

MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 1, 2008

The Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, July 1, 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
Richard Littlehales, Vice Chairman
John W. Bittig, Secretary
Paul L. Schwartz
Gary L. Shane
Greg T. Unger
Gregory A. Shantz

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Craig Peifer, GVC Consulting Engineer
Cheryl Franckowiak, Zoning Officer
Linda Cusimano, Recording Secretary

1. MINUTES

MOTION BY Mr. Littlehales, seconded by Mr. Shantz, to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2008 Planning Commission Meeting as presented. The motion carried with Mr. Wilson, Mr. Shane, Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Unger, Mr. Littlehales, Mr. Shantz, voting in favor and Mr. Bittig abstaining.

2. AGENDA

MOTION BY Mr. Unger, seconded by Mr. Bittig, to approve the agenda of the July 1, 2008 Planning Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

3. APPROVE APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

A. EXETER REALTY MANAGEMENT – PRELIMINARY PLAN; DIAMOND CREDIT UNION – PRELIMINARY PLAN; AEM ARCHITECTS PROPOSED OFFICE BUILDING – SKETCH PLAN:
MOTION BY Mr. Shantz, seconded by Mr. Schwartz to accept the preceding plans for review. The motion carried unanimously.

The following business was discussed:

4. FAIRVIEW CORNER - Madelyn Fudeman

Ms. Fudeman stated that she wanted to give an update on the Fairview Corner Final Plan. A few months ago they were given Preliminary approval by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. The only outstanding items were a few housekeeping issues and the HOP from PennDOT. She spoke with Brian Boyer of PennDOT and was advised that they should be issuing the permit within the next couple of weeks and apologized for the delay. She further stated that when they received the permit they would return at that time for approval. Mr. Unger asked if this was the Dunkin Donuts? Ms. Fudeman replied yes, that was correct.

5. EXETER REALTY MANAGEMENT – PRELIMINARY PLAN – John Hoffert – Hoffert Surveyors

GVC reviewed the Exeter Realty Management Preliminary Plan (reference letter dated June 25, 2008).

Mr. Hoffert stated that the two partners from the management company were with him, Mr. Clements and Dr. Cammarano. The land development plan is for an additional 4,000 s.f. to an existing 4,000 s.f. building. The previous use was eye doctor/medical use. It would be leased by Reading Hospital who would have five practitioners. There was an existing parking lot at the rear and they would increase the parking area. Mr. Hoffert further stated that item #2 stated that the existing building was an existing non-conforming structure relative to size and access points. That would not change. Item #3 stated that it appeared that there was a parking lot encroachment and that was true. Apollo pools parking encroached onto their parking as shown on the previous land development plan. Mr. Hoffert then passed copies of the deeds for both properties, they both acknowledged the cross easements – parking lot easement as well as the macadam and were in the form of existing easements. There was also a frame shed in the rear of the property that belonged to a residence in the rear and that was shown on the original plan. They did not intend to make the resident move the shed and would acknowledge that it was an existing encroachment. Item #6 was correct: by extending the building exactly in the same dimensional direction to obtain the 4,000 s.f. because the property line did skew it would make the non-conformity worse so they would apply for a variance. Mr. Bittig stated that would take care of item #6 & 7 and would put those in the hands of the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Hoffert replied that was correct. He further stated that other items were minor in nature, but item #10 was relative to the Planning Commission deciding if they would like to require an Environmental Assessment Statement or a Tree Inventory Report. They had the EAC review letter and changed the type of trees that would be placed there. Because there were only a handful of trees on the plan and they were only removing two and adding more trees along with the buffer in the rear, he asked if the Planning Commission would require those two items? The Planning Commission did not answer the question.

