

Minutes
Regular meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission
April 14, 2009 at 7:00 pm

Members present:

Ermete J. Raffaelli, Chairman
Michael E. Lauter, Secretary
Wayne Jonas Bealer, Assistant Secretary
Frederic dep Rothermel, Jr.
Brian Bingaman

Staff present:

Andrew W. Miller, Planning Office
Michelle R. Mayfield, Department of Law

Others present:

John W. Hoffert, John W. Hoffert, PLS, Ltd.
Timothy J. Krall, Spotts Stevens & McCoy, Inc.
Robert P. Stackhouse, Stackhouse Bensinger Inc.
Kevin M. Gaffney, Albright College
Edward R. Kappenstein, Albright College
Scott T. Miller, Stackhouse Bensinger Inc.
David A. Kostival, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Raffaelli called the April 14th meeting to order, and asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Miller said he wasn't expecting the Brentwood Industries parking plan to be presented. Mr. Lauter moved to accept the April agenda. Mr. Bingaman seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the April 14th agenda.

Subdivision and Land Development:

Review the **final** subdivision plan for the **Bean Annexation Subdivision**, a subdivision from that parcel known as 1535 Rockland Street for annexation to that known as 1605 Rockland Street [0:00.50]

Mr. Hoffert explained that the 2000 block of North 16th Street was vacated in 2003, its centerline becoming a common property line. He said it had no value to the residence (1535 Rockland), and proposed annexing it to the funeral home (1605 Rockland), for its exclusive use. He said he was willing to comply with all of the Planning Office's review comments, and confirmed the subdivision met all the dimensional requirements of the R1 zoning district

Mr. Rothermel moved to approve the final subdivision plan. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to approve the final Bean Annexation Subdivision plan.

Resolution #16-2009

Review the **final** land development plan for the **Play Lot at Grace and Pansy Streets**, a new playground and parking lot proposed on that parcel known as 412 Pansy Street [0:04.43]

Mr. Krall acknowledged the still outstanding Conservation District approval and, likewise, a municipal improvements agreement. Mr. Miller recommended the Commission agree to the 60-day extension offered by the applicant, expecting those two issues to be resolved by May meeting.

Mr. Bealer moved to grant the 60-day extension of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code-imposed deadline (its §508) for action. Mr. Bingaman seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously in agreement to a 60-day extension for the "Play Lot at Grace and Pansy Streets" plan.

Resolution #17-2009

Other business:

§513.a approval reaffirmation-Goggleworks Apartments [0:07.48]

Mr. Miller suggested the Commission to wait until the applicant provides the required municipal improvements agreement. He said the Commission could re-approve the plan, but would continue to 'go through

those motions' until the applicant settles the matter with City Council.

§513.a approval reaffirmation-CedarPak #4 Paper Mill [0:08.44]

Mr. Miller explained that when the applicant sought to record the annexation portion of the land development plan recorded, he was turned away, having exceeded the allowed time between plan approval and recording.

Mr. Lauter moved to reaffirm the final plan approval of the "CedarPak #4 Paper Mill". Mr. Rothermel seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to reaffirm it November 13th approval of the CedarPak plan.

Resolution #18-2009

§508.3 agreement to extension-DoubleTree Hotel & Garage Project [0:09.53]

Mr. Miller referred to a written request for extension to the June 12th meeting. He hoped the project would resurface for the May meeting, but wasn't sure it would. He noted the recent newspaper reports of an expanded Garage portion, which may trigger a zoning issue. Asked if the Hotel and Garage buildings were still being treated as one project, Mr. Miller said that was how the plans were officially submitted.

Mr. Bingaman moved to extend the Planning Code's deadline to June 12th, as requested by the applicant. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to extend the review period for the "DoubleTree Hotel & Garage Project" plan.

Resolution #19-2009

§508.3 agreement to extension-King Taco Land Development [0:13.01]

Mr. Miller reported the written request from the project architect, on behalf of the applicant, to extend the plan review to the May meeting. He confirmed that the proposal had finally satisfied the zoning procedures.

Mr. Lauter moved to extend the Planning Code's deadline to the May meeting, per the applicant's request. Mr. Rothermel seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to extend the review period for the "King Taco Land Development" plan.

Resolution #20-2009

§603.c.2 conditional use review-1259 North 10th Street (conversion) [0:14.42]

Mr. Bealer thought the ten units sought to be excessive, based on his exterior survey of the building. He suspected the parking needs of the Magisterial District Court (Thomas H. Xavios) on its first floor pressures the already scarce parking in the neighborhood, and suggested six apartment units as a more reasonable number. Mr. Miller thought the off-street parking a variance issue for the Zoning Hearing Board's consideration, while the decision before City Council is on the use itself. He wasn't personally familiar with the property, but was told that it was kept in good repair. He believed Council was looking favorably on the application, and might be viewing the off-street parking issue as an existing non-conformance. Ms. Mayfield suggested it was a disparity in the record keeping, most likely identified through the new housing-permitting process.

