

City of Reading Planning Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes: February 22, 2022

PC Members Present

Wayne Bealer
Lee Olsen, AIA
Bob Conklin, AIA
Will Cinfici
Nelson DeLeon
Peter Rye

Staff and Consultants Present

Jerome Skrincosky, AICP, HVA Planning and Zoning Consultant
Tim Krall, PE, Public Works Department
Michelle Mayfield, Esquire, Legal Consultant
Shannon Calluri, Zoning Administrator
Emily Diaz-Melendez, Zoning Officer

Others Present

John W. Hoffert, PLS (Scheibner Annexation Plan)
Gregg Bogia, Bogia Engineering (Exeter Hall and Berkshire Building)
Chris Heiniman, Perrotto Builders (Berkshire Building)
Larry Grybosky, PE, C2C Design Group (Habitat for Humanity)
Thomas Ludgate, Ludgate Engineering (Hope Rescue Mission and Iron Gate)
Marc Geddio, Iron Gate Development (Iron Gate)
Shawn Schwartz, McCarthy Engineering Associates (Scott Street Subdivision)
Mike Toledo (Centro Hispano)
Mark Koch, Esquire (Dream Ventures and Remcon Plastics)
Dan Laudenslayer, PLS (Supper Natural Produce)

- (1) **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman Bealer called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
- (2) **Acknowledgement of PC Members in Attendance and PC Meeting Agenda**
 - (a) New Planning Commission Member: The Planning Commission welcomed Peter Rye as a newly appointed member to the Planning Commission, which now has six (6) members.
 - (b) Planning Commission Agenda: The Planning Commission was advised that the meeting agenda was modified and posted on February 22, 2022 as a result of the Presidents Day Holiday observed on February 21, 2022. Commissioner Conklin made a motion to accept the modified meeting agenda. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimously approved (6-0). The Planning Commission Solicitor noted that the meeting agenda has been amended to comply with the PA Sunshine Law, as amended.
- (3) **Scheibner Annexation Plan: Preliminary/Final Plan Application**
 - (a) Application: An Annexation Plan was submitted as a Preliminary/Final Plan Application. The project involves three (3) parcels of land located along South 17^{1/2} Street that will be annexed together and joined in common deed. The existing one-family attached dwelling (2 units) will be converted into a one-family detached dwelling (1 unit) as a result of the approved plan and the conversion required as part of the building permit application.

- (b) Correspondence: Hawk Valley Associates issued a review letter on February 14, 2022 and the Berks County Planning Commission issued a review letter on February 4, 2022.
- (c) Discussion: John Hoffert, PLS who prepared the plans on behalf of the Applicant (James and Eileen Scheibner) stated that the plans will be revised to comply with all comments that have been issued for this project.
- (d) Action: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to approve the Scheibner Annexation Plan subject to the Applicant resolving all issues referenced within the review letter issued by Hawk Valley Associates, as dated February 14, 2022. Commissioner DeLeon seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimously approved (6-0).

(4) Albright College Exeter Hall: Final Annexation and Land Development Plan Application

- (a) Application: The Applicant proposes to construct a 5-story dormitory building on the campus of Albright College. The Planning Commission approved the Final Plan Application submitted for the Exeter Hall Annexation and Land Development Plan on January 25, 2022. The Applicant has submitted revised plans to address the conditions of approval.
- (b) Correspondence: Hawk Valley Associates issued a review letter on February 20, 2022.
- (c) Discussion: The Applicant will need to resolve the remaining issues referenced within the review letters before the approved Final Plan can be endorsed by the Planning Commission. Greg Bogia provided an update of the revisions to the approved Final Plan. The Municipal Improvements Agreement and Stormwater Maintenance Agreement will also need to be finalized and executed as a condition of municipal approval.
- (d) Action: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to authorize the execution of the Municipal Improvements Agreement and Stormwater Maintenance Agreement upon receipt and review of the documents. Commissioner Conklin seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimously approved (6-0).

