

**Members Present:**

Lee Olsen, AIA, Chairman  
Wayne Bealer, Vice Chairman  
Will Cinfici  
Philip Ashear  
Robert Conklin, AIA

**Staff Present:**

David Peris, Planning and Zoning Manager  
Tim Krall, Public Works  
Jerome Skrincosky, Hawk Valley Associates, Planning Consultant  
Michelle Mayfield, Hartman Valeriano Magovern Lutz, Solicitor  
Naomi Crimm, Planner

**Others Present:**

Dan Laudenslayer  
Timothy Strosser  
Kim Fasnacht, SSM  
Aristedes Otero, Stackhouse Bensinger  
Ed Stock, RHA  
David Talarico, RHA  
Aaron Booth, Kautter & Kelley Architects  
Thomas Ludgate, Ludgate Engineering

Chairman Olsen called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

**Item #1 - Agenda**

Commissioner Conklin made a motion to accept the March agenda as written. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

**Item #2 - Subdivisions and Land Developments**

PC-2019-106: 912 & 914 Lancaster Avenue (Asian Spa)

Mr. Strosser outlined changes to the plan. He made a draft deed letter, outlined the old property line on the plan (two twenty-foot wide parcels are being combined into a single forty-foot parcel), added notes about lighting (three floodlights that illuminate the walkway areas as you enter the building), and updated the title blocks to meet the City of Reading Planning Commission's criteria. He also updated the past zoning approvals in the notes section and added the hours of operation.

Mr. Peris gave a zoning background on the project. It first came to the Zoning Office and was referred to the Planning Commission to consolidate the two existing parcels. The uses are

preexisting and nonconforming, and the nonconformities are either going to be continued or reduced by this project. There is no zoning relief required for this project. The Zoning Office declined to issue a zoning permit until the Planning Commission approves the plan.

Mr. Skrincoosky stated that he has worked with Mr. Strosser on the plan. The only remaining issue would be the lighting. There is some exterior lighting already, which will be complimented by adding some rear lighting on the building façade. He mentioned that the plan has been drawn at a scale of one inch equals ten feet which is necessary because of the amount of detail on the plan. He said that he is not sure if the plan was previously granted a waiver for the scale, but that it does not look like there would be any municipal improvements for this plan.

Mr. Strosser confirmed that the waiver for the plan scale was approved the last time this project came before the Planning Commission.

Mr. Krall asked if everyone had agreed to an address on this project. Mr. Strosser stated that everyone agreed to 914 Lancaster Avenue. Mr. Krall asked if Mr. Strosser had received confirmation from the City or from Berks County that 914 would be the address. Mr. Peris found an email from Mark Connelly, Engineering Aide, stating that 914 Lancaster Avenue would be acceptable.

Ms. Mayfield asked to confirm that a stormwater management agreement is not needed. Mr. Krall confirmed that it is not. She asked if the city wants to escrow any funds to confirm the filing of the annexation deed. Mr. Peris said that the city does not require this. Ms. Mayfield said that a condition of the plan approval should be that the city receives a recorded copy of the deed.

**Action:** Chairmen Olsen stated that he would like to entertain a motion to approve the final annexation and land development plan. Commissioner Bealer made a motion to approve the final annexation and land development plan at 914 Lancaster Avenue known as the Asian Spa with the condition that the applicant submit a copy of the deed upon recording and that the commission accept the scale as written. Commissioner Conklin seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0 (**Resolution #06-2021**).

PC-2020-113-PF: 1001 Scott Street (Reading Housing Authority)

Mr. Otero said that he received two review letters from Hawk Valley and Public Works. He will edit the title of the plan to include the annexation. He asked if the fire and emergency services department had reviewed the plan. Ms. Crimm said that the plan had been sent to them. Mr. Otero said that he added notes about stormwater to the plan.

Mr. Krall clarified that the letter he sent was finalized. He stated that there is a discrepancy in the exhibits of the street vacation and right-of-way alignment between SSM (the consulting firm that the city has contracted for the work) and Stackhouse/Bensinger. This is being resolved. Mr. Otero said that they have been speaking with SSM and have traded files, so SSM is planning on revising their plans to match what Stackhouse/Bensinger has prepared. Mr. Stock said that the legal description he prepared and sent to the city is the one that SSM is using. Mr. Krall said that

this issue will be resolved shortly. He stated that City Council did not object to allowing the Commission to approve the plan before they vote on the street realignment.

Mr. Otero said that they are looking for a standard operations and maintenance agreement from the city because at the previous month's meeting it was determined that the agreement should be a separate document. Mr. Krall stated Ms. Mayfield has drafted an example agreement.

