

**Meeting Agenda  
State College Borough Planning Commission  
May 21, 2020**

The State College Borough Planning Commission (PC) met on Thursday, May 21, 2020 at the Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street for a virtual Zoom meeting. Zoe Boniface, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Douglas Shontz, Assistant to the Borough Manager and Communications Director, assisted with the Zoom meeting.

**Members Present**

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

**Others Present**

Ed LeClear, Planning Director; Greg Garthe, Senior Planner/Zoning Officer; Isabel Storey, Senior Planner; Denise L. Rhoads, Administrative Assistant, Barry Gordon, OPG Architects; Jeff Zelisko, Core Spaces, and Derek Kalp, Pennsylvania State University

**PA Act 15 of 2020**

Mr. LeClear noted the new legislation gave municipalities the authorization to hold meetings electronically as an alternative to the requirement for a physical quorum at a single meeting location.

Mr. LeClear stated, on April 20, 2020, Pennsylvania (PA) Governor Tom Wolf signed the PA Senate Bill No. 841 into law, creating PA Act 15 of 2020. The Act included an amendment that modified local governments' procedures and deadlines for land development plan review and approval action during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the Act extended State College Borough's deadline to act on subdivision and land development plans. Applicants who submitted plans that were actively under review had been notified of their individual deadlines.

He stated once the emergency declarations were over, the Act would no longer be valid.

**Virtual Meeting Procedure Overview**

Ms. Boniface asked Mr. Shontz to give a brief overview of how virtual meetings proceeded. Mr. Shontz gave a brief overview and noted step-by-step instructions could be found on the Borough's website [www.statecollegepa.us](http://www.statecollegepa.us).

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Ms. Madden and seconded by Mr. Dutt to approve the March 4, 2020 meeting minutes as submitted. The vote was unanimously in favor.

## Chair Report

Ms. Boniface, Chair, had nothing to report.

## Public Hour

Anyone wishing to address the Commission with an item that was not on the agenda asked to be recognized at this time. They utilized the “raise hand” feature to notify Mr. Shontz that they would like to speak. Mr. Shontz recognized the participant and then unmuted them so they could address the Commission.

No comments or concerns were heard during the public hour.

## Land Development Plans

Final Plan - Core Signature Development at State College; Core Spaces, Developer; CID Zoning District, Signature Development Area; PennTerra Engineering, Engineer; Antunovich Associates and OGP Architects, Architect

Mr. Gordon’s and Mr. Zelisko’s presentation included:

- This project had no changes; however, the developers took into consideration comments from the PC and DRB from previous meetings such as:
  - DRB recommended seating areas along Hetzel Street.
  - PC/DRB recommended two 15-minute parking spaces which would be implemented.
  - Proposed generous kitchens per the DRBs’ comment.
  - First floor plan on College Avenue had the potential for outdoor seating.
  - Proposed two access entries.
  - Proposed three levels of parking for a total of 175 parking spaces, with 4 spaces beyond what was required by the ordinance.
  - Proposed two charging stations along with bicycle parking.
  - Residential units would have their own lobby.
  - Levels 3-13 would be all residential units with 13 units per floor.
  - Level 14 would have a pool terrace, two green roofs and mechanical space.
  - The plan proposed 453 bedrooms, 135 units, and 175 parking spaces.
  - Materials did not change since the previous presentation with all windows being fixed, masonry and glassy elements on levels one and two. Calder Way elevation had some dark brick elements.
  - Mr. Zelinsky discussed shadow studies and noted there were no changes from the original plan.
- Mr. Garthe noted the project was within the area designated to allow “Signature Developments” as a Conditional Use within the Commercial Incentive District (CID) zoning district.
- The conditional use process required review against specific criteria in the zoning ordinance for Signature Developments. Core Spaces received Conditional Use approval from Borough Council on March 2, 2020.

Mr. Garthe shared the DRB comments from their meeting on May 19, 2020:

- He noted the DRB stated, overall, they liked the design, the changing stations, and commended the developers on looking for LEED certification.
- The DRB recommended pursuing a grocery store for a commercial tenant and noted underground parking garage lighting was important.