Mr. Shane asked where the new paving area would be located? Mr. Hoffert pointed out the area on the plan. Mr. Bittig asked if the buffer would be planted along the rear of the property? Mr. Hoffert replied yes, but they needed to be careful, as there was an existing 20-foot wide Met-Ed easement. Because of that they would not stagger the trees. They sent a copy of the buffer planting to Met-Ed asking for comments from them, along with plans for the addition because of an easement that ran through the center of the property and were waiting for a response. Letters have been sent out to PA American Water Company and the Sewer Authority. Currently the building was not sprinklered, but that would be required with the additional size and the water lines were not large enough to handle that. They were also adding additional bathrooms. Mr. Hoffert further stated that he did not feel that Traffic Impact Study would be needed as previously there were five practitioners and it would be the same with the new tenants. Mr. Wilson replied Ok. Mr. Hoffert stated that with the stormwater there was an isolation distance when you infiltrate and they were not sure that they could maintain the isolation distances because of the other buildings surrounding their building. He was asking for guidance with the stormwater requirements. Mr. Peifer replied that the purpose of the isolation distance was that you did not want your stormwater running into someone else's foundation. It was 10-ft from a building uphill, but 100-ft from a building downslope from it, which would be Apollo pools. Mr. Schwartz stated that we would prefer infiltration, but if it were not good for the neighboring property, then we wouldn't want that. Mr. Hoffert stated that they wanted to comply with all stormwater requirements by not increasing the run-off, but they still had the problem of putting the water back into the ground. Mr. Schwartz asked if Apollo had a basement? Mr. Hoffert replied that he did not know, but it would still be a risk for the foundation. Mr. Unger stated that if they could not meet the minimum buffer, then they can't meet it and they shouldn't be held to it.

Exeter Realty Management continued

Mr. Wilson stated that it was also an existing use. Mr. Hoffert stated that they would hold back the runoff with underground piping and release it back out to the storm sewer system along Perkiomen Ave. There was no room for a pond. Mr. Shane asked where it ran today? Mr. Hoffert replied that a lot of the water runs through a swale and on to the Apollo pool property. Mr. Unger stated that he felt the method they were proposing was the correct solution. Mr. Peifer stated that the Ordinance stated that if you can't meet the isolation distance, then you could not infiltrate. That was in the requirements for infiltration and they cannot meet it so they did not need to infiltrate. Mr. Hoffert asked if a waiver was necessary? Mr. Peifer replied that they would not need a waiver, as they could not meet the requirements. Mr. Hoffert replied that they would address the lighting comment. For the fire comment, it stated that there might not be enough turning radius in order to get around the building. They templated two types of fire trucks and demonstrated that the fire truck could come in and turn. They provided those templates to GVC and if that was not acceptable they could re-arrange the parking spaces.

6. DIAMOND CREDIT UNION – PRELIMINARY PLAN – Scott Miller – Stackhouse Bensinger

GVC reviewed the Diamond Credit Union Preliminary Land Development Plan (reference letter dated June 25, 2008).

Mr. Miller stated that they had been before the Planning Commission with the Sketch Plan. The only change from the Sketch plan was that the parking was re-oriented to make sure the layout functioned better and the Fire Marshal stated that we needed access around the entire building and they provided that. One of the bigger issues was the drive-thru and the ability to reduce the idling time, Comment #4 under zoning. As part of their Environmental Impact Statement, they were providing a pneumatic system where the tubes would not just go to one teller; they could go throughout the office and that would reduce the idling time. Mr. Schwartz stated that he was not convinced, five lanes with one teller or one lane with five tellers. If the cars were stacked up it wouldn't accomplish anything. Mr. Miller replied that there were multiple tellers within the building.

Mr. Schwartz replied that was not what we were told; when it was early in the morning there might be just one teller. Mr. Miller stated that the Planning Commission could stop over at the branch in Wyomissing as they have the same system there that we could observe. There would be some idling, but they would reduce the amount of time that the customer sat there, and he would provide more information. He then stated that they would be providing stormwater detention, but they would try to retain as much of the tree cover in the rear as possible. They would provide more information for the landscaping. Mr. Bittig observed that they had stated there were no wetlands on the property; a previous developer stated that in the one corner there were wetlands. Mr. Miller replied that he would agree and they would stay out of that area. If additional landscaping would be required they would then add native species. Comment #6 dealt with the emissions and they would provide more information for that. For the tree inventory, they would replace the trees that they were removing, it would be around 18. They submitted the Environmental Performance Standards and didn't know if there were any comments for that. Under subdivision, they would have the wetlands study done. Mr. Miller asked about #6, which stated that the Planning Commission should decide if sidewalks should be installed. Mr. Bittig stated that the nearest sidewalks were miles away. Mr. Miller asked if that required a waiver request?

