

**LOWER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes for October 20, 2008

The Lower Pottsgrove Township Planning Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, October 20, 2008. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Geoffrey Dailey, at 6:30 p.m. and the following were in attendance:

Geoffrey Dailey, Chair
Frank Cebular, Vice Chair
Nicholas Hiriak

Alyson Elliott, Assistant Manager
Susan Ebling, Engineer
Matthew Edmond, MCPC
Joe Nixon, MCPC

A motion was made by Mr. Cebular, seconded by Mr. Hiriak, and unanimously approved by a 3-0 vote to approve the minutes of September 15, 2008.

ACCEPTANCE OF NEW APPLICATIONS

A motion was made by Mr. Hiriak, seconded by Mr. Cebular, and unanimously approved by a 3-0 vote to accept new application, #2008-04A CVS Pharmacy, an amended site plan.

OLD BUSINESS

(#2008-03A) **Sunnybrook C-7 (Tri-County Urologic Associates)**, *Amended Site Plan*: proposal to develop a two-story, 26,000 square foot medical office building and associated lot improvements on a 2.96 acre lot at 20 Sunnybrook Road in the R-4 Residential District with the SV Sanatoga Village and PMD Planned Mixed Use overlay districts. [Plans prepared by Irick Eberhardt & Mientus, Inc. dated 08-25-2008, last revised 10-14-2008, and consisting of eleven (11) sheets].

This application was represented by the applicant's engineer, Bob Irick of Irick Eberhardt & Mientus, Inc. and the applicant's architect, Al Wulff of Wulff Architects, Inc. Mr. Irick explained the changes that had been made to the site since the last meeting. The building has been increased from 25,500 square feet to 26,000 square feet, while the dimensions of the building have been reduced to meet the intent of the ordinance with respect to dimensions. Two additional handicap parking spaces were added along the entrance drive as parallel parking spaces, to provide handicap parking accessibility for the lower level of the building. The white pine buffer trees have been replaced with douglas firs. An infiltration bed has been added to the parking lot; however, calculations have not yet been provided to the engineer as the infiltration testing was recently completed.

Mr. Wulff unveiled the new design for the building. He explained that the greatest dimension of the building will be 150 measured in the center of the building; however, he has included a rounded corner, two angled corners, a bump-out and "pop-ins" to reduce the square-ness of the previous building design. The Planning Commission liked the new design as proposed by Mr. Wulff.

Township Staff and MCPC supported the applicant's waiver requests and recommended approval of the plans, subject to the applicant working out stormwater details to the Township Engineer's satisfaction.

Action: A motion was made by Mr. Cebular, seconded by Mr. Hiriak, and unanimously approved by a 3-0 vote, to recommend approval the applicant's waivers, as requested in the Irick Eberhardt & Mientus, Inc. waiver request letter dated September 15, 2008.

Action: A motion was made by Mr. Hiriak, seconded by Mr. Cebular, and unanimously approved by a 3-0 vote, to recommend approval of the Sunnybrook C-7 (Tri-County Urologic Associates) Amended Site plan, subject to working out stormwater management details to the Township Engineer's satisfaction.

NEW BUSINESS

(#2008-04A) **CVS Pharmacy Amended Site Plan:** proposal to modify the site to improve handicap accessibility with new sidewalk, parking lot striping and layout at 1833 East High Street in the R-4 Residential District with an SV Sanatoga Village District Overlay. [Plans prepared by Larson Design Group dated 09-25-2007, and consisting of three (3) sheets].

Ms. Elliott presented the application for CVS Pharmacy. She explained that the applicant proposed to make improvements to the parking lot and sidewalk from High Street to better accommodate handicap customers. To do this, the applicant would remove a landscape island at the front entrance, restripe the parking spaces and provide a striped crosswalk from the front entrance to the sidewalk that accesses the High Street sidewalk.

Ms. Ebling said she had completed a review of the project and found that the proposal meets the requirements of the ordinance. Mr. Edmond stated that MCPC had no comments regarding this proposal.

Action: A motion was made by Mr. Cebular, seconded by Mr. Hiriak, and unanimously approved by a 3-0 vote, to recommend approval of the CVS Pharmacy Amended Site plan.

Berean Bible Church (Informal Presentation): proposal to construct an approximately 11,000 square foot gymnasium addition onto the rear of the church on 12.33 acres on East High Street/2600 Skytop Drive in the R-3 Residential District. [Plans prepared by Wil Hallman Retirement Development, dated 10-06-2008, and consisting of one (1) sheet].

