

QUAKERTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES

JANUARY 14, 2013

The regular meeting of the Quakertown Planning Commission was held on January 14, 2013.

Those in attendance were Chairman Jon Roth, Vice Chairman Fred Tirjan, Secretary Cathy Gillahan, William Kee, Ronald Heller, Michael Orzel, Michele Scarborough, Philip Abramson, Michael Haywood, Zoning Officer Ken Fretz and Recording Secretary Kris Barndt.

Reorganization of the Planning Commission Officers for 2013 was held. A motion was made by Mr. Orzel seconded by Mrs. Scarborough and was unanimously carried by roll call vote to nominate Jon Roth as Chairman. (Michael Haywood was absent from vote). A motion was made by Mrs. Gillahan, seconded by Mrs. Scarborough and was unanimously carried by roll call vote to nominate Fred Tirjan as Vice Chairman. (Michael Haywood was absent from vote). A motion was made by Mr. Orzel, seconded by Chairman Roth and was unanimously carried by roll call vote to nominate Cathy Gillahan as Secretary. (Michael Haywood was absent from vote).

A motion was made by Mr. Abramson, seconded by Mr. Tirjan and was unanimously carried to approve the November 12, 2012 minutes as written. (Michael Haywood was absent from vote). There were no minutes for December 10, 2012 as the meeting was postponed due to lack of an agenda.

Mr. Heller made a motion to approve the 2013 Planning Commission meeting time which will remain on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. If the meetings are postponed due to lack of an agenda, a Planning Commission meeting will still be held once every quarter of 2013. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kee and was unanimously carried. (Michael Haywood was absent from vote).

Dan Bleznak, owner of the Quakertown Shopping Center, along with his engineer Rick Stoneback were present to discuss the proposed Panera Bread which will be located at 139 N. West End Boulevard. Panera Bread will be located on the present site of Sonic. Sonic will be demolished and Panera Bread will construct a new 4,300 sq. ft. building with a single drive thru. Mr. Bleznak explained that Sonic was approximately 1,700 sq. ft. and the building prior to that which housed Weight Watchers and Sherman Bros. was 5,400 sq. ft. so the building will again be smaller than previous. All drive up parking stalls used for Sonic will be removed. Panera Bread will be offering breakfast, lunch, dinner, deserts, coffee and will have wifi. Mr. Bleznak feels Panera will be a good use for the shopping center and the Upper Bucks Diagnostic medical facility and will be well patronized. Panera Bread will be constructed within the foot print of the Sonic with a slight reconfiguration of the islands in the parking lot. There will be no additional impervious coverage. The project has a clean review letter from Cowan Associates. Mr. Bleznak added that there will be 74 parking spaces which is more than the required 45 parking spaces which counts for employees and patio seating.

The loading dock will be located in the back of the building and the trash enclosure will stay where it currently is located.

Mrs. Gillahan asked if the entrance into the Panera site is going to be the same as Sonic mentioning she has concerns with the parking lot and the four way stop at the medical building given that most Panera Breads generally generate a busy crowd. The four way stop is congested now including traffic coming off of Route 309 which does not have a stop sign. Mr. Bleznak answered that at the initial opening there will be the major rush of traffic and then there will be a natural slowing down. Panera's peak hours will be lunch time. Mrs. Gillahan feels Saturdays and Sundays are the worst time with more people being off from work and going shopping.

Chairman Roth asked how many lights will be installed in the parking lot. Mr. Bleznak answered that there will be six lights which will be a bit lower than the lights in Giant's parking lot. There will also be lights on the building's exterior walls. Chairman Roth asked if Mr. Bleznak feels comfortable with the amount of illumination at night for visibility purposes for traffic. Mr. Bleznak replied that the lighting will meet shopping center standards.

Mr. Heller asked why the existing sanitary man hole and the pipe will be removed. Mr. Stoneback answered that the line would go under the building and the manhole would fall by the front door so that is why it will be relocated. Mr. Bleznak mentioned Panera Bread will not be generating grease unlike Sonic which cooked burgers. The grease trap will remain but will not be used much if at all.

Mr. Tirjan questioned signage and asked if there would be a sign coming into the shopping center for Panera Bread. Mr. Bleznak answered there is an existing sign behind the pad site by Applebees which has been there for many years. The hospital facility requested putting a directional sign out at the corner turning in off of Route 309, therefore, Mr. Bleznak was thinking of putting a panel sign for Panera as well, especially since the pylon sign for the shopping center is full.

Mr. Heller asked if the items from the review letter dated December 28, 2012 from the Bucks County Planning Commission were going to be taken care of. Mr. Stoneback answered that the items will be reviewed with Cowan's office. Scott McMackin from Cowan Associates was present to answer any questions.

Mr. Kee asked who is responsible for the maintenance of the roads and driveways. Mr. Bleznak responded that he is responsible for the common area maintenance for the shopping center including up to the curb line around their building. The businesses handle their own utilities and sidewalks.

A question was asked regarding the passing of vehicles in the parking lot and maybe making it one way. Mr. Bleznak stated that the cart way is 25 feet wide and most standards are 24 feet wide.

Weather permitting Panera would like to break ground around April 1, 2013 and the project would take approximately 120 days to complete.

Mr. Kee posed a question with reference to #8 of the Bucks County Planning Commission's review letter regarding sewage flow. Mr. Bleznak replied the flow should be almost the same as Sonic and explained that there used to be a laundromat and a dry cleaner which were the heaviest water users outside of the Giant supermarket. The laundromat and dry cleaner have closed so the water usage has been reduced.

A motion was made by Mrs. Scarborough, seconded by Mr. Abramson and was unanimously carried by roll call vote to accept the proposed plans for Panera Bread.

Review of the revised Pedestrian-Oriented, Mixed-Use Overlay District (POMU) was discussed. Mr. Fretz pointed out the ordinance had a few changes, most notably some zoning districts were removed and they include HR and MR. The reason for their exclusion was the fact that there were only one building in each district of any interest and the idea was not to affect the entire area for one or two parcels and it also made for clearer boundaries on the overlay map.

A motion was made by Mr. Heller, seconded by Mrs. Scarborough and was unanimously carried to recommend to Borough Council the approval of changes made to the Pedestrian-Oriented Mixed-Use Overlay District.

In new business, the Dimmig building at 107 W. Broad Street, the property at 7 S. West End Boulevard and the nearly completed building at 515 S. West End Boulevard were discussed.

A motion was made by Mr. Haywood, seconded by Mr. Abramson and was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2013.

Recording Secretary,  
Kris Barndt