

**MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
AUGUST 5, 2008**

The Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, August 5, 2008 at the Township Hall, 4975 DeMoss Road, Berks County, Pennsylvania. Donald R. Wilson, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge to the Flag.

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Donald R. Wilson, Chairman
Paul L. Schwartz
Gary L. Shane
Greg T. Unger
Gregory A. Shantz

ABSENT: Richard Littlehales, Vice Chairman
John W. Bittig, Secretary

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Craig Peifer, GVC Consulting Engineer
Linda Cusimano, Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Cheryl Franckowiak, Zoning Officer

1. MINUTES

MOTION BY Mr. Shantz, seconded by Mr. Unger, to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2008 Planning Commission Meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

2. AGENDA

MOTION BY Mr. Shane, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, to approve the agenda of the August 5, 2008 Planning Commission meeting with the removal of Rite Aid Pharmacy as no one was in attendance for the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

3. APPROVE APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

A. **CUSTOM PROCESSING NEW WAREHOUSE – SKETCH PLAN; RITE AID PHARMACY – PRELIMINARY PLAN: MOTION BY** Mr. Shane, seconded by Mr. Unger to accept the preceding plans for review. The motion carried unanimously.

The following business was discussed:

4. EXETER REALTY MANAGEMENT – PRELIMINARY PLAN – John Hoffert

GVC reviewed the Exeter Realty Management Preliminary Land Development plan (reference letter dated August 1, 2008).

Mr. Hoffert stated that the property was located at 3703 Perkiomen Ave and it was an approximately 4,000 s. f. existing medical building which Reading Hospital would be leasing and proposed a 4,000 s. f. addition. The parking in the rear would be reconfigured for additional off-street parking. He further stated that the zoning relief they were seeking was for the side yard setback. It was an existing non-conforming building for the side

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yard setbacks. Any expansion out the back, because of the property line angling in towards the rear of the property, would make the addition more nonconforming. Next week they would be in front of the Zoning Hearing Board for relief relative to side yard setbacks. Mr. Hoffert stated that on page 2 item #7 was relative to the relocation of the Met-Ed lines that currently traversed over what would be the building addition. Their office has been in contact with Al Nurino/Met-Ed and he gave them a tentative relocation plan, however, warned them that Met-Ed's policy was that prior to finalizing the design, they needed to see Final Land Development Plan approval. Mr. Hoffert stated that they did have a letter stating that was their intent, for now. But they would not finalize it. The only thing he could offer was the letter stating that they intended to relocate it after Final Approval. Mr. Peifer stated that the issue was that your response letter stated that it was shown in the relocated location. Mr. Hoffert replied that it was shown on the plan as a relocated + or - with a new pole. Was the intend letter acceptable? Mr. Schwartz stated that should be fine. Mr. Hoffert stated that for the Lighting Ordinance, they turned that over to Mr. Frank Martin/Alltech to work on those details for security lighting. They have added the notes to the plan as requested. For the Fire protection, they did the template for the truck, but there was sufficient room to just barely make the arc into the rear. They now configured a 50-foot rig coming onto the property and eliminated one off-street parking space reducing it from 13 to 12 spaces but they still had one extra space. Mr. Peifer asked how far around you could turn on the other side? Mr. Hoffert replied that they might come into the handicapped parking space and that was the scenario as it was today. He then asked for advise for the landscaping of the buffer area in the rear which would fall in the Met-Ed easement area and wanted to know if the street tree list was also for buffer areas? Mr. Hoffert provided the letter that was received by Met-Ed requesting the change to the type of trees planted in their easement and they could not follow the tree species listed in the Tree Ordinance as Met-Ed was asking for Arborvitae and/or Juniper species. Any other trees would have the potential to grow to heights exceeding forty feet and a spread of twenty-five to sixty feet. Because of the potential growth they would need to trim them within their easement. In an effort to not have the same trees throughout the property, they had shown Norway Spruce and Douglas Fir in the buffer area. Arborvitae and Juniper were not on the list of approved trees, in this case would it be acceptable to deviate from the approved list for the buffer area? Mr. Peifer asked if we had copies of the new tree ordinance? Copies were provided. Mr. Peifer stated that it seemed to deal more with right-of-way and public lands than onsite landscaping. Mr. Schwartz stated that he did not think it was intended to cover buffer areas. Mr. Peifer replied that should meet the buffer requirements, which did not specify a tree, just evergreen and minimum heights of plantings. The Planning Commission agreed.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he would work with the EAC on buffer plantings to add to the Ordinance at the next meeting. Mr. Hoffert asked if that meant they would not require a waiver? The Planning Commission agreed. Mr. Wilson asked if they received the County letter about the ramp? Mr. Hoffert replied yes, at first they were planning a spiral ramp, because of the anticipated patients coming to the facility, they took out the ramp on the new plan and they filled that portion of the parking lot to maintain grade of less than 2% so the patients could access the building easily. Mr. Hoffert stated that was all he had for this evening.

