

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 and Thomas Rosenberger. The meeting was attended by Borough Manager P. Michael Coll and Chloe Mohr, Community Planner, Montgomery County Planning Commission. The meeting was also attended by Mayor John Reynolds and Borough Councillor Julie Munden.

Chairman Huber asked for consideration of the minutes from the November 6, 2019 Planning Commission meeting. A motion was made by Jeffrey Gross and seconded by Thomas Rosenberger, to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2019 meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission as presented. The motion was approved.

Borough Manager Michael Coll reviewed a Zoning Hearing Board application scheduled for consideration on December 12, 2019. The application concerns property at 521 Harleysville Pike, consisting of a single family detached dwelling that is situated to the rear of the lot with a lawfully conforming rear yard and a lawfully non-conforming side yard. The applicant is proposing to construct an attached two car garage to the existing dwelling following the established non-conforming rear yard setback. The garage will be in compliance with the minimum side yard setback but the applicant cannot achieve the minimum aggregate side yard of 20 feet given the existing setback of only 2.5 feet. The Planning Commission expressed no opposition to the application.

Brian Grant of School Lane Development and Engineer Susan Rice of STA Engineering, Inc. presented the Planning Commission with a revised concept plan based on discussions and comments from the prior plan review. Engineer Susan Rice noted that the plan was revised to reconfigure the proposed Walden Units along Road G. The prior connection with the adjoining property was removed and Road G was redesigned to loop around an interior area of parking. The plan provides a better traffic flow and provides additional parking. Parking calculations were reviewed and a separate plan showing parking calculations will be prepared.

Chloe Mohr and members of the Montgomery County Planning Commission met with Clay Heckler and his staff to discuss planning for the public plaza. Chloe Mohr presented a series of concept plans developed by the Montgomery County Planning Commission for the public plaza. The concept plan proposes a terraced grade change, ADA accessibility and a number of required plaza features. The developer appreciated the assistance and they will consider the suggestions.

Engineer Susan Rice discussed street tree requirements, the Borough expressed preference towards the use of root zones and pavers over a traditional tree well. The Planning Commission suggested a walkway between Building B & C. The Planning Commission expressed concern over the marketability of the Walden Units along Road G, which are now somewhat remote of the town center. The developer pointed out that the grade of the site forced the relocation of the units, but the plan does maintain a “community” of the Walden units.

The Planning Commission reviewed the site plan developed for the proposed Taco Shop at 20 Central Avenue. The Commission reviewed the parking calculations for the proposed use with respect to the current Zoning Ordinance requirements and the prior lawful non-conforming uses. Employees should be directed to park on the owner's Main Street parking lot. The Planning Commission was in general agreement with the parking calculations and the applicant will be asked to revise the parking table accordingly.

Borough Manager Michael Coll distributed a concept plan showing a proposed canopy and marquee along the Broad Street Pizzeria at 30 W. Broad Street. The plan also proposes a fairly large marquee sign above the entrance to the restaurant, similar to the recently approved marquee sign for the neighboring Broad Theater. The marquee sign will not conform to current Zoning Ordinance regulations. The Zoning Ordinance requires frontage of 100 feet for a marquee sign, the property is only 50 feet wide. The proposed marquee sign is a box sign which is also prohibited within the district. The Planning Commission liked the proposed canopy or awning across the building and felt that the marquee roof over the entrance was acceptable. The scale of the proposed marquee sign is excessive and has no historical significance, unlike the Broad Theater. A projecting sign in conformity with the Zoning regulations in conjunction with the canopy and marquee roof will provide an appealing building façade.

Planning Commission members discussed developing a template for a shared parking agreement and ways to advocate sound shared parking. There was a parking study completed for the Borough several years ago, suggesting that there is sufficient parking potential within the Borough but management of the parking potential will be key for success. The Borough created a Souderton Borough Parking Authority to purchase and construct some of the municipal lots with discussion whether an Authority could be beneficial to foster shared parking. Further thought and discussion will be given to this matter.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Recording Secretary