



Borough of Pottstown

Borough Hall, 100 East High Street
Pottstown, Pennsylvania 19464-9525

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION

Pottstown Borough Hall Council Chamber Room

100 E. High Street

February 21, 2018

7 p.m.

Present: Deborah Penrod, Chair,
Dan Weand, Jim Derr, and Brian Hydier Members

Also Present: Charles Garner, Borough Solicitor
Brian Olszak, Montgomery County Planning Commission
April Barkasi, P.E., Cedarville Engineering Group
Stephanie Drobins, Licensing & Inspections

Meeting called to order by Ms Penrod at 7:03 pm

Approval of Minutes:

The December 20, 2017 planning commission meeting minutes were accepted. Mr. Derr motioned, seconded by Mr. Hydier. Motion carried.

828 N Hanover St:

To acknowledge receipt only at this time. Motion made by Mr. Weand, seconded by Mr. Derr. Motion carried.

Hill School Dining Room Addition:

Tom Smith from Bursich and Robin Rhoads from the Hill School were present. There are no changes to the seating area, the renovations are for the kitchen area only. Ms. Penrod asked if the renovations would be visible from the road. Per Mr. Rhoads, it will not be visible from High St and the exterior will match the existing. No alterations are being made to the driveway and they've eliminated the larger additions. There are no concerns with the waiver letter or the Cedarville letter from 1/3/2018. Motion made for preliminary approval to Council by Mr. Weand, seconded by Mr. Derr. Motion carried. Motion made for approval of waiver request letter to Council by Mr. Derr, seconded by Mr. Hydier. Motion carried.

505 Lincoln Ave townhomes:

Changes to the plan since the last meeting include: reduced depth of unit to reduce the retaining wall about 75% (still around the rain garden) – can now grade and add trees as a buffer for the neighbors; the units were widened to accommodate the

trash bins (units are now 21 feet wide); plantings were added to the rain garden; no change to parking. Mr. Derr is concerned about the use of arborvitae – states they're typically only good for about 10 years and is not a sturdy plant. Per the applicant, they're easy to maintain and he has had success with them on other projects. Believes the landscaping at the corner of Lincoln & Washington Sts will give it a nicer appearance. The applicant will be resubmitting plans for review in response to the December review letter from Cedarville Engineering and everything in the letter will be complied with. A motion was made for preliminary approval to Council pending the resubmission to Cedarville's review letter by Mr. Weand, seconded by Mr. Hydier. Motion carried. The waiver letter still stands as is, cannot meet all landscaping requirements. An attempt was made to supplement for the required trees with shrubs and perennials. Mr. Derr questioned if the ongoing maintenance of the trees would be handled by a homeowners association and the applicant responded yes. A fee in lieu of was discussed regarding the tree shortage and lack of open space to combine those issues and say a fee of \$350 per tree for 10 trees. The waiver requested for no pole lighting was satisfied at the last meeting. A motion to recommend approval to Council for the 12/20/2017 waiver letter pending the fee in lieu of was made by Mr. Weand, seconded by Ms. Penrod. Motion carried.

728 High St / 728 Queen St Land Development:

Dane Moyer from Bursich was present on behalf of the property owner. Application is a proposal to increase parking spaces from 15 spaces to 34 spaces. Questions on the Cedarville review letter regarding #12 setback on side yard is a difference of 8 inches and #13 handicap spaces used ADA standard but does not meet the Borough ordinance. Applicant is proposing a fee in lieu of open space of \$1750. There was also a stormwater management discussion regarding #17 & #18 on the Cedarville review letter. There was also a discussion on the trees as referenced in the Montgomery County Planning Commission review letters, items #1 & #4.

Andrew & Sue Monastra were present from the public. They are the owners of Grand Review Holdings located at 740 High St. They are against the application as they do not want to see the "back yard" turned into a "concrete jungle". They state the parking lot is never currently full as is so why do they need the extra spaces. The proposed additional lighting may disturb the neighbors and they asked if there would be a buffer between the properties. They're not against them adding more spaces, just do not understand why they need so many.

Ms. Penrod questioned how the proposed number of spots was calculated and if they could reduce the number of spaces. Mr. Derr asked who uses the garages at the back side of the property. Mr. Moyer was not sure who uses them but knows they're owned by the property owner. Mrs. Monastra is concerned with water runoff to the sidewalks and the space between the proposed parking lot and their property is only 7 feet. Ms. Penrod would like an additional explanation for the number of spaces requested which was seconded by Mr. Derr, asked why so many spaces would be needed just for 1 dentist office and 2 residential units. A motion was made to deny the application to Council based on the Cedarville and MCPC review letters plus the concerns and questions raised by the Commission members which were unable to be answered at this time. Motion was made by Mr. Weand, seconded by Ms. Penrod. Motion carried. Applicant may sign an extension letter and reappear before the Planning Commission to address the concerns that were raised.

Mr. Moyer made a statement after the Commission's vote questioning the Commission's intent to chase business from the Borough, to which Ms. Penrod responded by repeating the basis for the Commission's decision.

Public Comment:

Kevin Pyle – owner of 520 Grant St. He had an application approved a few years ago to build 2 houses on either side of 520 Grant St. Application was to subdivide the lot with 1 existing house into 3 lots and then build the 2 homes on the 2 vacant lots. He held off on recording the approved plans due to the housing market and the façade elevation review required by the Planning Commission at the time the plans were approved. He's hoping to have the houses built in time for the spring housing market. His next step is to submit permits but he wanted the Commission to approve the proposed façade. The Planning Commission would like more time to review the information before discussing further as some of the members weren't even on the board at the time of the original application and are unfamiliar with what was approved.

Brian Boyer of Boyer Engineering and Ragesh Patel – brought in a sketch plan for a proposed 16 unit apartment complex over 6 parcels on N Warren St, West St & Hale St. A similar sketch was proposed 2 years ago. Mr. Derr stated parking was an issue the last time the sketch was submitted. Per Mr. Boyer & Mr. Patel, additional parking spots have been provided at this time. Mr. Patel states the properties would be a 1st floor unit and a 2nd floor unit, each only 1 bedroom. He's aware the ordinance requires a minimum of 800 square feet but will be applying for a variance to go to 700 square feet. The parking lot will not go out onto West St and would possibly have buffer trees. There are 2 houses on 2 of the parcels that would be removed. The total property size is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a acre.

Frank McLaughlin – 4 vacant parcels on Keim St that he just acquired. He's looking for options on how the parcels can be developed, what would fit best for the community/neighborhood. There would be a possible lot line adjustment. He's looking at a few different options, including townhomes or twins. Questions were asked regarding parking issues and if it would fall under a Homeowner's Association or would remain single lots.

Old Business:**Blighted Property Committee**

Properties from prior month's meetings that were put on hold were discussed: 357 Chestnut St, 36 W Eighth St, 60 W Fifth St, 900 N Franklin St, 826 Queen St, 1066 Queen St, 26 E Second St, 122 E Third St, 57 W Third St, 383 Walnut St, 659 Walnut St, 921 Walnut St, 111 S Washington St. Mr. Weand made the motion to approve to be blighted and being the blight process, seconded by Mr. Hydier. Motion carried except Mr. Derr who abstained.

Regional Planning

The Regional Traffic Study is underway.

Keim St Bridge

Safety review submission was submitted to PennDOT on 11/27/2017 and is in the preliminary engineering phase. No changes at this time.

Sustainability Plan

Approved and adopted by Borough Council & the School Board.

New Business

Discussion regarding a recommendation that Borough Council raise the fee in lieu of for trees.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:14pm.