



Borough of Pottstown

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***POTTSTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
Pottstown Borough Hall Council Chambers Room
100 E. High Street
December 16, 2009
7:30 p.m.***

MINUTES

Present: Dan Weand, Chairperson, Stephen Toroney, Vice Chairperson & Thomas Hylton

Also Present: Charles D. Garner, Borough Solicitor
Doug Dilliplane, P.E., Bursich Associates
Joseph Fay, architectural consultant
Michelle M Borzick, Zoning Work Leader

Absent: Terry Fetterman & Karen Weil

Meeting called to order by Mr. Weand at 7:30 p.m.

Approval of minutes

Mr. Toroney motions to approve the minutes of November 2009 Planning Commission meeting, seconded by Mr. Hylton.

Motion carried.

Mr. Hylton motions to approve the September 24, 2009 joint meeting of the Blighted Property Review Committee and the Planning Commission, seconded by Mr. Toroney.

Motion carried.

235 High Street, exterior renovation – Mr. Fay advises the commission that this project has been in front of HARB. Mr. Fay shares photos with the commission of the project and advises that with a lot of work with HARB they have come to an agreement to install glass panels in place of the wrought iron depicted in the picture. Jay Constantine, owner of the building, and Ron Garza, owner of the perspective business for the building, is present to discuss the project. Mr. Fay explains the intent is to remove the glass-enclosed area on the east side of the building and create a platform seating area that will be surrounded with glass panels to try in keep with the spirit of the building. Mr. Garza, perspective business owner, preferred wrought iron spindles. The commission, Mr. Fay, Mr. Constantine and Mr. Garza discuss advantages to both options.

Mr. Hylton motions to approve the platform seating area with glass enclosure or wrought iron spindled railing, seconded by Mr. Toroney.

Motion carried.

945 Chestnut St, Green & Walnut Sts: The Hill School East Faculty Village – Mr. Silverson addresses council and introduces Miguel Iola. Mr. Iola offers a power point presentation depicting a location for the subject property. This development will include a total of 16 homes sites: 8 singles and 8 half doubles. A portion of Green Street will be vacated between Walnut & Chestnut Sts to add to the green space. In addition there would be a minimum of 2 parking spaces per dwelling. Explains the existing & proposed exterior elements that will be utilized for this development to remain consistent with the area and the campus including the crescent lawn, emergency access area, center play lot area, types of trees to be planted, proposed retaining walls, architecture, etc... Mr. Iola introduces Shamarukh Billah to describe the site engineering.

Ms. Billah describes that there is very little to demolish from this site with the exception of the three residencies, a few trees and portions of Green, Walnut & Chestnut Sts. Ms. Billah comments on emergency access drive, crescent lawn, connecting sidewalks back to existing Hill School property where the units will be placed and the parking in relationship to those units. There are a total of 32 parking spaces for the development. Not much has changed from the original sketch plan. Ms. Billah speaks to the commission in regards to the high point of the property, grading, drainage conditions, multiple rain gardens, porous paving and stone bed to collect water in parking areas & utilities provided.

Mr. Weand questions the 12ft emergency access drive and references the memo from Chief Lengel. Ms. Billah advises because of saving the existing trees and a gentler slope widening the access drive would inhibit the aesthetics of the space. Chief Lengel advises that the Code requires a 20ft width based on engineering concept to support the weight of the apparatus and the width of operating the fire apparatus. The road can be engineered aesthetically to support the apparatus as long as the paving materials are designed to take the significant weight but the total area must be 20ft. Mr. Hylton clarifies with the Fire Chief that as long as the total width is engineered to support the total weight of 75,000 to 80,000 lbs. Mr. Dilliplane indicates he would like to see more green than paving. Ms. Billah indicates that they will work on the emergency access drive.

Subdivision & Land Development

Comment #12 Section A527 – sidewalk on Chestnut St & Walnut St

Ms. Billah advises of their intentions for sidewalks on one side of Walnut and one side of Chestnut St within the project limits. Mr. Dilliplane's suggestion to the Planning Commission is to make the full connection to High St & Beech Sts that is owned by the Hill School.

