

The regular meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 pm on the above date by Chairman William Maxwell. Other Commission members present included Thomas Rosenberger, Andrew Schlosser, Barry Stoltzfus and Roy Zeiher. The meeting was also attended by Borough Manager P. Michael Coll, Hannah Mazzaccaro of the Montgomery County Planning Commission and Borough Engineer Mark Eisold.

Commission members reviewed the minutes of the last Planning Commission meeting held on Wednesday, January 20, 2010. A motion was made by Roy Zeiher and seconded by Andrew Schlosser, to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2010 meetings as prepared. The motion was approved.

Chairman Maxwell noted that there is no old business for consideration. Chairman Maxwell next recognized Attorney Michael Kracht who serves as moderator of Church Council for Zwingli United Church of Christ. Michael Kracht addressed Planning Commission members on the history and current status of plans to redevelop and reconstruct Zwingli Church, located at 350 Wile Avenue that was destroyed by fire in June, 2008. Zwingli United Church of Christ has filed an application before the Souderton Zoning Hearing Board for dimensional variances concerning front yard setback, side yard setback and the setback between paved parking surface and the building. The purpose of tonight's visit is to ask the Planning Commission for a cursory review of the proposed plan and hopefully support for the project. Upon approval of the variance requests, Zwingli will appear before the Planning Commission for preliminary/final approval of the land development application to reconstruct the church.

Architect Jack Althouse of Althouse, Jaffe and Associates presented the proposed building plans. The project reorients the main sanctuary to face Wile Avenue and features a new bell tower to vastly improve the appearance from the street and it also serves to add in natural cooling of the building. The plans require that the front façade be bumped towards the street with a setback of approximately 75 feet. The Zoning Ordinance requires a front yard setback of 100 feet. New offices will be added to the northern side of the building that will encroach into the required 50 feet side yard setback. A new fellowship hall is planned for the rear of the building. The educational wing will be reconstructed generally within the same footprint. The architect described that the plans are intended to renovate the church with competing amenities to other more modern churches.

Mark Hintenlang, P. E. discussed the improvements to the site. The upper driveway is proposed to be eliminated to provide more opportunity for a landscaped buffer between the church and the adjoining residential properties. The lower drive has been relocated and widened for two way traffic and improved access for emergency vehicles. The driveway has been relocated to align with the intersection of W. Walnut Street. Storm water retention is now being added to the site. The basin will continue to discharge into the adjoining park at a much slower rate. Spreading features will be added to the plan. At the request of the Borough an evaluation was made to consider connecting the basin to an existing inlet on Wile Avenue. This connection will require a grade variance of nearly seven feet to accomplish which simply does not exist on the site. Pipe size and downstream capacity will also be of a concern. The basin with the

modification to add spreading features appears to be the best alternative. Impervious surface will be slightly reduced through the elimination of the upper drive. The number of off street parking spaces has been reduced but still within the Zoning Ordinance requirement of 1 space for every five seats. The site has sufficient room to consider adding additional parking if growth dictates. There was some discussion on adding an emergency access drive if the need was determined by the Fire Marshall or Code Enforcement Officer.

Michael Kracht summarized that a general contractor has been retained for the project. Depending on the required approvals, the Church would like to begin construction by the end of May with an optimistic completion date in seven months.

Borough Engineer Mark Eisold noted that the applicant should spread the discharge from the basin. While the discharge will be reduced it should still follow the current sheet flow condition. Mark Eisold discussed their final review letter of March 15, 2010, noting that the applicant is requesting a number of waivers from the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance reflecting existing conditions. The waiver requests do not appear unreasonable.

Andrew Schlosser commented that the parking requirement of 1 space for every 5 seats is an outdated standard. Some studies suggest that 1.75 people travel per car. Future regulation changes may require more parking for church facilities.

Planning Commission members expressed favorable comments towards the proposed plans but declined to consider any formal motion at this time.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Recording Secretary