

Borough of Quakertown
Planning Commission Meeting

June 9, 2014

At

7:00pm at Borough Office

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jon Roth – Chairman

Fred Tirjan – Vice Chairman -*Absent*

Cathy Gillahan - Secretary

Michael Orzel

William Kee

Michele Scarborough

Philip Abramson

Ronald Heller

Michael Haywood -*Absent*

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Ken Fretz – Zoning Officer

Cheryleen Strothers- Engineer of Cowan & Associates

Katherine Renner - Recording Secretary

PROCEEDINGS:

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm by Jon Roth – Chairman.

MINUTES:

The approval of April 14, 2014 meeting minutes was motioned made by Philip Abramson, and Seconded by Michele Scarborough and was unanimously carried to approve the April 14, 2014, minutes as written.

AGENDA:

Review the proposal of a Sign Ordinance changed in a Hospital Zone & Land Development for 20 S West End Blvd, Mattress Warehouse. The order of the agenda switched due to having the Mattress Warehouse gentlemen were in attendance of the meeting.

Gregg from Bogia Engineering – BEI Group was present to brief the Planning Commission on the Land Development plan located on 20 S. West End Blvd, Quakertown to a Mattress Warehouse retail store. The plans indicate they will be utilizing the same drive way access that is there today. Installing sidewalks to stay in the requirements as indicated. They will be tying into the same hedge line as Wendy's have; paving on the other two (2) sides. Then proposing a 4,352 square foot Mattress Warehouse building with sidewalks and parking in front along with sign and ADA access parking spots.

Ken Fretz asked Gregg to address the comments that were listed on the Cowan Associates review sheet. Gregg indicated that he brought one plan which addresses the concerns on Cowan's review. The first three items on the review sheet, he indicated were more as comments than concerns that they had to respond to. More like statements for us. The next comment was that they appeared before the Quakertown Borough Zoning Hearing Board on January 23, 2104 to request relief from a 25 foot rear yard requirement, which was granted. But according to Cowan & Associates review letter indicating it to be revised to show

the correct rear yard. Concerns from Cowan Associates review looked at the rear yard lot line as being the farthest property line to the west bordering the access drive easement, which would make what was believed to be the rear lot line as a side lot line. This lot is a very odd configuration also the rear lot line was perceived by the Zoning Hearing Board to be line bordering the Wendy's parking lot to the west. Even though they have gone to the Zoning Hearing Board and asked for a rear yard variance technically they still need a side yard variance because of a side yard setback if in fact this lot line should be considered a side lot line instead of a rear lot line. As far as the zoning hearing board, they granted the relief to allow the building to go 8 foot of the line indicated on the drawing. Technically they were referring it as a rear yard instead of a side yard. The conversation at the Zoning Hearing Board did present the fact that they did have this second rear yard for their back rear lot line. The Zoning Hearing Board granted the variance to allow the building to have an 8 ft. setback at the rear corner of the building, which is what the plans show.

Gregg Bogia continued with the response letter and commented the access easements mention in Cowan's review were handed out tonight at the meeting. The next couple of numbered items pertained to loading space that the revisions were made to the plans. Also were amended to the plans were landscaping, types of shrubs, tree and where they will be planted.

Mattress Warehouse is still waiting for the E&S review, Bucks County Planning Commission review and secured approvals from Penn DOT for the change in the use site pertaining to the ingress & egress.

Both Mr. Phil Abramson & Mr. Ron Heller indicated that they would like to see the Bucks County Planning Commission review before voting on this and asked to have the 90 day extension.

Gregg Bogia asked the gentlemen from the Mattress Warehouse if they would agree to the 90 day extension. Their reply was that they felt they wouldn't need or use it but will agree to the 90 day extension.

All unanimously agreed to the 90 day extension.

The review of a proposal of a sign ordinance change in the Hospital zone, notably the Hospital property Mr. William Kee mentioned that there are a lot of signs out there now. Mr. Ken Fretz mentioned that an application was made for an electronic message board and was denied which was the reason for the proposed change. Mr. Phil Abramson interjected that the major problem with this is it is right next to residential area. How many people will be irritated with not only us but with the hospital for putting digital sign up? But doesn't the ordinance say that it has to be a 100 feet away Mr. Ron Heller questioned. Yes, Mr. Jon Roth indicated, but it has to be on the same side of the street. But I believe this is the one that will be on the corner of Park Ave and 11th Street. The electronic sign will be replacing the one closer to the center of the block but that is not really specified at this point, Mr. Ken Fretz indicated. If this was granted, they could place the sign anywhere on the property technically. With these signs they are allowed 24 sq ft of signage normally with in the hospital zone. That is a 6 x 4 sign, but if they were allowed to have an electronic sign, they would only be able to have that at 35% of that 24 sq ft so they would only be able to have 18 squ. ft. Now if it is a mix sign where only a portion of that sign is electronic it can only be 10% of the whole sign size. Mr. Jon Roth asked Ken what the size of the size is at the West End Fire Co. to try and use as a visual of how it would look at the hospital. The question was brought up as to how the sign messages are regulated as for as the amount of time between cycles. Mr. Ken Fretz said that there must be 10 seconds between changes.

Phil Abramson mentioned that he couldn't imagine living across the street from the sign.

Mr. William Kee interjected and wanted to know why the Hospital wanted a new sign and what did they want to put on the sign? Mr. Ken Fretz told him that this was proposed to him by the hospital because they were denied on the application for an electronic message sign due to these types of signs to not being allowed in the H zoning district. Direction was given from council to propose an amendment to the sign ordinance.

Phil Abramson made a motion to amend the zoning district that would allow the electronic message boards to be allowed in the H, Hospital Zoning District with Ron Heller to second the motion.

Mr. Jon Roth asked for a Role call.

Katherine started the role call:

We have a roll call vote here:

Mr. Orzel:	NO
Ms. Scarborough:	YES
Mr. Tirjan:	ABSENT
Mr. Heller:	YES
Mr. Kee:	NO
Mr. Abramson:	NO
Mr. Roth:	NO
Ms. Gilahan:	YES
Mr. Haywood:	ABSENT

The motion was not passed.

Jon Roth went on to the next item of the agenda of old business, Quakertown Action Park / main street skate park weren't on the agenda tonight but will be next Planning Commission meeting to do a presentation. Also from a previous Borough Council meeting, Ron Heller was given the honor of public service award from the Borough. Mr. Ron Heller is only the second person who has been given this award.

As for new business, Phil Abramson brought up the discussion of the Quakertown High School and the football turf field and the progress that has been continually on going.

Mr. Ron Heller made the motion with Mrs. Michele Scarborough to second to adjourn this meeting.

The next regular meeting will be held on July 14, 2014.

Recording Secretary: *Katherine Renner*