Mr. Garthe shared staff comments:

- Staff met with the Borough Arborist, Alan Sam, to work through some items such as wider sidewalks around Hetzel Street and East College Avenue. Mr. Garthe noted staff had one concern regarding the lower level where the bicycle parking was proposed and asked how bicycles would be retrieved and secured. He asked if there would be any consideration in rearranging this area.

#### PC comments per member

- Mr. Eich asked if the large living area shown on the Hetzel Street side was reserved for occupants only and was there a laundry room on each floor. Mr. Zelinsky stated yes. Mr. Eich also asked how many bicycle parking spaces there were, and Mr. Gordon stated between 50 and 60. Mr. Eich complimented the developers for pursuing LEED certification.
- Ms. Genger asked where commercial parking would be and stated she was concerned about a traffic problem along Calder Way. Mr. Zelinsky stated the traffic study showed not much traffic movement in the area.
- Ms. Boniface asked if there would be a demand for charge stations could they be retrofitted. Mr. Zelinsky stated it could be done.

Ms. Boniface noted any comments would be incorporated into the plan review letter.

#### Preliminary/Final Plan - Foxdale Village Groundskeeping Building and Bird Garden; Foxdale Village Corporation, Developer; R2 and R3B Zoning Districts; Nittany

Ms. Boniface gave a brief overview:

- Foxdale Village proposed to construct an 800 ft<sup>2</sup> groundskeeping building and associated work yard, covered material storage bins, bird garden structure, and landscaping features near the onsite parking structure along East Marylyn Avenue.
- The project also included realignment of the access driveway to the parking deck to eliminate a dangerous blind curve.
- An associated lot consolidation plan was submitted prior to the land development plan and proposed combining the main Foxdale tract with three small parcels which included a vacant single-family home lot and two small strips of land that were previously planned for the extension of Norma Street until they were vacated in recent years. There were public utilities within the former Norma Street right-of-way, however Foxdale had been granted a variance to construct the new access road for the parking deck in that area, subject to an easement agreement.

Mr. Zerby and Mr. Kalp's presentation included:

- The property was on the corner of Norma Street and East Marylyn Avenue.
- Proposed road alignment.
- Proposed bird sanctuary included a walking path with a the lot consolidation to maximize the garden area; proposed trees: Red Oak, Norway Maples and Spruce, the accessible path would connect to Tusseyview Park with small seating areas, and rainwater would be channeled to a bird bath near the bird house shelter.
- The groundskeeping building would be four covered stalls.
- Proposed a continuation of the sidewalk along Norma Avenue.
- Proposed placing screening for miscellaneous items.

#### DRB comments

- DRB suggested keeping the preliminary right of way open.
- Plantings to attract the proper species of birds, (could have unwanted birds roosting in the parking and bird garden structure).
- Consider an open fence design that could attract more species of birds.
- Consider planting fruit trees.
- Consider skylights in the groundskeeping building.
- Overall, the DRB liked the plan.

#### Staff comments

- Mr. Garthe stated staff was concerned if the opening of the fence into the work yard was adequate for vehicles going in/out.
- Noted easements would allow obstructions within utilities.
- Sewer tapping would go through the Engineering Department.
- Was concerned about how the bird garden would affect the water usage.
- Aaron Jolin, Borough Engineer, stated he really liked this plan. He noted there were a lot of kids who biked in this area to the State College Friends Schools and they accessed the trails along University Drive and wanted to make sure to keep the corridor safe.

#### PC comments

- Ms. Madden stated she liked the accessible walkway to Tusseyview Park and asked if it was meant to be accessible to the public as well. Mr. Kalp stated it would be open to the public.
- Ms. Genger asked if the path wide was enough for slow moving walkers as well as bikers. Mr. Kalp stated the width was a typical Borough sidewalk width of five feet and it would not be for high traffic. Mr. LeClear suggested using some signage to help mitigate this. Mr. Kalp stated there would be an interpretive sign letting people know it was a Foxdale property.