Mr. Otero clarified the cost estimate request from Mr. Krall on the ADA ramps. They discussed the costs of the ramps. Mr. Talarico asked if all of the cost estimate would need to go into the escrow, or if it would be a percentage. Mr. Krall clarified that it would be the full amount, however it would not be in cash but could be in a letter of credit that could be worked out with the bank. Mr. Otero asked how many ADA parking ramps would need to be included in the escrow. He asked if it would just be the ramps in the city right-of-way. He stated that there are seven ADA ramps on the plan. Mr. Krall said that the ADA ramps in the right-of-way would be required, but asked Mr. Peris to clarify. Mr. Peris stated that the city can provide an opinion when the cost estimate is submitted.

Mr. Peris said that no zoning relief is necessary for this. Mr. Skrincoosky said that his comments have been covered.

Ms. Mayfield confirmed that City Council did not object to the Commission granting approval. Commissioner Olsen agreed that the project should not be held up.

Commissioner Bealer asked if this project requires sewer modules. Mr. Krall said that they looked at the historic evidence of the flows and that the project would not require sewer planning. Commissioner Bealer asked if Berks County reviewed the plan. Mr. Otero confirmed that they did.

Commissioner Olsen called for a motion to grant preliminary/final plan approval with the conditions that the ordinances facing Council be approved, and an agreement to a fair escrow. Ms. Mayfield asked to add a statement about the execution and submission of the required agreements and compliance with the planning and public works review letters.

Commissioner Bealer made a motion to approve the Reading Housing Authority preliminary/final plan with the conditions that the stormwater management agreement is finalized, the municipal improvements agreement is finalized and agreed to by staff, that the vacation and realignment ordinances are approved by City Council and are noted on the plan, and the conformance to any comments by staff and the fire marshal. Commissioner Cinfici seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0 (**Resolution #07-2021**).

Mr. Olsen expressed his condolences for the passing of Bob Stackhouse.

**Action:** Commissioner Conklin made a motion to recommend to City Council the realignment of Liggett Avenue. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0 (**Resolution #08-2021**).

PC-2020-114: 114-118 Belvedere Avenue (Schaeffer Subdivision)

Ms. Fasnacht presented the plans for 114 and 118 Belvedere Avenue. The plan is to turn two existing lots into three lots and construct a three-unit townhouse across them. They have received a review letter from Hawk Valley and Public Works.

Ms. Fasnacht addressed the alley parking. SSM reached out to the city surveyor's office and was told that all alleys are considered private. Because the alley has been used for access for the past twenty-one years, then the applicant would have the right to continue to use the alley as access to the subject property. She stated that she provided an exhibit demonstrating that larger non-commercial vehicles traffic can turn in and out of the parking spaces without exiting the alley paving.

Mr. Peris confirmed that zoning requires parking from the alley if access is available. He confirmed that the comments that were raised regarding the alley parking were to ensure that there was sufficient space to enter the parking space without encroaching on the other lots. Mr. Skrincosky stated that he is most concerned about lot 116 because it is the tightest, but the current arrangement for lots 114 and 118 appear to work. He stated that one way to resolve this is to make the depth of the space on lot 116 a little longer.

Ms. Fasnacht confirmed she will look into this. She stated that the property lines have been set. She said that they will be submitting the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan to Berks County Conservation District for review this week. She said that they are in the process of submitting the stormwater plan for review. She asked Mr. Krall to confirm that the check was received from the applicant. Mr. Krall said that he is unaware if they have received it. Ms. Fasnacht asked him to confirm when they do receive it.

Ms. Fasnacht asked if Ms. Mayfield would draft the stormwater agreement or if they would take it from the ordinance. Ms. Mayfield stated that they have a tweaked version. Mr. Krall will share that with Ms. Fasnacht.

Mr. Krall shared his screen to show the sewer connections needed. He stated that because they are creating a new lot at 116, it is one Equivalent Dwelling Unit, and the Department of Environmental Protection needs to approve it. He pointed out the infiltration trenches for the stormwater management and confirmed that the parking pads off the alley will be connected into the trenches. He stated that they need operations and maintenance notes on the plan so that the owners of the properties will know how to maintain their stormwater facilities. He said they will need the escrow for the improvements agreement, which will include the stormwater management, the replacement of the curb and sidewalks, the connections to the water and sewer, and the erosion and sediment control. Ms. Fasnacht said that the sidewalk is in pretty good shape, but due to the number of connections required they would be cutting pieces of it so it will make sense to remove and replace it.

Chairman Olsen asked whether the Planning Commission would be taking action on the plan tonight.

Mr. Skrincosky stated that the parking issues need to be resolved. Mr. Krall stated that the Planning Commission typically does not approve plans until the Department of Environmental Protection has approved the planning module and Berks County Conservation District acknowledges receipt of the plan.

Mr. Peris stated that it would be best to defer action at this point, assuming the applicant will agree to the time extensions associated with that.

