

QUAKERTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES

AUGUST 12, 2013

The regular meeting of the Quakertown Planning Commission was held on August 12, 2013.

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

A motion was made by William Kee, seconded by Michael Orzel and was unanimously carried to approve the July 8, 2013 minutes as written. (Michele Scarborough was absent from vote).

Carl Weiner, attorney for Moreland Development, LLC, who is the Applicant in conjunction with the Walgreens Development Site, was present to brief the Planning Commission on the proposed plans for the corner of S. West End Boulevard and West Broad Street. Mr. Weiner stated there is cooperation between the owner of the front building and owner of the back building to coordinate the redevelopment of this property in an orderly fashion that will promote better circulation, as well as, provide a number of improvements including landscaping. The impervious area on the property is approximately 100% and will be reduced to less than 83%. There will be a right hand lane north bound on S. West End Boulevard adjacent to the site that is proposed to PennDot.

This property was reviewed by the Zoning Hearing Board and relief was granted regarding set back requirements, maximum driveway width onto the public roadway and the maximum number of principal uses permitted on a single lot.

Robert Blue, the engineer retained by Moreland Development, LLC, explained he has been in constant contact with Cheryleen Strothers of Cowan Associates, Inc. regarding her review letter dated August 6, 2013. Mr. Blue pointed out the comment concerning vehicles coming around the southeast direction of the building and it being two way traffic. Mr. Blue mentioned the majority of parking is located in the front area and employee parking is located near the drive thru. Mr. Abramson asked if a Do Not Enter sign could be erected around the back of the building. Ms. Strothers answered that Walgreens wants it to be two lane traffic. Mr. Heller asked why the back area has to be two ways. Mr. Blue stated from a circulation stand point Walgreens has their specific criteria and they want to see two way traffic. If that area becomes a cut through, Mr. Blue said that is something Walgreens will have to police and is their issue. Mr. Heller asked if delivery trucks will stick out into the drive isle. Mr. Blue answered that the trucks would not stick out. Ms. Strothers pointed out that the current plans show the loading area sticking out in the drive isle.

Mr. Blue replied that they would shift one loading dock farther north so that it does not encroach into the drive isle. Ms. Strothers asked about the width of it into the drive lane. Mr. Blue answered now the cartway measures 34 feet and they only need 24 feet.

Mr. Heller stated he still has a problem with the drive thru design, such as the traffic exiting from the drive thru not having a good view of the incoming traffic coming off of Broad Street. Mr. Blue stated this would have to be approved by Walgreens, but suggested placing a stop bar at the east edge of the building and maybe place a Caution Traffic Ahead or Yield sign on the north to south travel lane coming off of Broad Street. Ms. Strothers suggested a stop sign going both directions that way both people have to stop.

Mr. Fretz pointed out they meet all the dimensions with the two way traffic, with the width of the drive thru and with the circulation pattern in accordance with the Borough's Ordinance.

Ms. Strothers explained that previously that property had speed bumps because it was being used as a cut through so it could be an interesting policing situation for Walgreens. Chairman Roth also has a concern with vehicles coming down the right turn lane and using the back area of the store as a short cut, especially during rush hour with the loading dock and drive thru. Chairman Roth feels the back driveway is going to become a nightmare with local residents cutting through to bypass the red light and suggested speed bumps to maybe make it less appealing to limit the traffic.

Mr. Blue replied that from Walgreens prospective, they have certain criteria and if the cut through becomes an issue, Walgreens will be the first one to acknowledge it with either signage or speed bumps. At this time Walgreens knows it is a busy intersection and have been out to the sight. Mr. Blue stated he appreciates the local community's concern and he will pass the word on to Walgreens.

Ms. Strothers mentioned one thing the Bucks County Planning Commission pointed out was the location of the drive thru exit as it references the corner where vehicles are coming around and where the loading area is located. Mr. Blue answered that it is not an unusual situation.