Richard Lyle, a Foxdale resident, stated the area would not be for public use.

- Mr. Dutt asked where the back of the bird garden would be. Mr. Kalp stated it would be the Tusseyview Park side. Mr. Dutt also asked if there would be

screenings along the basketball court. Mr. Kalp noted there would be grade changes and border plantings.

- Mr. Eich stated the seating areas were too far apart along the path.
- Ms. Boniface asked if the grass would be replaced with groundcover. Mr. Kalp stated there would be some. Ms. Boniface also asked if there would be any future plans to replace the Norway Maples and Mr. Kalp stated there were not.

Ms. Boniface noted any comments would be incorporated into the plan review letter.

## **Official Reports and Correspondence**

Borough Council (BC): Mr. LeClear reported Council would conduct public hearings on the following proposed zoning amendments:

- Exceptions for Private Garages at Single-Family Dwellings on Large Lots in the Residence 1 (R1) Zoning District – June 1, 2020
- Rezoning a Portion of Tax Parcel 36-26-22 from Public Activities (PA) to Residence 2 (R2) – July 6, 2020

Mr. LeClear noted the Community Development Block Grant received COVID funding to be used for housing.

Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB): Mr. Garthe reported on the following:

- Variance - Days Inn Penn State  
On June 9, 2020, the ZHB would hear a request from Days Inn Penn State for a variance from the 25-foot height limit of the Borough's sign ordinance. The applicant intended to relocate an existing exterior sign to another part of the building but retain the non-conforming height of 45 feet. The property was located at 240 South Pugh Street in the General Commercial (C) zoning district. The request was reviewed by the Design Review Board (DRB) at its May 19, 2020 meeting, as required by the Borough Code.
- Variances - Scholar<sup>X</sup> Hotel  
On June 23, 2020, the ZHB would hear a request from Scholar<sup>X</sup> Hotel for four variances from the Borough Code. The project was currently underway and involved renovations to the Glennland Building, located at 205 East Beaver Avenue in the Commercial Incentive District (CID) zoning district. Requested variances related to the height and size of a projecting sign, height of accent LED strip lighting, and outdoor lighting levels. The sign variance requests were reviewed by the DRB at its May 19, 2020 meeting, as required by the Borough Code.

Upcoming Land Development Plans: Mr. Garthe reported on the following:

- Final Plan – Pennsylvania State University (PSU) West 2 Building
- Preliminary Plan - PSU West 1 Building
- Preliminary Plan - PSU Lasch Building Expansion
- Preliminary Plan - PSU Lasch Building QB Lab

Staff Updates: Mr. LeClear reported on the zoning revision. Mr. LeClear stated he asked the Borough Manager when staff could start scheduling meetings. He also stated a parking study draft was ready and should have a PC review later this summer. He noted a lot of work had been done on this version.

Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC): Mr. Eich reported CRPC met at beginning of month. Items on the agenda: 1) new opportunities for workforce housing within the region and some of the findings on the preliminary report were there remained a premium on the sale of single-family housing that had student rental permits within the Borough, owners of multi-family units had made substantial improvements and both multi-family and student rental units within walking distance to campus remained popular with the students, not sure if there are affordable housing programs that had the capacity to take on the purchase, ownership and maintenance of either the single-family or multi-family units.

Another agenda item was the comprehensive plan implementation program because of the impact of the pandemic. He noted their staff would continue working on three current items with no new items being added.

He also noted there was a discussion on the University Area Joint Authority's (UAJA) beneficial reuse water. Currently, every time there was a project proposed adjacent to one of the beneficial lines, permission would be needed to extend the lines. UAJA proposed creating a service area so that any project that fell within the service area could move forward without going through the approval process.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

- Wednesday, June 3, 2020 at Noon (tentative)
- Thursday, June 18, 2020 at 7 p. m.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Madrid adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise L. Rhoads  
Administrative Assistant