

Minutes
Special meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission
August 9, 2016 at 7:06 pm

Members present:

Wayne Jonas Bealer, Chairman
William F. Cinfici, Vice Chairman
Michael E. Lauter, Secretary
Ermete J. Raffaelli

Staff present:

Andrew W. Miller, Planning Office
Deborah A.S. Hoag, Department of Public Works

Others present:

Michel B. deTurck, STV Group Inc.
Dennis C. Kohl, Carpenter Technology Corporation
Valdis I. Lacis, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Bealer called the special meeting to order and asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Cinfici moved to accept the August 9th agenda, as presented. Mr. Raffaelli seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the August 9th agenda.

Subdivision and Land Development:

Building 150 Site & Building Renovation (Carpenter) – final land development plan [0:00.29]

Mr. Miller explained that the meeting was called to discuss the building additions shown on a larger plan for a 205-space parking lot, expecting the latter to be discussed at a future meeting. Mr. deTurck explained a planned renovation of their Building 150, currently lacking the required two means of egress, to include two three-story fire-rated stair towers and a new elevator in an existing shaft. He showed the first-floor plan, indicating that the new towers were the only addition to the existing footprint, at about 190 square feet each. He presented a location map showing the site in the context of Carpenter's total 'east shore' property. Noting that the building was acquired from the Dana Corporation, he understood what Carpenter had since named Buildings 150 and 151 were attached but built at different times. He indicated an area of remaining concrete foundations to be used for the off-street parking. Ms. Hoag asked about any surveys to locate the utilities under those foundations, noting sewer mains paralleling the Schuylkill River, and manholes long lost under the buildings atop them. She thought the current condition presented an opportunity to find them. Asked about the status of 'Arsenal Road', Mr. Kohl thought it a private street, a vacated part of Weiser Street. Recalling an April 21st 'OneStopShop' meeting, Mr. Miller thought there was still some doubt about the topographical extents of Weiser Street. He recalled a discussion about relocating the gate and advised that question be resolved as part of the parking review. Mr. Kohl explained that the gate would be kept open, during the day, to admit retiree visits to a human-resources office. Mr. Miller recognized the small size of the additions, preferring that they remain as shown within the larger project, for the context. He suggested that, if no additional utility connections or other typical land development considerations were at issue, the Planning Commission consider allowing that part to proceed. Mr. deTurck added that they'd match the brick pattern of the existing building façade. Mr. Kohl confirmed that all the necessary utilities were connected. Mr. Miller expected the extensions to the additions might be limited to electric and fire-protection measures. Asked about sewage planning, Mr. Miller thought they should document the increase in occupancy vis-à-vis any prior allocation known. Mr. Kohl estimated 40 new employees. Mr. deTurck said they weren't changing the use or increasing the fixture counts. Mr. Miller noted that the building hadn't generated that flow in years. Ms. Hoag explained the sewage planning basis of a five-year average for a baseline volume. Mr. deTurck noted that the building was partially occupied until a few months earlier. Ms. Hoag requested the background information for further consideration. Mr. Cinfici wondered why the review couldn't wait for a regular meeting. Mr. Kohl described the predicament of a lease expiring at an office space in Wyomissing and, referring to media reports in February, half of its occupants relocating to Philadelphia and the other half to the Reading plant. Mr. Cinfici said he just wanted the explanation for the record, noting the burden on the City in arranging such meetings, while appreciating the 40 additional City-based employees. Mr. Kohl said they needed to finish by the end of October. Referring to the parking portion of the design, Mr. Miller reported receiving the formal application, qualifying it for review at the August 23rd meeting, and asked that the supplemental information concerning the building additions be added to it. Mr. Lacis asked the approximate cost of the project. Mr. Kohl estimated 'over \$2 million'. Mr. Raffaelli thought the move to Philadelphia an ill-advised and inefficient arrangement for the company. Mr. deTurck

mentioned that Building 150 would include some legal and financial staff in addition to the human-resources office. Mr. Miller thanked the members for attending, for what he conceded to be a minor expansion, and regretting the lack of an alternative to the additional meeting. He recommended they waive the full land development procedure for the building additions, upon the applicant's agreement to provide some of those details with the overall plan for the parking lot, and authorize the construction of those additions in the meantime.

Mr. Raffaelli moved to grant the partial waiver, and allow construction on the stair-tower additions to proceed ahead of the forthcoming consideration of the 205-space parking lot design. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to grant the partial waiver.

Resolution #33-2016

Mr. Lauter moved to adjourn the special meeting. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission adjourned the August 9th meeting. – 7:31p