

Ross Township
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

May 26, 2022

These are the minutes of the regular meeting of the Ross Township Planning Commission held on Thursday, May 26, 2022, held in person and called to order by Chairman Jim Wigal at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were also present: Chairman John Sample, Secretary Bridget Watson O'Brien, William Grady, Lauren Hergert, Joseph Argenas, and Ken Petri. Also, present were Dominic Rickert, Director of Community Development, Travis Stanczyk, P.E., Gibson-Thomas Engineers, and PJ Murray, Township Solicitor. Absent was Edward Nassan.

***It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the April 28, 2022.
Planning Commission meeting be approved.***

***Approval of secretarial bills.
Unanimously approved.***

NEW BUSINESS

Motion moved to accept application for study made Bill Grady and seconded by Bridget Watson O'Brien. Unanimously approved.

CU-22-3 Conditional Use Approval: Morris Knowles & Associates, inc., on behalf of DJD Development LLC, is seeking conditional use approval for a day care facility and office use located at L/B 431-K-112, 7202 Old McKnight Rd in a R-1 and C-1 District of the 2ND Ward.

Mark Zimmerman, with Morris Knowles & Associates, inc., on behalf of the applicant, addressed the Planning Commission stating that the existing property is zoned R-1 but there is a commercial use on it currently and that they would like to continue to utilize the commercial use for the day care and office building. Mr. Zimmerman said the Goddard school is open from 7am-6pm.

Mr. Wigal opened questions to the Planning Commission

Mr. Argenas asked if what is there now will be knocked down? Mr. Zimmerman said that is correct. It will be slightly bigger than the property that is there now.

Mr. Grady asked if they met all the state requirements for the school. Mike Thompson, onsite owner of the Goddard school said they have met all requirements. Mr. Grady also asked if the property will be fenced in? Mr. Zimmerman said the playgrounds will be fenced in. He also inquired about the green space shown on the plan and asked if it will be hillside. Mr. Zimmerman said the green space to the south of the building will be hillside and beyond that will be existing

trees. Mr. Grady asked how many children will be attending. Mr. Thompson said just under 150 kids. Mr. Grady asked about the landscaping plans to which Mr. Zimmerman said they will be meeting all township landscaping regulations.

Ms. Hergert asked if it will be open calendar year or school year. Mr. Thompson said it is open 12 months of the year. She also inquired if there will be any security measures in place. Mr. Thompson said you can't get into the building without being buzzed in, and nobody can just come into the building.

Mr. Petri inquired about the severe slope and if anything is being done with it. Mr. Zimmerman said the building will be 2 floors, and they will make up some grade within the building and to the rear they will have a geotechnical report done to make the slope is stable. He said they want to try to limit as much grading to the hillside as possible as well as maintain any trees as they can.

Mrs. Watson O'Brien said her understanding is the day care use does not comply with the R-1 zoning and asked the applicant to go over that. Mr. Rickert said there is a clause in our ordinances 27-805 called the transitional clause. He said that whenever you have 2 joining zoning districts, anything that is doable in the commercial district can be requested to do in the residential section as a conditional use. Mr. Rickert said they are covered to do this from this ordinance. Mr. Stanczyk, Township Engineer, said the intent of their comment in their review letter was that a majority of what they are proposing to develop is in that R-1 district, and that only a small portion of it that is in the commercial district. Mr. Rickert said in that case, they would want to amend their application, by stating it for the record, that in addition to the conditional use to operate the day care they are also requesting a conditional use to operate an office in the residential district under the purveyances of section 27-805. Mr. Zimmerman stated to the record he would like to amend the application to do that.

There were no further questions from the Planning Commission.

Mr. Wigal opened questions to the public

Darlene DiDonato inquired if this was a final plan or a preliminary plan. The applicant stated it is a preliminary plan. She expressed her concern with the steep slopes, as well as the closeness to the residents.

Mr. Sample made a motion to recommend approval of CU-22-3 with the added amendment.

Mr. Grady second.

Motion passed unanimously

NEW BUSINESS

Motion moved to accept application for study made Joseph Argenas and seconded John Sample. Unanimously approved.

