

Ross Township
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

June 25, 2020

These are the minutes of the regular meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission held on Thursday, June 25, 2020 at the Ross Township Municipal Building and called to order by Chairman Jim Wigal at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were also present: Vice Chairman John Sample, Secretary Bridget Watson O'Brien, Daniel Elder, William Grady and, Jennifer Deemer (present via phone). Also present were Dominic Rickert, Director of Community Development, and Travis Stanczyk, P.E., Gibson-Thomas Engineers, and PJ Murray, Township Solicitor. Absent was Edward Nassan and Joseph Argenas

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the February 27, 2020 Planning Commission meeting be approved. Unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion moved to accept application for study made by John Sample and seconded by William Grady. Unanimously approved.

S-20-1 Subdivision Application: Don Pohl, with Pohl construction, is requesting a resubdivision of parcel "A" of the Buccigrossi plan of lots to create two separate lots from one parcel located on Congalton Road at L/B # 363-P-79 in a R-1 District of the 1st Ward.

Don Pohl, with Pohl Construction addressed the commission stating that they are just requesting a simple subdivision. He said that the parcel is over 5 acres and that there is currently 1 home built on the parcel. He noted that are utilities are there as well. Mr. Pohl stated that they don't need the lot to be that large and that is his reason for the subdivision request.

The application was then open to questions by the Planning Commission members

Mr. Elder asked if Mr. Pohl has any future to divide it any further. Mr. Pohl answered that he does not have any future plans to do so.

Mr. Grady inquired about the other parcel asking if it is up for sale and if he is going to construct another building there. Mr. Pohl said he will be constructing another building there and that he will be selling it.

Mr. Sample and Mrs. Watson O'Brien did not have any questions for the applicant.

Mr. Sample made a motion to recommend approval of S-20-1

Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to open the application for study made by Bridget Watson O'Brien and Seconded by John Sample. Unanimously Approved

SP-20-1 Site Plan Approval: John Frydrych, with Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc, on behalf of Sisters of the Holy Spirit, is seeking Site Plan Approval to demo existing Motherhouse and replace existing building, as well as add two parking lots following the demolition of the current building on the property at 5246 Clarwin Ave located at L/B # 217-F-205 in a R-2 District of the 7th Ward.

John Frydrych, from, Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc, and Jackie Cowan, with VEBH Architects addressed the board on behalf of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit. Ms. Cowan addressed the commission stating that the current Mother House is 4 stories and that the building was built in 1920. She informed the board that the building is much larger than what the sisters need today. There are currently 56 rooms in the existing building and they are constructing a new building much smaller and energy efficient for the sisters which she feels is important for them. The sisters will live in the existing Motherhouse until the construction of the new building is complete. The existing Motherhouse will be raised and will be the location for the shared parking for the Martina center and the new Motherhouse. They will be constructing a 2-story building. There will be 10 sleeping rooms on both floors. There will be a residential area of the building as well as a public area of the building. Mr. Frydrych stated Clarwin Avenue is the main roadway along the residential portion of the development. There are 30 existing parking spaces as of right now. He said they are proposing 59 parking spaces all together. Ms. Cowan stated that the site circulation will be the same. Mr. Frydrych said the overall parcel is about 30 acres in total. He stated that currently there is no storm water management on the site due to the age of the facility. They are working through plans with the Allegheny County Conservation District, as well as the sewer authority. Mr. Frydrych feels confident that they addressed nearly 100% of the comments in the June 12th letter from Gibson-Thomas. He stated that there will be limited tree removal and there will be no variances required.

Mr. Rickert inquired about the size of the parking spaces. Mr. Frydrych said that they are 10x20 and that there was no reduction.

Mr. Wigal asked if they had any difficulty concerning Gibson-Thomas' review letter. He stated that there are no issues and he feels confident everything has been addressed in total. He said he did want to address that they do not have any plans for any resubdivision in the future.

Mrs. Deemer, apart of the Environmental Advisory Committee, had comments from the committee. She said the Japanese Lilac tree is considered invasive. They suggest choosing a native or something non-invasive. Mr. Frydrych had no problem with doing that. The committee also inquired about how many trees will be removed during the demolition and what is the plan to replace them. Mr. Frydrych said they made every effort to reduce any tree removal on site. He said there may be 2 or 3 that may be removed at the top of the slope. He said that there is going to be more put in that will be taken out.

Mr. Rickert suggested to table the application to make the necessary revisions to their plan.

The application was then open to questions by the Planning Commission members

Mr. Elder questioned if there was more parking than residents. Mr. Frydrych said they are providing 20 rooms in the new Motherhouse and that there is a parking requirement to meet those 20 spaces, 1 per room. They are also accounting for 34 additional parking stalls to accommodate overnight stays when there is a weekend or overnight retreat.

Mr. Grady asked if there is any recommendation for sidewalks. Mr. Rickert stated he doesn't think that will fall under this application

Mr. Sample asked if they have put on track boundaries to which Mr. Frydrych responded yes.

Mrs. Watson O'Brien had no questions.

Mr. Wigal opened questions from the audience.

Dale Hammel, a resident, addressed the commission stating that the Martina Center is 2 doors down from him. He voiced his concerns about what they are doing with the grass area behind his home. Mr. Frydrych stated that nothing will be touched in that area.

Brian Johanson, another resident, stated that with the additional parking he is concerned about the lighting going in. He said it is fairly dim right now, but he wanted to know what kind of lights will be going in once there is more open space. Mr. Frydrych informed him that the lights are shielded fixtures and that they are 20 ft mounted height fixtures. He said that there will be 2 light fixtures per lot and the parking lot continues step down in elevation. He informed the resident that he will be sitting above the lit area.

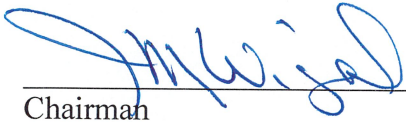
Darlene DiDonato asked the committee how Cemetery Lane is connected to this project. Mr. Frydrych informed her that it is not connected to Cemetery Lane by any means. She also inquired about the protentional wetland impacts to which Mr. Frydrych said that a full wetland assesment was done on the full 30 acres and there are no planned impacts and that they are not coming close to any disturbance. She had Also inquired about the retaining wall and Mr. Frydrych said it is still in plan and would like to speak with Mr. Reubi, the Fire Marshal, concerning the fire lane.

Mr. Sample made a motion to recommend to table SP-19-2. Mr. Grady seconded the recommendation.

Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. W. ...", is written over a horizontal line.

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Respectfully submitted by Dominic Rickert