Mr. Haywood asked if the exit onto Broad Street is going to be available for left and right hand turns. A traffic study was done and the recommendation is to have signage posted restricting peak hours, otherwise, it is a full access driveway.

Chairman Roth mentioned the exit onto Broad Street has a dog leg and since it will become a four way intersection slightly off center he feels there should be a Do Not Block Intersection sign heading west bound on W. Broad Street. He also pointed out when exiting the Shopping Center there are left and right arrow signs for turning, but no arrow signage to go straight across which is a traffic control measure. Chairman Roth also feels pavement markings on the plaza side should be made showing access can be made across the street.

Mr. Hoffman who was involved with the traffic study answered they are not at that stage and have to go through the PennDot process. Mr. Hoffman explained Broad Street currently has a concrete island and PennDot requested a dedicated left turn lane there. Having further discussions with PennDot, it was decided to take the concrete island away which gives the ability for additional stacking of vehicles during peak times instead of vehicles getting pinched back out into the thru lane. The created center left turn lane should help clean up a lot of congestion. There will be a complete traffic design.

Ms. Strothers asked if there will be retiming of the traffic lights. Mr. Hoffman answered that the lights will be retimed.

Mr. Blue mentioned on Cowan's letter item B-2 requiring a fifteen foot wide easement for all storm sewer lines. Mr. Blue said instead of having an easement put on the plan and have it recorded, they are proposing giving the Borough a blanket easement to come in and inspect the storm sewer system rather than give a defined easement along that area. They have a letter requesting the waiver for this item.

On page 4 –E1 pertaining to Miscellaneous Design and Detail Comments, stating applicant should provide verification that the plans have been reviewed by the Bucks County Planning Commission. Mr. Blue stated he was just given their letter tonight. E-2, the developer in coordination with

PennDot must provide improvements to the intersection including giving more stacking of vehicles which was previously discussed. Cowan's letter suggests that the proposed curb line radius be increased to approximately fifty feet to allow for better turning movements. He stated between himself, the Borough and PennDot they can resolve that issue.

Mr. Weiner went over the waivers which they are requesting.

1. A waiver requested from the provisions of Section 506.5.D of the Borough of Quakertown Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances pertaining to the requirement to provide a 15' wide storm sewer easement encompassing all storm sewers not located in dedicated lands. A waiver is requested to permit the applicant to provide a blanket easement over the entire site in lieu.
2. A waiver requested from the provisions of Section 508.1 of the Borough of Quakertown Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance pertaining to the requirement to provide a 15' wide storm sewer easement encompassing all storm sewers not located in dedicated lands. A waiver is requested to permit the applicant to provide a blanket easement over the entire site in lieu.
3. A waiver is requested from the provisions of Section 831.2.A(9) of the Borough of Quakertown Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance pertaining to the requirement to provide a 15' wide storm sewer easement encompassing all storm sewers not located in dedicated lands. A waiver is requested to permit the applicant to provide a blanket easement over the entire site in lieu.

Ms. Strothers asked for details of their sign since there are different regulations for different signs. If they are planning a digital sign there are different setbacks regarding location and the size of the sign. Mr. Blue replied he will send details of the sign to Ms. Strothers.

Ms. Strothers stated with regard to the Planning Module Application to the Department of Environmental Protection she feels it should not be a problem because currently the site has three allocated EDUs on it. For the project being proposed the sewage flow will remain the same while still having three businesses over the entire area.

Chairman Roth is pleased with the amount of landscaping to be added and that also that the site being redeveloped and aesthetically cleaned up.

Mr. Weiner pointed out they will take all concerns with the property into consideration and stated they are taking a property which is currently an eye sore and will be doing a tremendous amount of improvements to the exterior of the building along with adding landscaping, added storm water controls and external improvements with the roadways. In the end it will be a much nicer property than it is now and he is asking for the support and recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Mr. Kee asked how the taxes are handled since there are three parcels and various parties involved. Mr. Seidman stated Walgreens will be paying all the taxes once the lease goes into effect and when the lease is up with Walgreens, the taxes will revert back to the property owners.