Mr. John McMenamain of Wil Hallman Retirement Development represented this application as the engineer and Pastor Bill Neitz of the Berean Bible Church was also present. Mr. McMenamain explained that the Church would like to build a gymnasium addition onto the rear of the Church so the current space can remain set up as a sanctuary, rather than serving as both a sanctuary and a gymnasium. He explained that the Church was granted the use as a special exception, which limited them to no more than 1,000 occupants, which requires 250 parking spaces. He and Pastor Neitz further explained that the Church does not hold services at the same time as it utilizes the gymnasium. For a typical Church service, they have 400 attendees and on Christian holidays, they have approximately 600 attendees, well below the 1,000 limit.

Mr. McMenamain explained that the purpose of this informal presentation was to obtain input from the Planning Commission prior to finalizing drawings and preparing an application to the Zoning Hearing Board. He explained that the Church would be looking for the following relief from the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance:

1. The requirement to place parking islands every 10 parking stalls. He proposes to place islands at the ends of parking rows and on the edge of the Church / Sanatoga Ridge property to provide a separation of uses and capture some of the stormwater run off from the parking lot. He explained that the cost of landscaping and earthwork is a concern to the Church and that emergency evacuation helicopters often use the Church's parking lot and that additional landscaping would make it difficult.
2. The requirement to curb parking islands. He explained that curbing parking islands would reduce their effect on capturing stormwater and would require the Church to produce more sophisticated stormwater calculations.

3. The requirement to provide a property line buffer. Mr. McMenamain explained that he believes that the distance between the Church and its proposed addition and other neighbors is great enough that the Church should not be required to plant buffers. He also stated that the Church is an established part of the neighborhood and also that it did not want to plant extensive buffers due to costs.

Mr. McMenamain also explained that the applicant would be requesting a variance from the lighting requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Compliance with the Ordinance would require a lot of lights, or a smaller number of intense lights. The Church does have lights, primarily on the building.

Mr. Cebular asked the applicant if they had any complaints from neighbors regarding their activities. Pastor Neitz responded that they had one complaint from a neighbor that a light was too bright and they remedied the situation by placing a shield on the light.

Mr. Cebular said he was also concerned with safety at night. Pastor Neitz explained that 80 percent of their services are in daylight hours and that less than 100 people attend their evening services – they can park closer to the building near the building lights. Most of the participants who attend the evening gym programs are bused in using Church vehicles, which means that there are not many people who use the parking lot for these programs.

Mr. Hiriak said he was reluctant to formulate an opinion or make comment on these requests without further details. Mr. Dailey agreed and asked the applicant if they would provide a lighting plan with their proposal. He also said he might consider making a recommendation the Zoning Hearing Board, conditioned upon the Church adding lighting to the parking areas if attendance increases.

The Planning Commission said it was conceptually supportive of the applicant requesting a waiver from the requirement to provide curbing around landscape islands. They liked the additional planting islands, as provided by the applicant.

Action: No action was taken at this meeting. The Planning Commission requested that the applicant provide the Township with a lighting plan showing the coverage that they are proposing so they can better evaluate the proposal and make a recommendation. The Planning Commission also requested the applicant contact neighbors and request their input on lighting and buffer landscaping.

BCW Warehouse Grading Permit. Ms. Elliott explained that BCW Warehouse is adjacent to the Occidental Chemical property. Oxy is in the process of dismantling the tire plant and will be submitting a subdivision plan in the near future to realign the property lines between it and BCW. BCW, in turn, will be submitting a land development plan to improve circulation on its lot. However, when the building is dismantled, BCW will lose its fire suppression water lines and has requested a grading permit to install an underground water storage tank under its gravel parking lot prior to the building demolition. Ms. Ebling said she had reviewed the plans has requested that they include a rock construction entrance.

Action: A motion was made by Mr. Hiriak, seconded by Mr. Cebular, and unanimously approved by a 3-0 vote to recommend approval of the grading permit for BCW Warehouse.

Mr. Hiriak left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS

Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee Report

Ms. Elliott reported that Regional Planning Committee reviewed and approved Douglass Township's specific plan and zoning overlay which would allow a shopping center off County Line Road, Holly Road and Route 100. The next meeting of the PRMPC is October 22, 2008.

Ordinances

Ms. Elliott said she distributed to the members of the Planning Commission copies of proposed ordinances for a new Suburban Residential (SR-4) District, a revised Gateway Interchange (G-IN) District, a new Gateway Mixed Use (G-MU), and some associated administrative revisions. She said she will do a formal presentation on the ordinances at November meeting and will be looking for a formal recommendation at that time so the Board of Commissioners can consider adoption on December 1, 2008.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for November 17, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Alyson Elliott, Assistant Manager