5. VARIANCE REQUEST – EXETER REALTY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Swartz asked why they could not just jog the building to meet the side yard requirements? Mr. Hoffert replied that if they would do that they would lose some of the parking spaces and then they would need a variance from the requirement for the number of off-site parking spaces. The neighboring property owner, Apollo pools did not have a problem with the side yard setback and because of the type of structure of the existing building they could not build up.

MOTION BY Mr. Unger, seconded by Mr. Shantz to recommend the Zoning Hearing Board approve the variance request for Exeter Realty Management. The motion carried unanimously.

6. DIAMOND CREDIT UNION – PRELIMINARY PLAN – Scott Miller, SB

GVC reviewed the Diamond Credit Union Preliminary Land Development Plan (reference letter dated August 1, 2008).

Mr. Miller stated that they submitted the revised Preliminary Plan, which had no major changes in the layout to the previous plan. After they submitted the plans they met with GVC and one of the suggestions was that they remove the right turn lane on Pineland Road, as they were unable to meet ASHTO and PennDOT standards for that lane. They proposed to eliminate that right turn lane, but would keep the ultimate right-of-way in case it would be needed in the future. Item #4, they submitted the study on the drive-thru for the emissions. They also provided an internal traffic exhibit, one showing the trash truck, another one showing a fire truck and the last one showing passenger car circulation. With item #5, that was an oversight on their part, they would show the 10% landscaping and would be incorporated into the next plan. Mr. Miller further stated that item #10 concerned the shade trees and would be sure that they used the new master list. Under subdivision they had tied to the sewer datum for the topography for the site, but they would provide another benchmark as they found a marble monument that they would use. Mr. Miller then stated that they requested waivers for sidewalks and for the Water Resource Study. They would be tying into public water and would be doing infiltration, so they would not change any of the existing water tables. Under traffic review, they did meet with GVC and have changed the plan to reflect that, they had provided that plan to GVC for reference and to be sure that they concurred with the change. Mr. Peifer stated that

Mr. Maize was ok with what they proposed, so that would eliminate the traffic comments.

Mr. Miller stated that the Berks County Conservation District was reviewing the plan. He also stated that they would provide documentation to show compliance with the Lighting Ordinance and they felt that they have taken care of most of the items for Preliminary Plan and would like to ask for Conditional Preliminary Plan approval. Mr. Schwartz stated that we needed to address the waivers issue first. Mr. Unger asked if they would put the appropriate note on the plan stating that they would put the sidewalks in if it were required? Mr. Miller replied that they would do that, as it was standard procedure.

MOTION BY Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Shane to recommend the Board of Supervisors grant the waiver requests for Section 5.99; Water Resource Study since the site would utilize public water and the stormwater would be infiltrated into the ground per DEP's Best Management Practices and Section 6.204; Sidewalks (with the appropriate note being placed on the plan that in the event the Township would require sidewalk installation the owner would put them in at their expense). The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION BY Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Unger to recommend the Board of Supervisors grant conditional Preliminary Land Development Plan approval for Diamond Credit Union subject to all the outstanding comments in the August 1, 2008 GVC letter being addressed. The motion carried unanimously.

7. CUSTOM PROCESSING NEW WAREHOUSE – SKETCH PLAN – Pat Dolan

GVC reviewed the Custom Processing New Warehouse Land Development Sketch Plan (reference letter dated August 1, 2008).

Mr. Dolan stated that the proposed warehouse was located on Birchmont Drive in the industrial park off of East Neversink Road, the first parcel on the right hand side. The first bold comment stated: "No loading shall be permitted between the building setback line and the street line. Currently, a portion of the loading area was located in this area". Mr. Dolan stated that the loading was recessed into the building, so he wasn't sure if that was looking at the trucks sitting there, but the docks themselves were behind the setback line.

Custom processing continued

Mr. Peifer stated that was exactly what it stated in the Ordinance; he thought that they did not want to see the loading and unloading taking place in the front of the building. Mr. Dolan replied that given the topography of the site, it would be impossible to place it in the rear. Mr. Peifer stated that he understood that and was only quoting the Ordinance. Mr. Dolan responded that it was that way all over that area. Mr. Dolan then stated that the next bold item was related and stated: the arrangement of parking and loading should not be such that they interfere with each other. It was the only solution they could come up with. There was sufficient parking for the warehouse employees in front and while the trucks were backing in it would impede the parking, but while the truck was in the dock they would be available. Mr. Peifer stated that he was concerned that it would be the same as it was on Spring Street in Wyomissing, they have a person that would come out to stop traffic while the trucks back into the loading docks. Mr. Dolan replied that they had enough room for the trucks to drive off the road and back into the dock. Mr. Peifer asked if it was an independent operation, or was it in association with anything else going on in that area? Mr. Dolan replied that was a part of Custom Processing, they had a building next to it and across the street. Mr. Unger stated that it was a stand-alone building that could be sold anytime. Mr. Dolan replied that it would belong to Custom Processing, it was for their needs but that was correct, nothing could stop them from selling it in the future. Mr. Peifer asked if it would be possible to put the passenger car parking spaces someplace else? But then you would get into issues that they couldn't park and cross the street. Mr. Dolan replied that the parking was meant to only serve this warehouse. Mr. Shane asked if they had the tractor-trailer unloading, would it block all of the spaces? Mr. Dolan replied that it would only block the spaces, as it would be backing into the docks, not during the entire time that they would load and unload. They needed to build that way because of the topography of the site; it was very steep on the lot. It was the only solution they could come up with. Mr. Unger asked if they couldn't move the building back a little bit to be behind the setback line? Mr. Dolan replied that they were behind the setbacks in its entirety; the trucks would sit beyond that point. He then stated that was the question, was it an issue? The same condition exists next door. Mr. Shane asked how many docks were located there? Mr. Dolan replied three. Mr. Shane asked if a waiver would be required? Mr. Peifer replied that number 2 was zoning and would need to go to the Zoning Hearing Board, but maybe they could talk to the Zoning Officer, Cheryl Franckowiak to get her interpretation. Mr. Dolan replied that he would do that. Then he further stated that item #8 concerned the number of parking spaces needed, he would talk to the owners to clarify that. Item #9 stated that the Planning Commission should decide if an Environmental Assessment Statement would be needed.

