

Planning Commission Minutes – March 3, 2021

PRESENT: Chairwoman Nancy Moore and Member(s): Joe Becker, Diane Bernardo, Ed Andrulonis and David Volpe

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Code Enforcement/Zoning Officer, Zac Lawhead; City Engineer/Public Works Director, Chris Nasuti; City Solicitor, Toni Cherry; City Manager, John “Herm” Suplizio; and Administrative Secretary, Bobbie Shaffer.

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by Planning Commission Chairwoman, Nancy Moore.

Approval of Minutes – February 3, 2021

The motion was made by Becker and seconded by Volpe that the Planning Commission accept the minutes of February 3, 2021 as presented by the Administrative Secretary.

VOTE

AYES: Commission Members: Becker, Volpe and Chairwoman Moore

ABSTAIN: Commission Members: Bernardo and Andrulonis (Due to Absence)

NAYS: None

MOTION PASSED: 3 – 0

Visitor’s Comments: None

Old Business: None

New Business:

Penn State University – DuBois – Subdivision & Land Development

Presented by: Patrick McLaine, PE – Reuther & Bowen

John Luchini, PSU – Director of Business & Finance

Penn State University would like to consolidate their six lots which are surrounded by: College Place, North Sixth ST, East DuBois Avenue/Route 255 and East Second Avenue. He stated that their property is split between two different districts, R-1 and CH – Commercial Highway.

Second they would like to expand their Multi-Purpose Building by 3,800 sq. ft. and remodel the current building (31,000 sq. ft.) that houses the gymnasium, a multipurpose area, etc. He proceeded to show each member of Planning where the addition would show on the plans. It would be located on the top left of the building towards the parking lot; the remainder of the building would have very few modifications. Some of the updates would include a new elevator, update the existing gymnasium, update the ADA parking, update the building for handicapped accessibility, improve the landscaping and utility upgrades.

Third they are seeking a Modification of Saldo Requirements. They are requesting an 18 ft. front yard setback instead of the Special Yard Regulation of 24.5’. McClaine informed the Commission that an adjacent building currently encroaches the setback requirement.

Chairwoman Moore asked about parking. McLaine stated that there are 200+ spaces across the street from the campus. Moore asked about the onsite parking. Mr. McLaine did not have that information but Mr. Luchini stated 55 spaces.

While Mr. McLaine was showing plans to Becker and Volpe, Solicitor Cherry asked how the unemployment office ended up at the campus and why it is no longer there.

Mr. Luchini stated it was through grants with the state, they thought it would work well with the college training their clientele. Solicitor Cherry stated she just wondered as she didn't remember it ever coming to Planning. Mr. Luchini said the Unemployment Office used to use the college facilities a lot. It was thought that they would work well together putting programs together to help the unemployed; but, it didn't work out that way. He feels they moved because of budgetary restraints.

Mr. McLaine stated that they will be updating the utilities to improve efficiency and will be reducing the amount of stormwater which will improve the situation.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Nasuti felt there would be three motions. City Solicitor Cherry felt it all could be covered in one.

Member Bernardo asked when the project would begin; Luchini said he hoped in August. Member Andrulonis asked what the life of the project was; Luchini stated a year.

The motion was made by Volpe and seconded by Becker that the Planning Commission recommend to Council that they approve the request for the consolidation of the six lots and the land development plan contingent on Council accepting the 6' front yard setback modification.

VOTE

AYES: Commission Members: Becker, Volpe, Bernardo, Andrulonis and Chairwoman Moore

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

MOTION PASSED: 5 - 0

Day Property Holdings – 403 Patterson Avenue – Subdivision

Presenter: Derrick Day

Mr. Day stated that he and his wife purchased the 7 ½ acre property, and last month subdivided and sold 2.28 acres. He would like to subdivide ½ acre that is not accessed by any street; he will be selling it to the Peterson's as it is only accessible by their property. City Solicitor Cherry asked if the Peterson's are ready to consolidate the parcel with their existing property. Code Enforcement/Zoning Officer Lawhead confirmed the Peterson's are ready.

The motion was made by Andrulonis and seconded by Volpe that the Planning Commission recommend to Council that they approve the request from Mr. Day to subdivide ½ acre from 403 Patterson Avenue and it be consolidated with 723 Munro Street (Peterson's).

VOTE

AYES: Commission Members: Becker, Volpe, Bernardo, Andrulonis and Chairwoman Moore

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

MOTION PASSED: 5 - 0

Jeffrey W. Rice, DMD, PC – 90 Beaver Drive – Subdivision

Code Enforcement/Zoning Officer Lawhead presented the plan to Planning.

The proposed project is a subdivision of the property located at 90 Beaver Drive – Building E. Dr. Rice would like to subdivide and sell the property.

City Solicitor Cherry reminded Planning that Dr. Rice wanted to do this approximately a year ago and was told him we would need a cross easement and parking agreement in order to approve.

Lawhead stated that they thought they had the cross easement worked out but then the hospital wanted to change language in the document. It took months to get the documents.

The problem with this plan is there is only one water tap located in Building D and then lines run to all the other buildings. If Dr. Rice sells Building E it will have to have its own dedicated water line; separate owner, separate services.

City Solicitor Cherry is concerned that Council won't know when or if they put in their own water line. City Engineer Nasuti stated that we have had problems with other properties and we now have a system in place that we will know whether or not they put in the line. We will not approve the plan until after the line has been installed and we have an Accessibility Easement and Shared Parking Agreement.

There was some discussion about when they sold the other building to Penn Highlands; Nasuti stated they are no selling to Penn Highlands.

The motion was made by Becker and seconded by Volpe that the Planning Commission recommend to Council that approval be contingent on the installation of a dedicated water service to Building E, and an executed Accessibility Easement and a Shared Parking Agreement which are to be executed immediately and presented to City Engineer Nasuti.

VOTE

AYES: Commission Members: Becker, Volpe, Bernardo, Andrulonis and Chairwoman Moore

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

MOTION PASSED: 5 – 0

Prior to adjournment Chairwoman Moore stated that City Engineer Nasuti wanted to go over the Zoning Map with the Planning Commission. Engineer Nasuti stated that he needed to review some things prior to presentation. He felt he should be ready next month.

City Solicitor Cherry stated that her concern in reshaping the Zoning Map is unintended consequences. She then went on to talk about how the hospital is absorbing properties; which are taking taxable real estate and making it nontaxable.

She reminded Nasuti and the audience that Industrial Districts can have a lesser use.

She went on to say that we don't want Use by Right as we don't have design requirements in our Ordinance. She talked about incubators and how it's the perfect place for a new business starting out to begin; the diversity of businesses in the same building.

Another large concern is how much median income housing we are losing. Her hope is someday people want to own single family homes again. There is no market for 300,000 – 400,000 homes; we need homes that sell for 75,000 to 150,000.

Chairwoman Moore said that the Planning Commission will work with individuals on Modifications of substandard lots. She requests that they leave the Industrial zone the way it is.

Chairwoman Moore stated that whatever people want Planning can make it happen.

Member Bernardo complimented the staff on a wonderful job.

Adjournment

The motion was made by Volpe and seconded by Becker that the Planning Commission adjourn.

VOTE

AYES: Commission Members: Becker, Volpe, Bernardo, Andrulonis and Chairwoman Moore

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

MOTION PASSED: 5 – 0