Mr. Peifer stated that they should provide a written waiver request. Mr. Miller asked about the Traffic Impact Study? They were going to try to get approval from PennDOT for an additional lane, and would need to do a study for PennDOT. Would that be sufficient? Mr. Peifer stated that our concern was the possibility of stacking past their driveway. Mr. Littlehales was concerned about the turns on the plan. Mr. Miller stated that they would do a truck template to be sure that the fire trucks could make the turn. Mr. Shane asked if all of the

Diamond Credit Union continued

paving would be done in the first phase. Mr. Miller replied yes and asked about #11 for the Water Resource Study, they would have public water so they have requested a waiver of the Water Resource Study. They would meet the requirements of the Act 167 Stormwater Ordinance and the County Conservation District. Mr. Bittig stated that they would need to deal with PennDOT to get the water line across 422. Mr. Miller stated that they would work with GVC to clean up the stormwater issues, and the same for the traffic review items. He then asked if the turning movements were Ok? Mr. Peifer replied that he would talk to Tony Maize and get back to him. Mr. Miller stated that they agreed with relocating the dumpster. They would be working on applying for the HOP. Mr. Miller then asked if they should put curbing along 422? Mr. Peifer replied that if they would the Township had their own standards in terms of depth and they would also need to look at stormwater. Mr. Miller stated that it has its positives and negatives. They would clean up the items listed in the review letter and return next month for Preliminary Plan approval. Mr. Wilson asked if they had the County Planning Commission review letter? Mr. Miller replied yes, and they touched on those items. They also had the EAC review letter where they asked for a variety of species for the trees and they would take care of that. They were going to work on the green aspects of the building. Mr. Unger asked if they submitted their HOP application? Mr. Miller replied that they were working on that. Mr. Schwartz asked if we should deal with the waiver request for the Water Resource Study. Mr. Wilson stated that they needed to submit that in writing. Mr. Peifer stated that was included in their submittal letter but we should wait until they completed their stormwater. Mr. Miller stated that at least they had the understanding from the Planning Commission that they would waive that requirement.

- 7. AEM ARCHITECTS PROPOSED OFFICE BUILDING – SKETCH PLAN** – Scott Miller:
Stackhouse-Bensinger
- Phil Leinbach
- Marlin Meckley

GVC reviewed the AEM Proposed Office Building Sketch Plan (reference letter dated June 25, 2008).

Mr. Miller stated that they planned to eliminate the existing building and build a larger building approximately six to seven thousand square feet in size and they would add parking to comply with the requirements for the size of the building. The biggest issue was the zoning; it was located in the SR1 Zoning District where offices were not permitted at this time. Two of the comments in the GVC letter specifically dealt with variances for the proposed use and they showed the building twelve feet off of the adjoining property line and that was not allowed with current zoning. They would need a variance for that also. He understood that the Township was in the process of adopting a new ordinance that showed a Restricted Office Commercial District and asked where that was at this point? Mr. Schwartz replied that we were working on that tonight. Mr. Miller stated that from a timeline standpoint they would like to proceed with the project, but if it would be a lengthy process for the Ordinance, they might apply for the variances. If not they would wait for that change. What amount of time did the Planning Commission think it would take for those changes? Mrs. Franckowiak replied that it was the intent to get these changes done as quickly as possible, advertised and adopted by August. Mr. Peifer stated that it might be a little longer since it would need to be sent to the County and they had a 30-day review period. Mr. Miller asked if that would possibly mean at the latest September. Mrs. Franckowiak replied yes at the latest. Mr. Miller stated that the only other item would be the need for sidewalks. Mr. Schwartz replied that it might make sense for 37th St, but not Perkiomen Ave. Mr. Bittig then asked if there were any sidewalks on 37th? Mr. Leinbach replied that there were sidewalks on the other side of the street from old Perkiomen up to the driveway of the church. Mr. Schwartz stated that he personally would like to see sidewalk along 37th St.

