

Minutes
Regular meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission
June 28, 2011 at 7:00 pm

Members present:

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

Staff present:

Andrew W. Miller, Planning Office
Charles M. Jones, Department of Public Works
Frederick T. Lachat III, Department of Law

Others present:

August J. Antol, Liberty Engineering Inc.
Kent D. Morey, SSM Group Inc.
David A. Wolf, Carpenter Technology Corporation
Carole Duran, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Raffaelli called the June meeting to order, and asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Miller welcomed Mr. Lachat, the new legal advisor assigned to the Commission. Mr. Lauter moved to accept the June 28th agenda, as presented. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the June agenda.

Subdivision and Land Development:

Sylvania Homes II – Accessible Housing (Reading Housing Authority) – final subdivision and land development plan [0:00.55]

As Mr. Antol began to address the Planning Office review, point-by-point, Mr. Miller interjected that the Commission members have only a summary. Mr. Antol asked for conditional approval, though the Planning Office has yet to review the most-recent revisions. He summarized those corrections, intending to comply with each item. Mr. Miller recommended approval on that condition. Asked about a Public Works review, he said he wasn't necessarily expecting one, thinking the City Engineer's concerns had been addressed in the preliminary phase. He added that the improvements agreement estimate was under review. Regarding the off-street parking arrangement, Mr. Miller said there were no changes. Referring to a County Planning recommendation on the matter, he indicated that the Housing Authority had previously explained that they anticipate enough handicapped demand as to make any other occupancy unlikely. He said he was still waiting on revised legal descriptions. Mr. Antol intended to submit the latest revisions for a Planning Office review. Mr. Lauter clarified that they are considering a final plan, though the commentary labeled it 'preliminary'.

Mr. Bealer moved to approve the Sylvania Homes II – Accessible Housing final plan, conditioned on a municipal improvements agreement and a satisfactory review of the latest revisions by the Planning Office. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to grant final plan approval to the Sylvania Homes II plan.

Resolution #58-2011

Mr. Jones later (following the "Family Wash Day Laundromat" vote) confirmed that his review comments had been satisfied, save the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) approval of the sewage facilities planning module. He said a new packet (replacing one that was lost) was received late the day before. And while PADEP's approval is required prior to the issuance of building permits, the Planning Commission was okay to proceed.

Building 84 ESR North Addition (Carpenter Technology Corporation) – final land development plan [0:08.02]

Mr. Wolf, awaiting Mr. Morey's arrival, said he wasn't prepared to present anything more than he had in May. Mr. Jones, having just arrived, questioned changes to the sanitary sewer layout mentioned to the Utilities Division Manager. Mr. Wolf explained that the line will be exposed during construction, in order to verify its depth, and adjust the foundation design to it, before covering it again. Mr. Miller reminded that an improvements agreement was unnecessary, and that the requested waivers were addressed at the May meeting.

Mr. Lauter moved to approve the Building 84 ESR North Addition final plan. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to approve Carpenter's Building 84 ESR North Addition plan.

Resolution #59-2011

Mr. Wolf, in reply to a question about a re-zoning proposed to facilitate a Building 118 expansion, expected the formal petition to be submitted to City Council in the next few days. He said the adjacent land owners have been identified, and that they've been communicating with Muhlenberg Township. Mr. Morey, having arrived just after the vote, mentioned discussing the process with the City's Zoning Administrator, and that the petition would be made shortly.

Family Wash Day Laundromat – final land development plan [0:14.41]

Mr. Miller said he and the project architect agreed that another presentation was unnecessary and, barring any additional Public Works issues, needed only an improvements agreement.

Mr. Bealer moved to approve the Family Wash Day final land development plan, conditioned on receipt of a municipal improvements agreement. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to approve the "Family Wash Day Laundromat" final plan.

Resolution #60-2011

Other business:

§603.c.2 conditional use review-1457 North 9th Street (conversion) [0:18.22]

Having just received their meeting materials, the members took sometime to review the written comments. Mr. Miller summarized his findings, per the applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance. He said he had not reviewed the history of code and property maintenance issues, as he prefers to for such applications. He said, based on the measurements and information provided by the applicant, the proposed apartments appear to meet the minimum floor-area standards, and enough off-street parking is available for two of the three units requested. He said no off-street parking is reserved to the existing commercial use (Zapata Mexican Deli), on the first floor. Members recalled two previous businesses: Keystone Antiques and, before that, Bea's Luncheonette. Mr. Lauter, comparing the specific situation to other applications, felt that, between the off-street parking in the garage and the property's frontage on Amity Street, the project could be approved without an adverse impact on the neighborhood.

Mr. Lauter moved to recommend City Council's approval for the conversion of 1457 North 9th Street, based on the off-street parking provided for two units, and availability on-street sufficient to cover the third. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to forward that recommendation to City Council.

Resolution #61-2011

review the draft May 24, 2011 meeting minutes [0:33.33]

Mr. Bealer, having picked-up his copy earlier in the day, said he read the minutes and was satisfied. Since the other members had only received the draft minutes just before the meeting, Mr. Miller suggested postponing action until the July meeting.

Mr. Lauter moved to adjourn. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the June 28th meeting. – 7:42p