

The regular meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 pm on the above date by Chairman Edward Huber. Other Commission members present included Jeffrey Gross, Andrew Schlosser, Laurie Reynolds and Thomas Rosenberger. The meeting was attended by Borough Manager P. Michael Coll and Chloe Mohr, Community Planner of the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Also in attendance from Souderton Borough Council were Mayor John Reynolds and Police Chief James P. Leary.

Chairman Huber asked for consideration of the minutes from the February 7, 2018 Planning Commission meeting. A motion was made by Andrew Schlosser and seconded by Laurie Reynolds, to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2018 meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission as presented. The motion was approved.

Chairman Huber moved to the business portion of the agenda with further review and discussion on the conceptual development plan for the former high school site. The latest draft of the concept plan is dated February 16, 2018. Chloe Mohr presented two sketch plans developed by staff of the Montgomery County Planning Commission. The sketch plans are intended to blend comments from the Borough and the developer. The County scenarios present 122 residential units and 96,171 sf of commercial space. The ratio is roughly 66% residential and 34% commercial.

Planning Commission members discussed the size of the open space within the town center, suggesting a narrower central green area. Planning Commission members raised concern with locating parking spaces too close to intersections with County Line Road and with East Broad Street. PennDOT usually restricts parking within 150 feet of an intersection. The entrance from Broad Street shown on the developer's concept plan could be straighter. Perhaps the commercial buildings labeled "C" and "D" could be combined in some fashion to provide for a straighter entrance drive from east Broad Street. Concern was expressed over the competition for parking to support these two commercial buildings along with the neighboring Lipkin building.

Planning Commission members discussed the overall density of the site. The floor area ratio provisions should be reconsidered. Possible density can be controlled through a mix of dwelling units per acre with some percentage for commercial uses. Chloe Mohr reviewed a memo dated April 4 with notes from Planner Bob Gibbs who made a presentation on urban retail best practices. Some of his comments might be considered when reviewing the Souderton site. The Montgomery County Planning Commission will prepare another sketch plan of the site based on the latest comments from the Planning Commission members.

Chairman Huber discussed the Borough's parking requirements and improved policies on providing waivers from parking requirements. Chloe Mohr and the Planning Commission members reviewed a past parking inventory study. Chloe Mohr noted that Lansdale Borough has an ordinance, but few other municipalities have considered a fee in lieu of parking. Such a fee must be maintained in a separate fund and there is uncertainty whether the funds can be used to maintain existing lots or only

for the construction of new parking spaces. The matter should be reviewed by the Borough Solicitor. There are potential County grants that can be used to restore and rehabilitate existing parking lots, focusing on certain green technologies. Another potential avenue is to strengthen language to require shared parking, however, the noted difficulty is to compel an existing property owner to work with a new developer. Parking is necessary but not necessarily the best use of available property.

The Borough Manager reported on an application from Wawa to replace an existing free standing sign at the corner of Main Street and West Summit Street. The existing and proposed freestanding sign exceeds the height limitation in the C-2 limited commercial/residential district. The applicants note that a freestanding sign with a maximum height of six feet may pose visibility concerns at this rather busy intersection. As a side note, Chloe Mohr noted that the Borough Sign ordinance references a "sign review committee" that has not been formally created by the Borough. She suggested that language should be considered to use the Planning Commission as the default committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Recording Secretary