(5) Alvernia University Berkshire Building: Revised Plan of Record and ZHB Application

- (a) Application: A Final Land Development Plan has been submitted for review. The Applicant proposes to redevelop the Berkshire Building, which is located on a 21,022 +/- square foot lot at the northeast corner of North 5th Street and Washington Street. The Applicant proposes to apply adaptive reuse techniques in order to permit commercial/retail uses on the first floor and 79 residential apartment units on the upper floors that will house foreign exchange students attending Alvernia University as part of the "College Towne" initiative.
- (b) Correspondence: Hawk Valley Associates issued a review letter on February 20, 2022 and the Berks County Planning Commission issued a review letter on February 4, 2022
- (c) Discussion: The Applicant has submitted ZHB Appeal 2022-13 in order to reaffirm the zoning relief (special exception and variance) granted as part of ZHB Appeal 2020-18. The Zoning Hearing Board will need to consider ZHB Appeal 2022-13 prior to municipal approval. Greg Bogia and Chris Heiniman provided updates on planning and zoning compliance.
- (d) Action: Commissioner Cinfici made a motion to table action on the plan until the Zoning Hearing Board has rendered a decision on ZHB Appeal 2022-13. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimously approved (6-0)

(6) Habitat for Humanity: Final Subdivision and Land Development Plan Application

- (a) Application: The Applicant (Habitat for Humanity) is seeking to redevelop 11 residential lots as part of the Buttonwood Gateway Project and Miltimore Revitalization Plan. The Final Plan was previously approved during the 2021 calendar year subject to conditions. The Applicant is also seeking relief regarding provisions for financial security and a performance guarantee.

- (b) Correspondence: Hawk Valley Associates issued a review letter on February 17, 2022. Larry Grybosky from C2C Design Group was in attendance to respond to the comments that were made by the Planning Commission.
- (c) Discussion: The Applicant was advised that the Planning Commission may not be able to consider waivers regarding financial security and/or performance maintenance guarantee. This authority may reside with City Council and the agencies that have provided funding for this project. Further discussion on this issue should be coordinated with the City Solicitor. The Planning Commission also determined that Lot 9 should consider site accessibility issues through the retaining wall that separates the dwelling and off-street parking area.
- (d) Action on Maintenance Guarantee: Commissioner DeLeon made a motion to recommend that City Council should consider the waiver of the performance maintenance guarantee that may apply to Habitat for Humanity for the residential lots that will be funded or guaranteed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Commissioner Rye seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimously approved (5-0). Commissioner Olsen did not participate in the discussion of this project and abstained from voting on this motion.
- (e) Action on Reaffirmation: Commissioner Conklin made a motion to reaffirm approval of the Final Plan that was previously approved during the 2021 calendar year, which should include a municipal improvements agreement for the project. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimously approved (5-0). Commissioner Olsen did not participate in the discussion of this project and abstained from voting on this motion.

(7) Hope Rescue Mission: Final Subdivision and Land Development Plan Application

- (a) Application: A Revised Final Plan has been submitted for Hope Rescue Mission Subdivision and Land Development Plan, which will include a lot for the Men's Residence and Office and a lot for the Women and Children Shelter.
- (b) Correspondence: Hawk Valley Associates issued a review letter on February 18, 2022.
- (c) Discussion: Tom Ludgate was in attendance representing the Applicant (Hope Rescue Mission). The plan will need to be revised to resolve the comments contained within the review letter. A Municipal Improvements Agreement and a Stormwater Management Agreement shall be required for this project.
- (d) Action: Commissioner Conklin made a motion to conditionally approve the Final Plan subject to the Applicant resolving the comments issued within the review letter. Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimously approved (6-0).

(8) Scott Street Subdivision Plan: Preliminary/Final Plan Application

- (a) Application: The Revised Final Plan was submitted for review and consideration.
- (b) Correspondence: Hawk Valley Associates issued a review letter on February 18, 2022.
- (c) Discussion: Shawn Schwartz was in attendance representing the Applicant (Bilman). The issue for sidewalks along this segment of Scott Street was discussed. The Planning Module will also need to be endorsed by the City of Reading and PADEP. A Municipal Improvements Agreement and a Stormwater Management Agreement shall be required.
- (d) Action: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to conditionally approve the Final Plan subject to the Applicant resolving the comments issued within the review letter. Commissioner Cinfici seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimously approved (6-0).