**Action:** Commissioner Bealer made a motion to table the plan. Commissioner Ashear seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

PC-2021-103-PF: 660 Schuylkill Avenue (Isla Property Management 1 LLC)

Mr. Laudenslayer said that he received a review letter from Hawk Valley, Berks County Planning Commission, and Tim Krall. He said that the project was stalled until they were able to get a PennDOT permit. He stated that there is some sidewalk that needs to be replaced. He stated that the Zoning Hearing Board asked that the parcels be combined. He said that the applicant submitted a request to rezone so that all the properties would be in the C-N zoning district. He said that it is a tight property, so they have rented parking spaces from a location across the street.

Mr. Peris said that variances were granted by the Zoning Hearing Board for parking and for the change in use with the condition that the parcels be combined into a single parcel. He clarified that there are two applications here – one for the plan and one for the rezoning.

Mr. Skrincosky gave an overview of the parcels and the uses. He stated that there are several nonconformities, and the Zoning Hearing Board tried to remedy this by requesting that the parcels be combined. However, combining the parcels would increase the number of nonconformities because of the number of uses. The way to resolve this would be to rezone all parcels to be in the C-N district. He stated he understood that the applicant has an agreement to purchase twenty spaces across the street.

Mr. Laudenslayer confirmed that the agreement was to lease the parking spots and not purchase them. Mr. Skrincosky stated that the issues can be resolved if the parcels are rezoned. Mr. Laudenslayer confirmed that the consolidation and rezoning was what the Zoning Hearing Board wanted.

Mr. Skrincosky stated that there are issues with parking space one and five and the loading space. Mr. Laudenslayer stated that in reference to the loading zone, it is challenging to put anything on the site. He said that Schuylkill Avenue is too busy for a loading zone, and Miltimore Street is too narrow. He said that the owner will have to figure out scheduling so that the loading zone is not an issue.

Mr. Peris stated that city staff received letters from Berks County Planning Commission and that there were no significant comments on the plan and no comments on the zoning map request.

Mr. Laudenslayer said that according to Mr. Krall's letter, stormwater is not required. He said that they will need to get flows on the previous uses to see if sewer planning is needed. Reading Area Water Authority doesn't have records that go back that far, but he assumes the proposed store will be less than the former lodge.

Mr. Krall said that he'll need to see what the projected sewer demand will be. He might be able to get flow records from the city's Hansen database, but that a case needs to be made to not need sewer planning modules for the four lots. Mr. Krall said that the PennDOT permit for Schuylkill Avenue is for ingress only, which means it will not affect parking or the bus stop. He confirmed that stormwater management is not required because there is nothing that constitutes a regulated activity in accordance with the ordinance.

Mr. Olsen asked Mr. Peris what the appropriate action would be. Mr. Peris said that the map amendment and the waivers requested should be addressed, but not plan approval.

Mr. Skrincosky stated that the Planning Commission should wait for the zoning map change to take affect before granting approval.

Mr. Laudenslayer asked about the process for the zoning map amendment. Mr. Peris said that a public hearing would happen around the end of April and he can return to the Planning Commission after Council sees the request. Ms. Mayfield said that the Council would likely be able to address the request by the May Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Skrincosky recommended that the commission take action on the waivers. He outlined the waivers: reducing the scale to one inch equals twenty feet (SALDO-515-402-2), a request to review the plan as a preliminary/final (SALDO 515-302-A-1) and SALDO 515-304). Mr. Krall stated that he does not think the water quality requirements are waivable, but stated that the ordinance does not apply because stormwater management does not apply here.

There was a discussion of the changes to the driveway. Mr. Laudenslayer said that there is no draining off the property to the other properties. Ms. Mayfield asked if there could be a partial waiver of stormwater requirements. Mr. Krall stated that no part of Chapter 505 could be waived unless it goes through a County board. He said that there is no regulated activity, so it does not apply. He also stated that SALDO 515-507 does not apply. Mr. Laudenslayer said that he will put a note on the plan that the stormwater drainage will be directed away from other properties. Mr. Krall said that a note stating that Chapter 505 does not apply should be added to the plan.

**Action:** Commissioner Cinfici moved to waive the plan scale requirement to accept the plan scale as one inch equals twenty feet. Commissioner Conklin seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

**Action:** Commissioner Bealer made a motion to review the plan as a preliminary/final plan (SALDO 515-302-A-1 and 515-304). Commissioner Cinfici seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

Mr. Laudenslayer said that he will make a chart for the waivers and put that on the plan.

**Action:** Commissioner Conklin made a motion for the Isla Property Management Annexation and Land Development plan that when parcels one, two, three, and four as shown on the plan are consolidated, that the zoning map line for the C-N district be moved to include all parcels. Commissioner Bealer seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0 (**Resolution #09-2021**).

