

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, Thomas Rosenberger and Andrew Schlosser. The meeting was attended virtually through Zoom by Commission Member Laurie Reynolds, Borough Engineer Melissa Prugar and Chloe Mohr, Community Planner, Montgomery County Planning Commission. The meeting was also attended by Borough Manager P. Michael Coll, and Borough Councillors Julie Munden, Daryl Littlefield, via Zoom, and Donna Rogers.

Chairman Huber asked for consideration of the minutes from the January 8, 2020 Planning Commission meeting. A motion was made by Andrew Schlosser and seconded by Thomas Rosenberger, to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2020 meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission as presented. The motion was approved.

Chairman Edward Huber first recognized representatives from Sowhangar Investments, LLC to discuss their request for a variance to permit the installation of a marquee style sign for their new restaurant at 30 W. Broad Street. Their application is scheduled to appear before the Souderton Zoning Hearing Board on August 11, 2020. Ed Reed of the Reed Sign Company presented several renderings of the proposed sign in relation to the neighboring businesses and the size and mass of the building. The adjacent Broad Theater will have a large marquee sign, that was previously approved by variance, to replicate the historic sign that was originally displayed. The design of the proposed sign for the restaurant will be smaller in scale and will complement the theater sign and the existing signs for the other adjoining commercial properties. A sign in conformity to the Zoning Ordinance will be too small in scale and will not be appealing to the other adjoining commercial units. The overall goal is to design signage that will make the entire building stand out in the downtown streetscape. Marquee signs are permitted in this Zoning District, but they do not have the required building frontage. County Planner Chloe Mohr commented that she researched the history of the Borough's sign regulations. She noted that municipalities have deleted specific sign types restrictions with an approach to set a maximum signage limitation based on the amount of building frontage. This approach will provide commercial properties with more flexibility to design signage that best meets their specific business requirements. The proposal of Sowhangar Investments appears reasonable. Planning Commission members generally agreed with the signage proposal as requested by Sowhangar Investments, LLC.

Chairman Edward Huber next recognized representatives from School Lane Development, LLC to review the Berkeley Court Phase 2 land development. School Lane Development was represented by Brian Grant and engineer Susan Rice of STA Engineering, Inc. Susan Tice informed the Planning Commission that they submitted HOP applications to PennDOT and they filed their NPDES applications with the Conservation District. Initial land development plans were forwarded to the Planning Commission in March, 2020, realizing that additional details will be required concerning site amenities. The purpose of the initial submission was to verify specific engineering details for the site.

The March, 2020 plan set was reviewed by the Montgomery County Planning Commission with a recommendation letter dated May 11, 2020. The Montgomery County Planning Commission expressed general agreement with the proposed plan, noting that the plan set must include a site design plan, streetscape plan, architectural plan, signage plan and lighting plan. The County requested clarification with the proposed phasing plan. The County review letter discussed parking requirements and some potential waivers that will be required. The County also provided some recommendations concerning storm water management and the construction and maintenance of rain gardens.

Boucher and James, Inc. submitted an extensive review letter dated May 19, 2020 concerning the initial March, 2020 development plan submission. Borough Engineer Missy Prugar highlighted a number of engineering issues to be addressed by the applicant. Susan Rice of STA Engineering, Inc. presented a letter dated July 27, 2020 requesting a list of waivers and deferral requests for the project. The Souderton Planning Commission discussed the requested waivers and deferrals as follows:

1. The waiver from SALDO §304.3.A concerning existing features was approved.
2. A deferral from SALDO §306.12.D concerning the submission of architectural plans was discussed. The Planning Commission concluded that they will require the submission of a basic architectural plan for each building understanding that the actual architectural plans may be modified by individual tenant fit out requirements.
3. A waiver from SALDO §402.2.B.2 concerning street grades was requested. Street grades of approximately 6% are acceptable, however an 8% slope in a parking area should be contingent upon an increase in the parking stall width.
4. A waiver from SALDO §403.2.I to permit a street cartway width of 24 feet was approved.
5. A waiver from SALDO §403.3.C.1 was requested to provide a more traditional 9 ft. x 18 ft. parking stall within the more dense commercial areas of the site that may exceed a slope of 5% to be permitted to maximize parking within these areas of need. The Planning Commission expressed some hesitation in areas of steep slopes, but expressed a desire to work with the applicant on this request.
6. A waiver from SALDO §403.3.F was requested to reduce the pavement sections for the parking areas. The Planning Commission will consider a reduction in pavement for the parking areas, but expressed a desire to maintain the heavier pavement construction for the interior streets.
7. A waiver from SALDO §408.2 was approved to allow grading up to the street right of way along County Line Road and east Broad Street.
8. A waiver from SALDO §418.5.A was partially approved by the Planning Commission,

noting that some shrubbery can be planted in lower areas.

9. A partial waiver was requested from SALDO §418.8.C was requested to allow a flat bottom in the bio retention basins to infiltrate stormwater. The partial waiver was approved.

10. A waiver from SALDO §420.1.E.5 was considered. The Planning Commission suggested that no sidewalk will be required for the angle parking on Road D. Sidewalk should be provided along the parking area on Market Street.

11. A waiver from SALDO §420.1.E.6 is requested to delete the 4 ft. landscape verge and allow the placement of sidewalk against the curb along E. Broad Street and County Line Road to remain consistent with existing sidewalk. The Planning Commission will further review this request.

12. A waiver from SALDO §420.1.E.12 was requested to allow a painted continental pattern crosswalk in place of a concrete, stone or brick pavers. The waiver request was approved.

13. The Planning Commission approved the deferral of SALDO §420.1.G.1 requirements to show screening details for loading, mechanical equipment until building plans are submitted.

14. The Planning Commission will further review the requested waiver from SALDO §420.3.E.5 to not provide planting beds along the sides of the end townhouse units.

15. The waiver request from SALDO §703.A and 703.C was approved to approve direct connections to storm facilities in areas over impervious surfaces to avoid icing conditions.

Planning Commission members discussed the park and open space planning priorities associated with the Berkeley Court Phase 2 development plan.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Recording Secretary