Mr. Fretz stated parking is still a little deficient. Mr. Fretz explained to consider all the uses as one they fall short on parking spaces. Since this building touches a third parcel, all those businesses which include Aamco and Sherwin Williams, have to be taken in to consideration when doing the parking count. There was a comment in the Bucks County Planning Commission's review that this should be listed as a retail center instead of a retail store. Therefore, the count would be one space for every hundred square feet plus employees rather than one space for every four hundred square feet plus employee which puts the

count up about twenty more spaces. Mr. Blue suggested sitting down with Mr. Fretz to work out the numbers. Ms. Strothers thinks it is workable coming up with the proper numbers because there are some unlined spaces in the one parking lot. Mr. Fretz stated he will need a floor plan to accurately figure out parking spaces.

Chairman Roth asked if customers of Sherwin Williams and Aamco will be permitted during the demolition of part of the building. Mr. Fretz answered that is yet to be determined and there are no demolition, architectural or shoring plans submitted yet. The engineers will be on site making sure the shoring was done in compliance with approved plans.

Mr. Abramson asked if there is a way to recommend the plans to Borough Council with some loose ends to be finished. Mr. Fretz replied that there could be a preliminary approval pending Ms. Strothers and Mr. Fretz work out the little details with Walgreens. If any major problems or changes arise that requires a need to revise the whole plan, then it would come back to Planning Commission.

Ms. Strothers pointed out we are still waiting for PennDot approvals, the NPDES waiver.

Mr. Seidman stated Walgreens is on a time constraint and need to stick with their schedule. Taking too much time might cause them to lose the deal with Walgreens. Walgreens would like to be under construction by the first week in November 2013. If the approvals go into next year, he is not sure what will happen with the deal. Mr. Seidman explained they have an agreement with PennDot and they are working on their HOP plans and it was their understanding they would go to Borough Council to get the final approval with the condition on getting their HOP permit. He stated obviously if they do not get the HOP permit, they do not have a deal.

Ms. Strothers explained Walgreens will not go to Borough Council until the conditions are relatively close to being satisfied.

Mr. Blue stated the burden is on them to comply with the letters.

A motion was made by Mr. Abramson, seconded by Mr. Haywood and was unanimously carried by roll call vote to recommend to Borough Council the approval of the above referenced waivers pertaining to the requirement to provide a 15 foot wide storm water easement. (Michele Scarborough was absent from the vote).

A motion was made by Mr. Abramson, seconded by Mr. Orzel and was unanimously carried by roll call vote to recommend to Borough Council the approval of Walgreens with the acceptance of the conditions and comments concerning both the Cowan Associates review letter of August 6, 2013 and the Bucks County Planning Commission's letter of August 12, 2013, and also a resolution addressing the traffic concerns discussed at the Planning Commission meeting, in particular with regards to the southeast rear corner of the Walgreens property. Also the coordination between the Borough, Moreland Development Group and Robert Blue Engineers to work out the PennDot related issues. (Michele Scarborough was absent from the vote).

Mr. Seidman mentioned he thought he would get a final approval tonight with a condition of satisfaction prior to going to Borough Council so he would know when he left tonight he had final approval with conditions which he then could report that to Walgreens. Ms. Strothers answered that the problem with that scenario is the Planning Commission is only a recommending body not an approving body, and they are recommending approval to Council. It is still up to Council to determine the approval.

In new business Mr. Tirjan asked what happened to the automotive garage on Front Street. Mr. Fretz answered that Affordable Automotive left and new owners have cleaned up the property and have occupied the building at 205 Front Street. It is now called Effrig's All Out Automotive.

Mr. Heller asked what is happening with the previous Dimig Appliance building. Mr. Fretz answered that is at a standstill until they can determine if they can get a liquor license.

Mr. Heller also asked if anything is happening with the Moose building. Mr. Fretz answered at this time no.

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

The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2013.

Recording Secretary,  
Kris Barndt