PC-2021-102-P: 226 & 230 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street (Medical Arts Building)

Thomas Ludgate introduced the plan. The plan involves converting the Medical Arts Building into a residential building and the associated parking lot on 5<sup>th</sup> Street will be redeveloped with a building on it. The first floor of the building will be retail and residential will be on the second floor. The driveway entrance on 5<sup>th</sup> Street will be removed. The buildings will be on public water and sewer, and will have stormwater management and landscaping. The plan received zoning approval.

Mr. Shuman stated that he is planning on doing a historic restoration of the Medical Arts Building with the National Parks Service. As part of that, he wants to bring back the historic massing of the block. The new building will match the Medical Arts Building façade.

Chairman Olsen asked when the Medical Arts Building was put on the National Register of Historic Places. Mr. Shuman said that happened in late 2020, and he was responsible for that. Chairman Olsen asked about parking. Mr. Shuman said that he has petitioned to have the Medical Arts Building be added to the Commercial Core zoning district, and that there are no requirements for parking. Mr. Ludgate said that there will be thirty-seven spots on-site for the residential units, and that there are other spots off-site. Mr. Shuman confirmed that on the adjacent block (the 100 block of N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street) there are fifty-two spaces. Mr. Skrincosky asked what will be on the first floor of the Medical Arts Building. Mr. Shuman confirmed that the first floor will be commercial.

Mr. Skrincosky stated that special exception has been granted to the Medical Arts Building by the Zoning Hearing Board for the adaptive reuse. He said that traffic will not be able to go through to 5<sup>th</sup> Street from Madison. The angled parking should be changed to ninety-degree parking so the vehicles will not have to back out. This might require a zoning permit. Proposed retail building C would be right against the existing building (224 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street), and there are windows on that building. Codes said that it is not allowed. Mr. Peris said that part of the issue is when the windows were installed. He said that those more familiar with the building code and the site can provide more clarity. Mr. Skrincosky said that the plan is in a historic district so it would need further reviews. He stated that the plan is also an annexation plan. Mr. Peris said that the location of the off-street parking relief was granted from the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Ludgate confirmed that ninety-degree parking will work within the boundaries.

Mr. Skrincosky said that a closure permit from PennDOT may be needed. Mr. Krall confirmed that a Highway Occupancy Permit will be needed because they will be breaking the pavement. Mr. Krall said that they are working on whether sewer planning modules are needed. He recommended that repairs to Cow Path Alley be done. There was some discussion of what that

would entail, and the process for doing so. Mr. Krall stated the stormwater management looks good, but some notes regarding operations and maintenance need to be added to the plan, and there is an application and fee for the review.

Commissioner Bealer asked about the public water and sewer connections. Mr. Shuman responded that RAWA has issued a letter approving the water and sewer connections. Commissioner Bealer asked if the building is sprinklered. Mr. Shuman confirmed it is, and that there is a separate connection for them which was put in eight years ago. The existing line may need to move, though.

Commissioner Cinfici summarized the Medical Arts Building for the public. It is an eleven story Arts Deco building located in the Callowhill Historic District.

Mr. Krall said that he supports putting in street trees, but the applicant needs to be careful about where to put them because of underlying infrastructure.

Ms. Mayfield said that she does not recommend any action on the plan until the zoning map amendment is acted upon.

**Action:** Commissioner Bealer moved to recommend to City Council that the Medical Arts Building at 230 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street be added to the C-C zoning district. Chairmen Olsen seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0 (**Resolution #10-2021**).

### **Item #3 - Other Business**

**Action:** Commissioner Cinfici moved to approve the February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Bealer amended the motion to include that his minor changes be incorporated. The motion was approved unanimously, 5-0.

Chairman Olsen stated that there was a blight determination meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup>. There were thirty-one properties on the determination list. Two had been tabled, twelve had been removed. The next meeting is in August for certification.

Commissioner Bealer stated that he is still working on the minutes for last year.

Chairman Olsen said that April 13<sup>th</sup> will be a joint Berks County Planning Commission and Reading Planning Commission meeting. On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mr. Peris, Chairman Olsen, and Ms. Crimm made a presentation to City Council of the Annual Report.

**Action:** Commissioner Cinfici moved to approve the 2020 Planning Commission Annual Report. Chairman Olsen seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

Mr. Peris said that City Council approved the SALDO amendments. He expressed thanks for everyone's help.



**Action:** Commissioner Bealer made a motion to accept the time extension requests for Hummingbird Hill, Reading Housing Authority, Schaeffer Subdivision, and Jan & Wil Properties. Chairman Olsen seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous, 5-0.

Commissioner Bealer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cinfici seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Naomi Crimm, Planner*