

Minutes
Regular meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission
March 26, 2013 at 7:00 pm

Members present:

Ermete J. Raffaelli, Chairman
Brian J. Burket, Vice Chairman
Wayne Jonas Bealer, Assistant Secretary

Staff present:

Andrew W. Miller, Planning Office
Charles M. Jones, Department of Public Works

Others present:

Elizabeth Zimmerman, American Gold Star Mothers Inc.
Nina Owens, American Gold Star Mothers Inc.
Thomas B. Ludgate, Ludgate Engineering Corporation
Alan W. Shuman, Shuman Development Group Inc. (Kutzfactory LP)
Daniel H. Laudenslayer, Tarson LLC
Miguel A. Herrera, Milan Consulting Group
Jose Montalvo, Iglesia Cristiana el Poder de la Palabra de Dios Inc.
Gregg A. Bogia, Bogia Engineering Inc.
Michael D. Hartman, dH Enterprises Inc.
Chris Reber, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Raffaelli called the March meeting to order, reminded presenters to sign the attendance sheet, and asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Bealer moved to accept the March 26th agenda. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the March agenda.

consideration of two proposed memorial benches in City Park – §303.a.2 review [0:01.01]

Ms. Zimmerman referred to an earlier presentation made to the Historical Architectural Review Board, and their agreement to locations away from the walking path. The Commission members took some time to review her photographs. She said she hoped to have two benches placed in the Park: one for Berks County's casualties in the Global War on Terror, and another for all veterans "past and present", granite benches engraved. Mr. Raffaelli noted that the pattern of park benches is metal, and believed the theme to already be covered by existing memorials. He questioned the history and basis of the Review Board's involvement.

Mr. Bealer moved to recommend City Council's approval, as detailed by the Historical Architectural Review Board and its executive committee, contingent on the City's removal of two broken benches. Mr. Jones added that the new Operations Manager hopes to repair the broken benches. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted 2 to 1 in deference to the Review Board's opinion, Mr. Raffaelli casting the dissent.

Resolution #5-2013

Kutztown Road Retail – preliminary subdivision and land development plan [0:18.04]

Mr. Ludgate described the site – formerly home to the Burlington Coat Factory – its existing building, and some landscaping islands added with other improvements made about three years earlier. He said the addition measures about 8800 square feet, on an area currently paved, and will be separated from the existing building by about four feet. That width will be blocked from passage by some kind of architectural detail. Mr. Miller suggested the benefits of joining the buildings. Mr. Shuman said he'd prefer that, but noted structural and foundation issues in joining two pre-engineered buildings. Mr. Ludgate said it will appear as a single building. He said the rear parking is intended for employees, as there are no storefronts planned for that façade. He noted a slight decrease in the total impervious cover, and additional stormwater management. He said the new building will have its own sanitary lateral, and maybe a separate gas line, while all other utilities, including the fire-suppression water would be fed from within the existing building. Mr. Miller reminded that utility trenching toward mains in the public right-of-way will require highway-occupancy permits and a municipal-improvements agreement. Mr. Ludgate said he had no issues with the March 19th Planning Office review. He said no additional site lighting was proposed. A few trees would be removed, and a few more added. He said he was waiting on the County Planning Commission and Conservation District reviews. Asked for architectural elevations, Mr. Shuman said the addition will be in line with the existing building, and "a mirror image". Mr. Raffaelli insisted that elevations be provided. Mr. Jones said he hadn't yet completed his review, but saw no major obstacles in his 'first look'. Mr. Ludgate affirmed that no changes were planned for the existing driveways. Mr. Miller said they couldn't do anything without the County

Planning review, noting that the plan was submitted well ahead of the deadline. He thought it worthy of a final plan consideration at a following meeting, adding that a zoning permit was already issued. Asked about the 2009 plan date, Mr. Ludgate explained that it originated with those earlier improvements, which included changes to the parking layout.

Mr. Bealer moved to table the preliminary plan and, with the inclusion of architectural elevations, consider the revised submission for review as a final plan. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to table the Kutztown Road Retail preliminary plan.