Ms. Billah addresses questions regarding parking. There is sufficient parking for the units and overflow parking can be utilized on the street.

Comment #13 Section A528 – renaming the streets.
This would be a council decision.

Comment #15 Section A531.2 – Utilities on Green St right of way need to be reviewed and easements will have to be established. Mr. Garner advises that when this was discussed a couple of years ago the Borough made it clear and the Hill School understood that the utilities would have to be relocated or they would have to correct what was there.

Storm Water Management

Mr. Dilliplane suggests looking at eliminating the surface basin and implement some type of other facilities underground. Ms. Billah indicates that maybe they can look into creating a larger rain garden area.

General Comments

Comment #3 Mr. Dilliplane mentions the fence and access. Ms. Billah advises the fence line runs along Green St and they could maintain the fence and provide gates for the residencies and man gates so that could be controlled by the Hill School for security purposes. This would allow the public access to the area but secure access to the campus.

Comment #5 Mr. Dilliplane mentions the conditions of Chestnut & Walnut Sts. He believes with the agreement in place regarding Edgewood St it just makes sense to complete improvements on Chestnut & Walnut Sts.

Mr. Ennis further questions the sidewalk issues on Chestnut & Walnut Sts.

Mr. Garner comments that this is the first review and would anticipate a resubmission prior to next month's meeting.

Public Comment

a. Hibbeln Engineering – Cherry, Price & South Sts project – Anthony Hibbeln, Hibbeln Engineering, Frank McLaughlin & Randy Rasor, owners, present to represent the proposed project. Mr. Hibbeln advised the commission based on the direction received at last month's meeting they have created a bridging over of the entryway to connect both buildings to create a thoroughfare into the parking area to enter off of Cherry St. The commission was advised the buildings would be at least 2 full stories, access for emergency apparatus, meeting parking requirements as set forth in the new amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, public transportation access, owner expresses concern of arch beneath the property & discussions regarding traffic flow in reference to the property entryway. Mr. Hylton expresses that he is in favor of the development.

Old Business

Blighted Property Committee – Mr. Hylton motions to enact a Resolution declaring the following properties as blighted and authorize the appropriate code officials to proceed to cause removal of the blighted conditions, as provided for by Borough Ordinance: 444 Apple St, 448 Apple St, 164 S Franklin St, 422 South St, 255 Chestnut St, 403 Chestnut St, 539 Chestnut St, 174 N Washington St, 364 Lincoln Ave & 421 Lincoln Ave seconded by Mr. Toroney.

Motion carried

Mr. Hylton motions to declare the following properties as blighted and to certify the following properties to Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority for potential acquisition: 464 ½ N Evans St, 541 Chestnut St, 454-456 Chestnut St a.k.a. 67-69 Leshner St, 350 Beech St & 794 Lincoln Ave, seconded by Mr. Toroney.

Motion carried.

Pottstown Regional Planning – Mr. Toroney informs the commission of the fiscal analysis and the RFP process, cost and timeline. Mr. Toroney raises the question of appointing a second person to Regional Planning to represent Pottstown. Mr. Ennis mentions the amendments to the Regional Plan should be forwarded to him for January 2010.

Mr. Toroney motions to have Mr. Hylton draft a formal letter of comment indicating the position of the Borough of Pottstown Planning Commission in reference to the suggested map amendments, seconded by Mr. Hylton.

Motion carried.

Keim Street Bridge comments – Mr. Dilliplane states that Penn Dot is working on King St Bridge over Manatawny at this time.

New Business

Regional Planning Comp Plan & Intergovernmental Cooperative Implementation

Agreement Amendment updates – Mr. Ennis indicates that he has received comments and would like to schedule a separate meeting for next month. He will facilitate a date and time via email with all potential attendees.

Review and possible approval of suggested 2010 Planning Commission meeting dates – with noted changes to the April, September, November & December 2010 meeting dates.

Mr. Toroney motions to advertise the meeting dates and times as noted, seconded by Mr. Hylton.

Motion carried.

Adjournment