

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Planning Commission
June 5, 2019

The State College Borough Planning Commission (PC) met on Wednesday, June 5, 2019 at the State College Municipal Building, 243 S. Allen Street. Zoe Boniface, Chair, called the meeting to order at Noon.

Members Present

Zoe Boniface, Chair; Anita Genger, Vice-Chair; Jon Eich; Richard Kalin; and Ron Madrid

Members Absent

Mary Madden

Others Present

Ed LeClear, Planning Director; Jenna Wargo, Senior Planner; John Wilson, Zoning Officer; Amy Kerner, Borough Engineer; Greg Garthe, Senior Planner; Albert Drobka, Architect; Richard Francke, University Park Plaza Corporation owner; John Sepp, PennTerra Engineering; David Peck, Penn State University (PSU); Corey Rogalski, Pennoni; Chris Boskey, Kieran Timberlake; and Denise L. Rhoads, Administrative Assistant

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Madrid and seconded by Mr. Eich to approve the May 8, 2019 meeting minutes as amended. The vote was unanimously in favor

Chair Report

Zoe Boniface, Chair, had nothing to report.

Mr. LeClear introduced Greg Garthe as our new Senior Planner, formerly a regional planner. He also noted Ms. Wargo was promoted to Senior Planner for redevelopment.

Public Hour

No comments or concerns were heard during the public hour.

Land Development Plans

Final Plan - 880 Fraser Apartments (formerly Hamilton Plaza Apartments); University Park Plaza Corporation, Owner; CP3 Zoning District; PennTerra Engineering, Engineer; Albert Drobka, Architect

Mr. Drobka and Mr. Francke's proposal included:

- Mr. Drobka stated nothing had really changed from the last presentation other than a rain garden would be added to hold runoff from the roof and the parking lot.

PC comments:

- Ms. Boniface stated the building was “boring”. She suggested using a dark green with an accent color around the windows and add more plantings to spruce up the look.
- Mr. Dutt asked if the solar panels were already added and if the roof was flat. Mr. Drobka stated the roof was like a mansard and the roof would be prepared for possible solar panels. Mr. Dutt stated there seemed to be a lot of panels and would they handle the large amount of snow the region usually got. Mr. Drobka stated yes, they would.

Design Review Board (DRB) Comments: Mr. Garthe stated the DRB looked at the plans at their June 4, 2019 meeting. He noted the DRB were concerned about the limited amount of closet space, encouraged use of solar panels, would like to see more windows, and larger kitchens, and thought one of the rain gardens plant species might be invasive.

Borough Staff Comments: Mr. Garthe stated he had a question on the residential parking and Mr. Drobka answered his question.

Ms. Boniface noted the PC’s comments would be incorporated into the plan review letter.

Public Hour

Jeff Martin of 168 West Hamilton Avenue stated he was concerned about water flow into his home because of living in a low spot. He also asked if inclusionary housing (IH) was being considered. The developer stated, at this time they were considering paying the fee-in-lieu. Mr. LeClear stated the funding would help the Borough’s housing non-profits. Mr. Martin stated most houses on Crestmont Avenue were one-story and was concerned this building would overshadow the neighborhood. He noted he was also concerned about the increased traffic and noted residents in the neighborhood thought placing this building in this area was “unfortunate”.

Ms. Kerner stated there would not be any stormwater management runoff and the plans were still being reviewed.

PC’s Comments:

- Mr. Dutt stated there was a lot of vegetation between the car storage lot and the property and asked how much would be removed. Mr. Francke stated Alan Sam, Borough Arborist, asked that much of the vegetation be left intact.

Mr. Francke stated there was a system to the rear of the building that was actually doing what it was supposed to do.

He also noted they were definitely making the proposal solar ready with the idea of long-term.

- Mr. Eich asked Mr. LeClear how many units of IH were required and Mr. LeClear stated 1.8, which is rounded up to 2 units unless the fee-in-lieu option is utilized, in which case it is based on 1.8 units. Mr. Eich asked if the IH units would be configured differently. Mr. Francke stated they could not be.

Ms. Boniface noted the PC’s comments would be incorporated into the plan review letter.