AEM architects continued

to Perkiomen Ave. Mr. Leinbach replied that the cross walk at Perkiomen Ave was on the church side and it wouldn't make sense to provide the sidewalk when they would have to cross to the other side to reach that. Mr. Miller stated that the topography of the site would make it hard to put in sidewalk. Mr. Schwartz replied that was a good point. Mr. Wilson stated that the Fire Marshal might ask about access completely around the building. Mr. Miller replied that if they would put in a drive around the building it would make the property unusable. He felt that they would be close enough to the adjoining street for access. Mr. Shane asked how it compared in size to the existing building? Mr. Miller replied that the existing building 4,500 s.f. total space, the new building would be six to seven thousand sq. ft. in size. Mr. Wilson asked what type of construction would they use, did they have an idea on that? Mr. Leinbach replied that they were developing that now. Mr. Wilson stated that when they returned with Preliminary Plan he would like to see the outside view. Mr. Leinbach stated that they were pursuing a LEED Certified building and they have not worked out all the details. Mr. Meckley asked if the Planning Commission had any comments on the location of the building as they placed it that way because of the LEED's points for direction of the sun. Mr. Wilson asked if it was a one-story structure. Mr. Miller replied one-story with a daylight basement. Mr. Littlehales stated that his problem was the close proximity with the neighboring residential area for the lighting aspect. Mr. Leinbach stated that they would handle that with the neighbors for lighting and screening. Mr. Peifer stated that the only problem from a fire standpoint that he might see was the access to the rear of the building. Mr. Miller asked if grass pavers along the back could handle that and maintain a clear path to that area? Mr. Peifer stated that he could look into that for them. Mr. Miller replied that they were within 50-ft of all the roadways. Mr. Bittig asked why they showed all those parking spaces; according to the Ordinance they would only need 20 spaces. Mr. Miller replied that the EAC also asked why they would need that many and they calculated that because they were planning on using some of the basement area and part of the basement would be storage. Mr. Bittig stated that if they would be using the basement area that made sense. Mr. Miller asked if they would apply for a variance for the parking requirements would the Planning Commission make a recommendation supporting that. Mr. Wilson stated that he would support that.

8. HUMANE SOCIETY PROPOSAL – Karel Minor

Mr. Minor stated that they had an opportunity for a location for the Humane Society in Exeter and before they worked on that they had questions. They spoke to Mrs. Franckowiak and she suggested coming to the Planning Commission. They identified locations that would need adoption and veterinary services. They also needed a large animal facility for adoption and emergency housing. In the city they did not have the facilities for that. They were also looking for a place that responsible pet owners could bring their pets, and they would like to provide a dog park. It was shown that the better you exercise your dog it helps their behavior and it was less likely that they would be brought to their center. They had contact with quite a few horse lovers and one those people worked with Pat Mascaro. They met with Mr. Mascaro and he took them to a property that he owned across the street and asked if that would work for our needs. It was the 12-acre property at Rt82 and South Baumstown Road. It was ideal as they had an existing barn, which would work for the horses, and it was fenced in. There was a flat 2-3 acre area that would work for the dog park setting. They would possibly use the house for general education facility. Primary interest was to utilize the horse facility and then install a 2-3 acre fenced Dog Park with double gated entrance and exits and make it available and free to the public. Mr. Mascaro planned to keep the property and provide a 20-year no cost lease agreement to the Humane Society for their use. He has also agreed to put up the vast majority of the development expenses for them. The driveway improvement would include roses and pear trees along there and have proper signage, which he wanted to look spectacular. Before they went further, they wanted to be