Mr. Unger asked if they were filling or cutting? Mr. Dolan replied that they did not have a final topo yet, but, they would try to be balanced to cut and fill. Mr. Dolan then asked if an Environmental Assessment Statement would need to be done? Mr. Wilson replied that he thought so because there was a stream through the property. Mr. Schwartz stated that it would not need to be that involved, but he also felt that it was needed. We wanted to see that the wetlands would be protected along with the stream. Mr. Dolan stated that item #10 stated that the lot was currently wooded, the Planning Commission should decide if a Tree Inventory Report should be submitted. He then stated that there was an existing paved access that went up to a stone parking area and the bulk of the area was open now. They would remove some trees in two areas for the grading. Mr. Unger asked if they would disturb any of the rear portion of the lot? Mr. Dolan replied no, the whole idea was to keep the rear area with as minimal disturbance as possible. They were trying to use as much of the open space as possible in order to disturb as little area as possible on the site. Mr. Schwartz stated that they would not need to do the entire lot, just the areas to be disturbed. Mr. Dolan replied that they could do that. He then stated that under Floodplain Ordinance that would be addressed in future submission. Mr. Peifer stated that while he was looking at the Township website, he saw that a significant portion of the site was in the floodplain; it was the FEMA floodplain that has been overlaid on the Township Map.

Custom Processing continued

Mr. Dolan stated that he was surprised as they were 30-ft above the creek. Mr. Peifer replied that he was not saying that FEMA was correct, he was just stating what it showed. He further stated that they might have to do some paperwork to demonstrate that they were not in the floodplain. Mr. Dolan stated that was all for the bold comments, but he had one question. The comment for Traffic Impact Study being required for non-residential land development containing 20,000 sq. ft. or more of gross floor area. His question was, given the nature of what they were proposing would they really need to submit that? Mr. Peifer stated that was how the Ordinance was written, if they wished to ask for a waiver, now would be a good time to discuss that. Mr. Dolan replied that was their intent, he wanted to ask the Planning Commission if a waiver would be considered if they came in with a formal waiver request. Mr. Unger asked if it was five/six spaces and three trucks? Mr. Dolan replied it was eight parking spaces and three trucks. Mr. Peifer stated that the Ordinance did not distinguish between a warehouse and a 20,000-foot office building. Mr. Shane asked what they anticipated for the truck traffic? Mr. Dolan replied that he did not know, he would check into that. Mr. Peifer asked if it would be used to store incoming raw material and he figured that it would be used to jockey material between buildings in addition to leaving the site. Mr. Dolan replied that traffic would be reduced with the new warehouse because right now they were hauling material from other warehouses. Mr. Unger stated that they should ask for the waiver. Mr. Dolan stated that was all they had for the evening. Mr. Wilson stated that they should check the floodplain and that the trucks would not be backing up on the street. Mr. Dolan replied that they would not be backing up on the street. Mr. Wilson asked if they would consider curbing along the front of the property. Mr. Dolan replied that there was no curbing along Birchmont. Mr. Wilson stated that he was concerned about how they would guarantee that the trucks would pull into the parking lot to back up rather than on the street. Mr. Peifer replied that the dark gray area along the street was all drive way. Mr. Dolan stated that they would have that entire area at their disposal, they could look at eliminating all that and put in an island but that would be harder for them to pull out. Mr. Peifer replied that he felt that they would go down the road and pull a u-turn at the cul-de-sac. Mr. Dolan stated that they could pull out and turn onto the road. They would almost have to put in an island in the middle to force them to go to the cul-de-sac. Mr. Unger asked what Custom Processing did? Mr. Dolan replied that they grind fine material into finer particles. Mr. Schwartz asked if Birchmont Drive was a Township Road. Ms. Cusimano checked the streets list and found that it was a Township Road. Mr. Dolan stated that they could put in signage stating that the trucks could not back in from the street. Mr. Dolan then thanked the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Shantz, to adjourn the August 5, 2008 meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission at 8:34 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Cusimano
Planning Commission Recording Secretary

lrc
Correspondence to:

BOS: Diamond Credit Union Preliminary Plan approval & waiver request
ZHB: Exeter Realty Management