Mr. Bealer moved to recommend that City Council consider the availability of neighborhood parking and have the appropriate code officials certify the fire safety compliance of the building. Mr. Rothermel seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to communicate the recommendation concerning 1259 North 10th Street.

Resolution #21-2009

Subdivision and Land Development: (continued)

Review the **preliminary** land development plan for the **Albright College Outdoor Athletic Courts**, six basketball courts over 103 off-street parking spaces proposed for that 1.7-acre parcel known as 1716 North 12th Street [0:21.49]

Mr. Stackhouse recalled some of the former occupants of the site: a U. S. Army Reserve Center from 1951 to 1987 and, originally, the Noe-Equal Hosiery Company from 1923 to 1928. He explained the parcel's location relative to the College's main campus. He said the building demolition was complete, but that associated environmental issues prompted a recommendation to "cap" the site, a parking lot being the most expedient method. He said it would serve as overflow capacity for events at the Shirk Stadium, with an alternate recreation use in the basketball courts. He said the property would be landscaped and fenced (black vinyl chain-linked, 8-feet high), with two driveway entrances, and new curb and sidewalk along its frontage. He said the basketball hoops and mounts are portable. He proposed a partial striping of the parking stalls, enough to identify the spaces without confusing the use

of the courts. He summarized the landscaping schedule; hornbeams, zelkovas, vibernums, yews, and all between the fence and sidewalk. Asked about the interior shade trees required by the Zoning Ordinance, Mr. Stackhouse said it wasn't possible with the shared use and opted for extra plantings along the perimeter. He said the basketball courts were for the College's use and certain organized leagues. He expected the Zoning Administrator's review the following day. He said the stormwater management system had already been changed per the City Engineer's direction.

Mr. Miller said most of the Land Development Ordinance issues had been addressed, the County Planning Commission and Conservation District input received, but still needed the Zoning Administrator's review of the use and layout. Mr. Rothermel recommended the landscaping selected be arranged more randomly. Answering questions about the lighting, Mr. Stackhouse said the fixtures were chosen for both illumination and security, and could be dimmed as necessary.

Mr. Gaffney cited numerous complaints from the neighborhood about the lack of on-street parking as motivation for the design. He said, for about nine months of the year, the lot would accommodate the College's faculty and staff and, during the summer, leagues like The Hoop Group.

Mr. Bealer moved to table the parking lot plan, pending the Zoning Administrator's review. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to table the "Albright College Outdoor Athletic Courts" plan.

Other business: (continued)

§513.a approval reaffirmation-Goggleworks Apartments [0:46.16]

Scott Miller, attending to represent the Goggleworks Apartments plan, explained that delays related to the Department of Housing and Urban Development funding were nearly resolved, and anticipated a start of construction within 60 days. Andrew Miller, over his earlier objections on the improvements agreement issue, confirmed that the project was approved, and had been since September 2006. He asked that the condition of satisfying the latest Planning Office review be added to any renewing vote. Asked about the status with the Conservation District permit, Scott Miller said they view it as an active site, because of the demolition activities.

Mr. Bealer moved to reaffirm the September 2006 approval of the final land development plan, provided the plan meets the ordinance requirements as communicated by the Planning Office. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to reaffirm its approval of the "Goggleworks Apartments" final land development plan.

Resolution #22-2009

§207 nominations-2009 Planning Commission office holders [0:53.44]

It was agreed that Mssrs. Lauter and Bingaman would recommend a slate of candidates for the offices, and present it for consideration at the May meeting.

§207 appointment-Blighted Property Review Committee [0:55.02]

Mr. Bealer agreed to continue in his capacity as the Commission's representative on the Review Committee. He said a lot of work remains, and praised the efforts and attendance of his colleagues, and the cooperation of the Community Development Director, Marty Mayes.

Mr. Rothermel moved to reappoint Mr. Bealer to a second term. Mr. Bingaman seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to reappoint Wayne Bealer for a second term representing the Planning Commission on the Blighted Property Review Committee.

Resolution #23-2009

§207 appointment-Vending License Board [0:58.58]

Following a discussion about the intended function of the License Board, the different types of portable vending and its local history, Mr. Bealer indicated his willingness to serve as the Commission's representative.

Mr. Lauter moved to appoint Mr. Bealer to the License Board. Mr. Bingaman seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Wayne Bealer as its representative on the Vending License Board.

Resolution #24-2009

review the draft March 10, 2009 meeting minutes [1:07.22]

Mr. Miller noted Mr. Bealer's suggested corrections, submitted by email. Mr. Lauter moved to approve the March meeting minutes. Mr. Rothermel seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the March

10th meeting minutes.

Resolution #25-2009

The discussion turned toward other lingering business, such as: traffic-impact fees, the status of the Berkshire Bottling Works project (1 Berkshire Place), the demolition of the ICI/Glidden Paints property (1853 North 3rd Street), the barbed-wire construction fence surrounding Hershey's Reading Plant (200 North 8th Street), and the demolition debris left at the Buttonwood Gateway industrial park (490 Tulpehocken Street).

Mr. Bingaman moved to adjourn the April meeting. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the April 14th meeting. – 8:28 pm.