and convert the existing building into five (5) attached residential units. The amended application proposes to demolish a portion of the building to create more setback in the rear of the residential units and to only convert the remaining structure into three attached residential units increasing green space and making it less dense. The applicant is seeking a special exception from the Zoning Hearing Board for the use (as being a more restrictive nonconforming use compared to the fire house use) as well as some dimensional relief, for setbacks, building coverage and impervious coverage. (These are required since this would be a new use, even though these dimensions are the same or more favorable than the existing situation is.) This application is scheduled to be heard on the November 7, 2018 Zoning Hearing Board meeting agenda. The Planning Commission appreciated the applicant's revision to the plan, however, they still feel that they are proposing too many units which are not in keeping with the neighborhood. Public comment: Gene Swider, 256 Roberts Avenue; Terri Ferris, Summit Avenue and Wells Street; Tim Ferris, 300 Summit Avenue; Frank Watton, 331 Hillcrest Avenue; Anna Gregory, 1500 Wells Street all spoke. Their comments and concerns included: not in favor of the project; it does not meet zoning regulations; not compatible with the neighborhood; stormwater runoff; visual impacts and lack of privacy for adjacent home; precedent that could be set since there are many nonconforming lots; not opposed to new development but would like to see it as a single family dwelling. Mr. Cornog moved to not make a favorable recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board; seconded by Mr. Quitel. Vote 7-0
- ZHB#2018-26 901 Washington Partners, LP, 901 Washington Street, Conshohocken, PA; Construction of 35 Single Townhouse Units and 40 stacked units on former industrial site (total 75 dwelling units). Jim Vesey, owner/partner along with Jim Bannon, Civil Engineer, with Nave Newell were present. The Commission reviewed a sketch plan for this development at its July 24th meeting. Some changes have been made to the plan in response to comments made at that meeting. Some of the changes included parking under the proposed townhomes on a platform as opposed to enclosed garages, to allow flood waters to flow through; brought the buildings closer together to create space for additional parking spaces (12 spaces) on either end. Mr. Vesey explained that they now were negotiating with a specific builder who had experience in waterfront development. He also showed an exhibit demonstrating that all units would have views of the river based on the current layout; for this, the builder wants decks on all units and since there are some stacked units, 4 stories is necessary. Mr. Bannon discussed the requested variances and stated that some of the relief is similar to the previous application (when the same developer proposed an 82,000-square foot office building)

relative to the floodplain and riverfront setbacks; the remainder of the relief is from certain requirements for residential developments in the RDD-1, Riverfront Development District, Sub-district 1. Planning Commission comments and concerns included: would like to see more green space; wanted to see more river view for all units; parking allocation for the stacked units (number and location); safety of pedestrian access to the train station through David's Bridal; and would like to see a larger riparian buffer. Public Comment: Linda Doll, Fairway Road; and Sydelle Zove, 644 Harts Ridge Road spoke. Their comments and concerns included: is there sufficient amount of parking spaces for each unit; questioned if it is a transit oriented development since there are no sidewalks directly from the project to the train station; and concerned about the extensive granting of variances to the zoning code and this being contrary to the comprehensive plan update currently underway. Mr. Quitel made a motion to recommend granting the requested relief in items 1 through 4 [Special exception under §116-166.A.(1); Variances under §§116-165, 116-280.H., and 116-281.A.(7)(a)]; seconded by Mr. Doran. Vote 7-0. Mr. Quitel made a second motion to recommend rejecting requested variances 5 through 7 [Variances under §§116-281.A.(8), 116-281.A.(9), and 116-284.A.]; seconded by Mr. Dambman. Vote 4-3

5. Subdivision & Land Development Applications:

- SLD#04-16 Whitemarsh Shopping Center, 10 Ridge Pike, Conshohocken, PA; expansion and modified parking layout; revised Sketch Plan. Marc Kaplin, Esquire, applicant's attorney, along with Brian Conlon, Engineer with Langan Engineering and Bill Greimel, shopping center manager, were present. Mr. Kaplin presented a brief history including explaining the 1994 Zoning Hearing Board relief and the existing nonconformities; he mentioned that these have been reviewed with Mr. Guttenplan and he is in agreement with the variances currently needed based on proposed plan changes. He also explained the parking ratio which is currently 5.36/1,000 SF and which would change to 4.48/1,000, which is still in the range recommended for shopping centers. The Planning Commission last reviewed a Sketch Plan for an expansion in June, 2016; at that time, a new 11,380-square foot building was proposed. A number of the changes on this version of the plan are in response to comments made in 2016. In addition to reducing the size of the new building to approximately 9,000 sq.ft., the current plan shows the reconfiguration of the parking spaces to eliminate the angled parking and one way drive aisles and replace it with perpendicular and parallel spaces with two way drive aisles; add parking islands; extend the throat of the center entrance from Ridge Pike to make for safer ingress and egress movements, and improve access at eastern Ridge Pike entrance; add retaining wall along part of Ridge Pike frontage and sidewalks along the entire frontage for Ridge Pike with sidewalk access at the center entrance from Ridge Pike (retaining wall to be built as part of the County's overall Ridge Pike project); reconfigure the sidewalk access to the east from Lisa Lane; add a patio for Panera; add shrubs along the length of the rear curb line to prevent headlight glare onto neighbor's properties (shrubs without a fence are the neighbors' preference based on two meetings); and replace dilapidated trash enclosures and add two (2) other enclosures for existing dumpsters and one (1) additional enclosure for the new building. Impervious coverage would be reduced from 81% to 78%. The Planning Commission comments and concerns included possibly adding more green space in between Panera and the proposed building and possibly pushing them closer together as more of a plaza area; correcting the blind spot near the Starbucks; and questioned whether the applicant would consider building up (2nd floor) and making the building addition smaller (Mr. Greimel said that in his experience, that doesn't work in centers like this); concern about the parking adequacy even with employee parking in the rear. Public Comment: Linda Doll, Fairway Road; Denise Nowak, lives in the township spoke. Their comments and concerns included: were fencing and shrubbery both offered to the residents that live behind the shopping center; doesn't see enough parking for three (3) additional stores; the idea of islands for the pedestrians to cross are a good idea but can't see seniors walking such a distance (from apartments across Ridge Pike), and prefers the angle parking to the proposed parallel parking. Mr. Shula stated that the applicant did a nice job with the new layout. The applicant will take all comments into consideration and will be back with a land development plan.

6. Conditional Use Applications: None

7. Old Business: None

8. New Business: None

9. Public Comment:

- Eli Glick, Whitefield Drive, read a statement regarding the Comprehensive Plan which he wanted to include in the minutes. He was advised Township policy prohibits including prepared statements attached to meeting minutes. Mr. Glick is looking for more information on the Comprehensive Plan and believes the Planning Commission should demand this information.

10. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 10:10 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.