Preliminary Plan - Center for Innovation, Making, and Learning; The Pennsylvania State University, Applicant; CID Zoning District; Pennoni, Engineer; Kieran Timberlake, Architect

Mr. Peck's presentation included:

- The plan proposed to demolish the James Building and construct a new building for the Center for Innovation, Making, and Learning.
- The new structure will be a six-story (95 ft tall) building containing 84,500 ft² floor area.
- A total of 32 parking spaces were proposed in an underground parking facility accessing Miller Alley and would be regulated for occupants of the building only.
- The structure was built in 1920 and was three stories.
- The entry on Burrows Street was not accessible for ADA. There would be no sidewalk along the new alley.
- It was built to property line.
- The proposal was to consolidate a few community groups into the new building (i.e.) PSU's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, Happy Valley Launch Box, Invent Penn State and, IST.
- Noted there would be a four-foot difference between Burrowes Street and Miller Alley and would look for connectivity in this area.
- Incorporating setbacks on the first floor to provide for sidewalks with lighting and the use of plenty of glass.

PC Comments:

- Ms. Genger was concerned with water runoff and Mr. Rogalski stated a green roof was proposed to help with this concern. Ms. Genger asked if a green roof could be a solar roof as well. Mr. Peck stated solar would not be proposed on the green roof, only for the larger roof above.
- Mr. Kalin asked if there were enough parking spaces to accommodate the number of residents to be housed there. Mr. Rogalski stated there would not be enough parking. Parking would be provided on campus. Mr. Sullivan stated those residents would be relying on CATA and the campus shuttle, (the parking ecosystem already in place on campus).
- Ms. Boniface asked if the 2-year plan for water runoff was going to accommodate the excessive rain we had been having. Mr. Rogalski stated the water runoff would not change.
- Ms. Boniface stated she was concerned about the glazing area on the Launch Box business regarding light control issues. Mr. Rogalski stated their ratio was about 40% glass.
- Mr. Dutt stated they would be changing the experience of those who stayed at the Hyatt. He noted the roof and side of the building are not "just those things".
- Mr. Madrid asked if Burrowes Street would be closed while the building was demolished and rebuilt. Mr. Rogalski stated the alley would be closed with no intention of closing Burrowes Street and they would provide a pedestrian path.
- It was noted construction would start October 2019 for demolition and abatement with total completion in 2021.
- Mr. Eich stated he would like more information on the proposed parking plan.
- Ms. Boniface stated she hoped to see high standards for aesthetics.

Ms. Boniface noted the PC's comments would be incorporated into the plan review letter.

Design Review Board Comments: Mr. Garthe stated the DRB reviewed the plan at their June 4, 2019 meeting. They stated the plan lacked creativity and design and suggested adding lights and cameras for safety.

Borough Staff Comments: Staff asked for clarity on how the plan would meet the requirements of the ordinance.

Ms. Boniface noted the PC's comments would be incorporated into the preliminary plan review letter.

Final Plan Minor Lot Line Adjustment for 415 Nimitz Avenue (John Globeck and Carolyn Wilhelm, Owner) and 1282 Smithfield Street (Cameron and Judy Bausch), R-2 Zoning District

Mr. Garthe noted these two properties contained single-family homes. The driveway of 415 Nimitz Avenue encroached within the property of 1282 Smithfield Street and the request was for a lot line adjustment. The lot line adjustment could occur since it met the lot requirements of the zoning ordinance.

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

Official Reports and Correspondence

Borough Council (BC): Mr. LeClear reported BC reviewed the operations agreement for the State College Area School District (SCASD) lighting amendment. The Borough Solicitor had prepared the draft and it should be on Council agenda within the next one or two meetings. He noted there had been more dialogue with the neighbors. He noted the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) tax abatement for the downtown commercial properties passed.

Land Development Plans: Mr. Garthe noted staff received a final plan submission for the PSU Henning Building.

Staff Updates: Mr. Eich asked how the zoning ordinance rewrite was coming along. Mr. LeClear stated staff had been focusing on filling open staff positions and once those had been completed, they should be able to reorganize in the summer. He noted he would be reviewing the 300+ pages of text in the next week or two.

Mr. LeClear stated the Allen Street Civic District Phase 2, which would now be called the Fairmount Civic District, started to look at feasibility studies. He noted the Borough was trying to be proactive in preparation for SCASD's decision regarding the Fairmount School building. Mr. Eich asked if the PC would have a role in the decision making and Mr. LeClear stated yes, they would have a major role.

Ms. Boniface thanked staff on being proactive regarding the Fairmount School building.

Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC): Mr. Eich noted CRPC would meet on June 6, 2019 and look at a presentation from Centre Region Parks and Rec on their comprehensive

plan. The Municipal Planning Organization staff presented information on additional money for impacting CATA and two for the long-range transportation plan.

Upcoming Meetings

Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 7 p.m.
Wednesday, July 3, 2019 at Noon

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Madrid adjourned the meeting at 12:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise L. Rhoads
Administrative Assistant