Iglesia Cristiana – final land development plan [0:30.20]

Mr. Laudenslayer recognized that they hadn't yet received a County Planning Commission review but, at under an acre of disturbance, would not require an NPDES permit. He said the property corners will be marked, and noted plan revisions made in response to the Planning Office review, including a revised location map and a rearrangement of the sheet order. He said an additional water lateral will be shown for the planned fire-suppression system. Mr. Jones said he was still working on the stormwater planning review. Mr. Laudenslayer described some infiltration, though avoiding any along the East Laurel Street retaining wall, and piping the rest toward a 2- by 6-foot catch basin at the South 9th and South Streets intersection. Overall, he calculated a reduced stormwater discharge. He said the Zoning Hearing Board relieved some of the off-street parking requirement in exchange for driveway modifications and in recognition of the on-street availability. Questioned on the solid-waste-planning requirements, Mr. Miller clarified that a note explaining their arrangements would be sufficient. Mr. Laudenslayer wondered if a sewage-planning module would be necessary for the addition. Advised to contact the Utilities Division Manager, he said he'd already left a message. The scope of a municipal improvements agreement was briefly discussed. Mr. Miller sought clarification of the landscaping plan. Mr. Laudenslayer indicated a few new trees, rain gardens in the parking islands, and new site lighting with screening. Mr. Miller advised that they consider the vertical separation from the neighboring residences across East Laurel Street, and the effect of even compliant lighting. Mr. Montalvo noted an existing light, at a 30-foot mount height, in comparison to those proposed at 18 feet. Mr. Miller compared the landscaping shown on the civil plan with the much-more ambitious planting suggested by the architect's renderings. Asked about the 'underground parking' labeled, Mr. Herrera said they intended it for lawnmowers and other maintenance equipment. Mr. Montalvo added that they have a truck with a snow plow. Mr. Miller advised a discussion with the Fire Marshal's Office, in order to preempt potential building-code complications. Mr. Raffaelli recommended that they consider their proximity to the Neversink Mountain environment, and plan their site compatibly.

Mr. Bealer moved to table the final plan, pending receipt of other requisite reviews and approvals. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to table the final plan for Iglesia Cristiana el Poder de la Palabra de Dios.

219 Buttonwood Land Development (Dollar General) – final land development plan [0:52.33]

Mr. Bogia reported that, since the February presentation, he'd met with the 'OneStopShop' group, and understood that the Fire Marshal preferred a gate from Beech Street. Mr. Miller recognizing that one already existed across the former street, clarified that an additional 'man gate' was requested on the southern street/northern fence line. Mr. Bogia agreed. He mentioned receipt of the County Planning Commission comments, and reported that the Department of Environmental Protection will not require a sewage module based on the prior occupancy. Addressing a request to enhance the western façade, he said Dollar General prefers to maintain their prototype look. He offered to include a bike rack and a more-ornamental fence style. He felt the stormwater waiver requests had been resolved by the Public Works review letter. Mr. Jones explained that the reduced impervious cover and collection plan justifies granting the three waivers. Mr. Raffaelli repeated his recommendation to include architectural enhancements, feeling it contributes to a more-successful business. The members generally supported the efforts at aesthetic improvement. Asked about the zoning status, Mr. Bogia said he made the changes sought by the Zoning Administrator, though no permit had been issued. Recognizing that would bar an approval, Mr. Bealer suggested they work toward preparing signed, record plans for the April meeting. Mr. Miller offered to follow up with the Zoning Office.

Mr. Bealer moved to table the now-final plan for the 219 Buttonwood Land Development, pending receipt of zoning and erosion-control permits, granting the requested stormwater-planning waivers in the meantime. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to grant the waivers and table the Dollar General preliminary plan.

Resolution #6-2013

Humane Society Building Addition – final land development plan [1:13.57]

Mr. Hartman reported that he had met with the Conservation District that morning, and would meet with

the Zoning Administrator that coming Friday. He noted that sidewalk along Bern Street was added to the plan, and porous paving will be used in the parking areas of the new paving. An obsolete driveway entrance on Bern Street will be closed and replaced with curbing. Handicapped ramps will be installed as required. Asked about the width of the green strip on the eastern boundary, Mr. Hartman estimated between four and six feet. Mr. Bealer noted a potential setback issue. Asked about the trees, existing and proposed, Mr. Hartman said they'd try to keep those along the Bern Street frontage, though one may be removed due to damage or disease. Mr. Miller asked about a trench drain shown along the northern building line. Mr. Hartman wasn't sure of its use, but observed some piping to the curb. He thought it may be removed with the new construction. Asked about outdoor and open areas accessible by the animals, Mr. Hartman thought the architect should answer. He believed that areas currently exposed would be enclosed by the addition. The whole building will be redone in a matching façade. The storage and disposal of animal waste, including medical waste and deceased animals, was discussed. Mr. Miller requested additional plan notes to explain.

Mr. Burket moved to table the plan, pending zoning and erosion control permits. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to table the Humane Society's final plan.

[review the draft February 26, 2013 meeting minutes \[1:29.30\]](#)

Mr. Bealer referred to an email detailing his requested grammatical corrections. Mr. Burket moved to accept the February meeting minutes, with the requested edits. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the corrected February 26th meeting minutes.

Resolution #7-2013

The members discussed business anticipated for the April meeting and recent activity by the Blighted Property Review Committee.

On Mr. Burket's motion, and Mr. Bealer's second, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the March 26th meeting. – 8:42p