

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Planning Commission
February 20, 2020

The State College Borough Planning Commission (PC) met on Thursday, February 20, 2020 at the Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street. Zoe Boniface, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Zoe Boniface, Chair; Scott Dutt; Jon Eich; Anita Genger, Vice-Chair; Mary Madden; and Ron Madrid

Members Absent

Mallory Meehan

Others Present

Ed LeClear, Planning Director; Greg Garthe, Planner/Zoning Officer; John Wilson, Zoning Officer; Isabel Storey, Planner; Joe Corvaia, Crawford Architect; and Denise L. Rhoads, Administrative Assistant

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Dutt and seconded by Mr. Madrid to approve the February 5, 2020 meeting minutes as submitted. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Chair Report

Ms. Boniface, Chair, had nothing to report.

Public Hour

No comments or concerns were heard during the public hour.

Land Development Plans

Final Land Development Plan - Pennsylvania State Field Hockey Stadium; UPD Zoning District; Pennsylvania State University, Owner; Stahl Sheaffer Engineering, Engineer; Crawford Architects, Architect

Mr. Corvaia's presentation included:

- The plan proposed development of a new field hockey stadium behind Pennsylvania State University (PSU) Wagner Building near the corner of University Drive and Curtin Road.
- Private scope would be everything up to the field and down to the intramural fields located to the south.
- Lower level would consist of visiting team suites, bathrooms, concessions along with mechanical/electric rooms.
- There would be approximately 1200-1500 seats based on a bid they were waiting for. Accessible seating would be towards the front.
- Upper level would consist of a viewing room along with a press room.
- Proposed plantings would be bushes and low-level shrubs and would screen the mechanical elements.

Design Review Board (DRB) comments

Mr. Garthe stated the DRB asked what kind of safety plantings and landscaping were proposed.

Borough Staff comments

Mr. Garthe stated Borough staff had no comments.

PC comments

- Mr. Eich asked if the plants were native and Mr. Corvaia stated they were.
- Mr. Madrid asked about lighting and intensity. Mr. Corvaia stated they would not adjust any field lighting, but would add additional lights to the roof, and the current field light would be moved the back of the stadium.

A motion was made by Mr. Eich and seconded by Mr. Dutt to recommend approval of the proposal. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Community Planning

Request to Amend the Zoning Ordinance to Allow Four-Car Garages at Single-Family Dwellings

Mr. LeClear's overview include:

- Mr. LeClear stated what was provided in this meeting agenda packet was the simplest approach.
- He noted the amendment created an avenue in the R-1 zoning district to allow four car garages in lots exceeding 25,000 square feet and five vehicles in lots exceeding 30,000 square feet.
- He stated staff recommended this approach.

Ms. Boniface, Chair, gave a brief overview of this proposal for the audience.

PC comments

- Mr. Dutt stated he did not agree with limiting the number of vehicles a resident should be allowed to have, especially if they had room on their property.
- Mr. Madrid addressed the language in the proposed ordinance and noted a run-on sentence and made a suggestion. He asked about the term "living quarters" and Mr. Wilson stated there was not a clear definition of that term. Mr. Madrid asked if it should be more definitive and Mr. Wilson stated he would open up the suggestion that it should be. Mr. Madrid noted it should be stated clearly in the ordinance that the space would not be used as a living space.

Mr. Eich suggested using the Census Bureau's definition of living quarters which was a bathroom and kitchen.

At the February 5, 2020 meeting, the PC asked staff for a recommended approach. See below for staffs' recommended approach.

- Add a note to the definition of a private garage to reference an exception for larger capacity attached garages at one-family dwellings on large lots in the Residence 1 (R-1) zoning district.
- Provide an exception to allow 4-car garages on lots greater than 25,000 ft², and 5-car garages on lots greater than 30,000 ft² in the R-1 district.
- Add language to reinforce existing capacity limits for detached garages on any lot and attached garages on lots smaller than 25,000 ft² in any zoning district where they are permitted.
- Staff recommended approval of the ordinance.

Public comments

A member from the public was interested in whether or not any structures had been put in place to mitigate fires. Mr. LeClear stated building code would regulate that.

A motion to recommend approval of the proposal with members comments included was made by Mr. Eich and seconded by Mr. Madrid. The vote was 5-1-0. The nay vote was Mr. Dutt.

Official Reports and Correspondence

Borough Council (BC)

Mr. LeClear reported BC had a lengthy amendment coming up on March 2, 2020 along with a presentation on the Redevelopment Authority's (RDA's) Neighborhood Sustainability program (NSP). Mr. LeClear stated the RDA was looking to move away from the acquisitions of homes and concentrate on paying back the approximately \$400,000 balance on the line of credit. A Centre Link map change and the amendment to allow 4-car garages in single-family dwellings would be heard at a public hearing April 6, 2020.

Ms. Boniface asked if the RDA had another program to replace the NSP with. Mr. LeClear stated the hope was to move away from the acquisitions of properties and move towards acquiring student home licenses and their zoning permits.

Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB)

Mr. Garthe reported on the following:

- Variance - HERE State College

On February 25, 2020, the ZHB heard a request for a variance regarding the 25-foot height limit of the Borough's sign ordinance to allow for the installation of an exterior building sign for the HERE State College project at a height of 28 feet along East Calder Way. HERE would be located at 131 Hiester Street, in the Commercial Incentive District (CID) zoning district. The request was reviewed by the DRB at its February 4, 2020 meeting, as required by the Borough Code.

Upcoming Land Development Plans

Mr. Garthe reported on the items below:

- Preliminary Plan for 1401 South Atherton Street
- Final Plan for Core Spaces Signature Development - Council to take action on the condition use permit at their next meeting.

Staff Updates

Mr. LeClear reported staff confirmed a March 19, 2020 joint meeting with the PC, BC and the Zoning Revision Advisory Committee (ZRAC). He noted the meeting would concentrate on specific items to obtain some guidance.

Ms. Boniface shared, with the public, a brief overview of what the zoning rewrite consisted of and why it was being done. Mr. LeClear stated there were many personnel changes on the ZRAC committee for 2020.

Mr. LeClear noted the Public Works department hired a new engineer to start on March 16, 2020 and the Planning department was still looking to fill the Senior Planner -Redevelopment Specialist opening.

Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC)

Mr. Eich reported the CRPC discussed three items: 1) an amendment to the College Township zoning ordinance adjusting the boundaries between the University Planning District zones eight and 11. He noted one zone had too much impervious surface; 2) received a briefing on the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization, which handles transportation projects, work program and approved an agreement with PennDOT; 3) received an overview of the American Community Survey trend from 2010-2018 from the Centre Region which showed population was up 2.4% during that nine year time period (3872 people), PSU was up 2% at that time (1453 people), new construction was up 11% (3828 housing units brought online). Mr. Eich stated, if the population trend continued at this pace, it would be the slowest growth in the Centre region in 50 years.

Upcoming Meetings

- Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at Noon
- Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Madrid adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise L. Rhoads
Administrative Assistant