Humane Society continued

sure it was permitted. Veterinary was not permitted, but horses should be. Parks were permitted by special exception, but did not mention “dog” parks. They had a project that would benefit the community and the nonprofit charities. They made a search of Exeter Township residents and they found that 1 in 10 families had either made donations, adopted pets or made use of their veterinary services. They had gotten a positive response from their supporters. It currently had a field, which would continue as a field along with the Dog Park. It would remain in the tax roles because we would not own it. Mr. Bittig stated that it was a great idea, but it did not fit the zoning for SR1. We had two things in our definitions, Agriculture subpart B, covered Animal Husbandry and outdoor recreation, which fit the dog park. Both of those uses are allowed in the AP, RC and Rural Districts. He did not see where it could fit under the current zoning definitions of allowable uses. Mr. Minor stated that he thought parks were allowed in SR1. Mr. Bittig replied parks, except for amusement parks, but he wasn’t sure if parks were defined. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that parks were not defined, so they might be able to have that. Mr. Schwartz stated subject to Section 606.

Mrs. Franckowiak stated that horses were already allowed as an existing use, they just needed to have a 2-acre parcel. It was a horse farm previously. Mr. Bittig stated that it was not a listed use, but large animals were allowed by the amount of acres located there. Mr. Wilson stated that it was a farm; it was a grand fathered use, so they could continue that. Mrs. Franckowiak replied that was correct, it was George Hamptons’ farm so they would be covered for that. Mr. Schwartz stated that it did not seem to violate anything in Section 607 either. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that her only concern, as a planning standpoint was how they would control the amount of people, it would be a public park that would be advertised. Mr. Minor stated that it was for dog walking only. Mr. Schwartz stated that we did not restrict parks in the Township and there were other ones located in the SR1 district. Mrs. Franckowiak replied that was correct.

Mr. Littlehales asked if they would have any other large animals other than horses? Mr. Minor replied that right now they were the coordinating agency for the County Animal Response Team for emergency situations and they did not have a place to take the animals. They would have them located there temporarily. They sometimes got goats, donkeys etc. and they currently put them in a kennel and needed another location. Mr. Unger asked if that was covered in the zoning aspect of the property?

Mrs. Franckowiak replied that the park was allowed, but she wasn’t sure about the rescue of animals.

Mr. Bittig stated that Section 606 covers AG use regulations and it covered animal husbandry on a farm of minimum 3 acres and then it shows two AEU’s per acre. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that we could work that in as the last use of the property. Mr. Minor invited the Planning Commission to visit their locations, to see how well they were run. It would be good for Exeter Township to work with the non-profit organization to bring something in that would not cost the Township and would be able to show off. Mr. Bittig asked how large the tract was? Mr. Minor replied it was 12 acres. Mr. Littlehales stated that he would like to figure out a way to allow it. Mr. Bittig stated that we were favorably disposed to make it happen. Mrs. Franckowiak replied that first they could go to the Zoning Hearing Board for the dog park, then look at the property as the last use and work in the AG use regulations, then ask them to go through land development as it was a change in use and that would take care of everything. Would that be agreeable to the Planning Commission? Mr. Wilson asked if anyone objected to the project? The Planning Commission agreed to have them go through the procedure listed by Mrs. Franckowiak. Mr. Minor thanked the Planning Commission.

9. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SALDO

MOTION BY Mr. Littlehales, seconded by Mr. Bittig to recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt the changes in SALDO concerning the number of time extensions allowed for Subdivision and Land Development plans. The motion carried unanimously.

10. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Ms. Cusimano stated that there were two plans coming due on 7/28/2008, Deer Run and Applebee's revised drainage plan. She knew that Mr. Bellwoar was looking into the Deer Run Subdivision because of the litigation, but we needed to have a motion for both plans.

MOTION BY Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Bittig to recommend the Board of Supervisors reject both Deer Run and Applebee's revised drainage plans unless time extension are accepted or showed progress on the completion of the plans. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Mr. Shantz, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, to adjourn the July 1, 2008 meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission at 9:51 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Bittig
Planning Commission Secretary

lrc

Correspondence to:

BOS: SALDO amendments
BOS: Deer Run & Applebee's revised drainage plan rejection/if needed