(9) Centro Hispano Project Land Development Plan: LDP Waiver Request

- (a) Application: Zoning Permit Application 2022-108 was submitted to the Zoning Office along with a request to waive the requirements for a Minor Land Development Plan.

- (b) Discussion: The Applicant (Mike Toledo) provided a presentation on the relocation efforts of Centro Hispano from the Berkshire Building at 5th and Washington Street to the first floor at Albert Boscov Plaza at 25 North 2nd Street. The existing and proposed uses are compatible and permitted by right within the C-C Zoning District. There will be no impacts associated with traffic, parking, stormwater management, sanitary sewage disposal and other variables that will require a Minor Land Development Plan for this Change of Use.
- (c) Action: It was concluded that no action is required and a waiver is not required for this project. The Applicant shall be required to submit a Building Permit Application for the interior renovations within the existing building.

(10) Old Business, Waiver Requests, Project Updates and Pending Plans

- (a) Dream Ventures (100 South 4th Street) Land Development Plan: A Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan Application has been submitted for review and consideration. Mark Koch was present to discuss the project on behalf of the Applicant. The project will be on the Planning Commission Meeting Agenda for March 22, 2022.
- (b) Super Natural Produce III: A Final Annexation and Land Development Plan shall be submitted to for review and consideration. This project will be on the Planning Commission Meeting Agenda for March 22, 2022.
- (c) Reading Station Building D (Cube Smart) Subdivision Plan: ZHB Appeal 2022-12 has been submitted to the Zoning Hearing Board for review and consideration. If successful, the Subdivision Plan will be resubmitted to the Planning Commission
- (d) MJ Reider Annexation and Land Development Plan: A Final Plan has been revised and submitted for review and consideration. This project will be on the Planning Commission Meeting Agenda for March 22, 2022.
- (e) Iron Gate Land Development Plan Application: A lengthy discussion was held on issues relative to site accessibility, off-street parking and on-street parking for the development. Tom Ludgate and Marc Geddio were present to discuss the project on behalf of the Applicant. A site meeting will be scheduled in an attempt to resolve the remaining site accessibility, parking and loading issues. These issues will need to be resolved prior to Preliminary Plan approval.
- (f) Remcon Plastics Land Development Plan: The Applicant has submitted an updated plan and a draft Municipal Improvements Agreement and a draft Stormwater Management Agreement for review and consideration. Hawk Valley Associates issued a review letter on February 18, 2022. Mark Koch was present to discuss the project on behalf of the Applicant. Commissioner Cinfici made a motion to reaffirm approval of the Final Plan subject to the Applicant resolving all issues within the review letter. Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimously approved (6-0).
- (g) Sollanlly Tinco 1527 North 5th Street: Additional information has been requested in order to consider a waiver of a Minor Land Development Plan.

(11) Announcements and Other Business

- (a) MPC Review: The Zoning Administrator shall provide an educational seminar with the Planning Commission on March 14, 2022 (3:00 pm to 5:00 pm) on the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and the City of Reading Zoning Ordinance.
- (b) Workshop Sessions: The Planning Commission shall discuss options for future workshop meetings on March 14, 2022. The location for the workshop meetings will need to be coordinated with Linda Kelleher.

(12) Approval of Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:

- (a) Meeting Minutes from PC Meeting on January 25, 2022: Commissioner Cinfici made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 25, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0). Commissioner Rye abstained from the vote since he was not a PC member at that time.
- (b) Meeting Minutes from PC Meeting on February 12, 2022: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 12, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner Cinfici. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0). Commissioner Rye abstained from the vote since he was not a PC member at that time.

(13) Future Planning Commission Meetings:

- (a) PC Meetings: The Planning Commission determined that future meetings should be a hybrid approach that provides the option for attendance in person and via a zoom or telephone link. The location of the regular meeting will be coordinated with Linda Kelleher.
- (b) Next Workshop Meeting: Monday, March 14, 2022 at 3:00 pm via hybrid.
- (c) Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 6:00 pm via zoom.

(14) Adjournment: Commissioner Conklin made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission Meeting. Commissioner Cinfici seconded the motion. The vote on the motion to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved (6-0). The Planning Commission Meeting concluded at 9:36 pm

Respectfully submitted by Jerome Skrincosky, Planning and Zoning Consultant