SP-22-3 Preliminary Approval: Morris Knowles & Associates, inc., on behalf of DJD Development LLC is seeking preliminary land development approval to construct a 2-story structure for a day care facility and office space located at L/B 431-K-112, 7202 Old McKnight Rd

in a R-1 and C-1 District of the 2nd Ward.

Mr. Zimmerman stated they went through the plan in pretty good detail with the conditional use presentation but the one thing they didn't mention was the storm water. He said they will design it to meet the Ross Township and State regulations.

Mr. Wigal opened questions to the Planning Commission

Mrs. Watson O'Brien asked if a traffic study has been performed. Mr. Zimmerman said there has not one been done yet but per the Township Engineers comments, they will provide one.

Mr. Rickert stated there also may be a traffic impact fee they would have to pay.

There were no questions from the public

Mr. Argenas made a motion to recommend approval of SP-22-3 subject to all comments being addressed.

Mr. Sample second.

Motion passed unanimously

NEW BUSINESS

Motion moved to accept application for study made Joseph Argenas and seconded John Sample. Unanimously approved.

SP-22-4 Preliminary/Final Approval: Bohler Engineering, on behalf of Penn Ross Joint Venture, is seeking preliminary/final land development approval to redevelop the existing Sears building and construct a sport and track field located at L/B 518-G-4, 1008 Ross Park Mall Dr. in a C-1 District of the 2nd Ward.

Kevin McKeegan, with Meyer, Unkovic, & Scott LLP, on behalf of Simon Property Group, addressed the Planning Commission stating that in 2020 Simon presented plans to demolish the Sears store and replace it with a cinema, including a climbing wall, and constructing a one-story restoration hardware store, to which the plans for that location has now changed. He said that the Sears store will turn into a Dicks House of Sport.

Shannon Yeakel, with Dicks Sporting Goods, said they have been planning this concept for a while. She said the store has changed in a way where it makes it more experiential. She walked the Commission through the plans and what the store will be providing to consumers. She walked everyone through the slides provided to show the character and the amenities inside the store. An athletic field will also be attached to the store.

Michael Takacs, with Bohler Engineering, stated the store is 2 levels. He said the sears automotive building will be coming off in its entirety, but everything else will remain intact. He also walked the Commission through the proposed plans as well as current pictures of the site. He said the outline of the building is staying the same, but entrances will have some modifications. He said they are extending parking on the lower side, where the automotive store will be coming off. He

showed the upper level, where the entrance is enhanced. They are relocating some utilities to go out around the field structure. He also stated their effort here is to really keep the project as contained as possible, and that their goal is to get to a 25% reduction impervious, and therefore they wouldn't have to do underground detention between the pervious surfaces of the artificial field surface and the landscape areas, to which they believe they can get there. Right now, they are at 20%. He said they are reducing total GLA from the mall about 48,000 sq. ft. He said this is a significant reduction and decrease in the total number of trips.

Mr. Wigal opened questions to the Planning Commission

Mr. Grady asked if the hours of operation will be the same hours as the malls and inquired about the lighting for the field. Mr. Takacs said it is a flat LED light and the light levels at the ring road is at zero from the fixtures. The hours will also operate as the same hours the mall does.

Ms. Hergert asked if the field hours will be longer than the store hours. Ms. Yeakel said they are the same hours, and the lighting in the field is only on when the store is open.

Mrs. Watson O'Brien asked if they have the traffic study from the previous project. Mr. Takacs said he does, and it was accepted as a trip generation analysis.

There were no questions from the public.

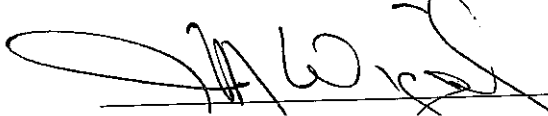
Ms. Sample made a motion to recommend approval of SP-22-4 subject to all comments being addressed.

Mr. Argenas second.

Motion passed unanimously

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.



Chairman

Vice Chairman

Respectfully submitted by Dominic Rickert