

**Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Planning Commission
August 7, 2019**

The State College Borough Planning Commission (PC) met on Wednesday, August 7, 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; Scott Dutt; and Ron Madrid

Members Absent

Jon Eich; Richard Kalin; and Mary Madden

Others Present

Ed LeClear, Planning Director; Greg Garthe, Senior Planner; Jenna Wargo, Senior Planner-Redevelopment; John Wilson, Zoning Officer; Amy Kerner, Borough Engineer; Mark Saville, HRG Architects; Neil Sullivan, Pennsylvania State University (PSU); Maria Papacharalambous, HOK Architects; and Denise L. Rhoads, Administrative Assistant

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Dutt and seconded by Mr. Madrid to approve the June 5, 2019 meeting minutes as submitted. The vote was unanimously in favor

Chair Report

Zoe Boniface, Chair, had nothing to report.

Public Hour

No comments or concerns were heard during the public hour.

Land Development Plans

Final Plan - Pennsylvania State University Henning Building Replacement Project; UPD Zoning District (Subdistrict 5); The Pennsylvania State University, Owner; Sweetland Engineering, Engineer; HOK Architects, Inc., Architect

Ms. Papacharalambous's presentation included:

- Proposed complete demolition and replacement of PSU's Henning Building since the existing building and infrastructure were at the end of their useful life and

could no longer support the education and research needs of the College of Agricultural Sciences.

- The property was along Shortlidge Road, adjacent to the Agricultural Sciences and Industries Building. The new building would have a similar footprint and a slightly smaller overall building size.
- The existing Henning Building was completed in 1967 and housed the Department of Veterinary and Biomedical Science Departments.
- The site plan had no changes.
- Two stories of laboratories above the first-floor overhang, and the basement would house the library.
- Materials would remain the same; mostly brick with some areas of stone, and grout color to match the brick better.
- Lower level plans showed storage, custodial area, loading dock, dumpsters, etc.
- Level 1 (northside) would house the administration offices, general purpose class rooms with a generous lobby, and lounge area for students.
- Levels 2 & 3 would house more administration offices, and student work spaces in the middle.
- Level 3 would house an open laboratory and a closed conference room.
- Level 4 would house penthouse with all metal panels.
- Full curtain glass wall between the connector to the two buildings.

PC's comments included:

- Ms. Boniface asked about the use of the stone plan on the north facade and Ms. Papacharalambous stated it was because the bids came in very high.
- Ms. Boniface asked if there would be a fence around the ramp area and Ms. Papacharalambous stated there would not be because it was a very flat area.

Design Review Board (DRB) comments:

Mr. Garthe stated the DRB suggested placing benches in the plaza area. Ms. Papacharalambous stated the seating area currently was in the grove area.

Ms. Boniface stated final comments could be made at this time and would be incorporated into the plan review letter.

Final Plan - Pennsylvania State University West Campus Parking Structure and Roadway Connection; UPD Zoning District (Subdistrict 4); The Pennsylvania State University, Owner; Herbert, Rowland, and Grubic, Inc, Engineer; Clayco/FS Architecture, Architects

Mr. Saville and Mr. Sullivan's presentation included:

- Proposed construction of a new parking structure on the West Side of campus to accommodate campus growth.
- Centre Area Transportation Authority bus loop access on the northwest corner to provide bicycle access and storage facilities inside.

- The project involved the demolition of some of the surface parking in West Campus, the extension of White Course Drive to the proposed parking structure, and the development of turn lanes on North Atherton Street.
- The parking deck would have six levels and include a total of 1,651 parking spaces with a net increase of 600 spaces.
- Existing stormwater management facility would be expanded to accommodate a much larger area.
- The design intent was: prepare for a future building with connections, plan ahead for stair towers, and to promote safe pedestrian access across Atherton Street.
- Landscape plan would be to use street tree plantings, add screen plantings, and ground cover in the stormwater management basin area.
- Utilities: minimal load demands, sanitary sewer lines, and water line relocations needed.
- Anticipated the structure would consolidate the surface parking on the West Campus and allow for the construction of future buildings noted in the West Campus Plan.

PC's comments included:

- Mr. Dutt was concerned pedestrians would be crossing the dangerous access path twice. Mr. Saville stated there was an upcoming project, in the design stages, that would direct traffic in a safer path. The intent was still to make this area as safe as possible for pedestrians. Mr. Dutt suggested, in the interim, close access to Atherton Street and direct them to the crossway near the Nittany Lion Inn. Mr. Saville stated there would be an existing walkway and closing the walkway on Atherton Street would be a discussion for PennDOT.
- Mr. Madrid asked about the Traffic Impact Study (TIS), and Mr. Saville stated it was in the final stages of review and had not been approved yet. Mr. LeClear stated that PC approval would be conditional on the outcome of the TIS. Mr. Madrid also asked who would be using the parking lot. Mr. Sullivan stated it would be the College of Engineering, IST, the Liberal Arts building, and faculty and staff. Mr. Madrid asked if there would be a parking attendant and Mr. Sullivan stated it would be automated with gates.
- Ms. Genger asked if there were restrooms on the new deck. Mr. Saville stated there would be one, but it was not a public restroom. Ms. Genger stated, according to the Centre Daily Times, in five years there would be issues again with traffic. Mr. Saville stated the Borough requested some coordination of signal plans and delaying some signals at crosswalk. Mr. LeClear clarified it was PSU, not the Borough who requested this.

Mr. LeClear stated the TIS was a third revision for this area, and at this point there would be a lot of work still to be done by the design team. Mr. Saville stated some issues were environmental such as the flood plain area and it was a lot to take into consideration.

- Mr. Dutt would like to see number of cars turning onto Park Avenue be less.

- Ms. Boniface asked for clarification of Park Smart. Mr. Saville stated it was similar to LEED certification and helped to show how to conserve energy such as providing spaces for electric cars and reducing the energy footprint of the building. Ms. Boniface asked if there had been any discussion of how to handle the increased rain volume in the future. Mr. Saville stated they were looking at conveying an additional 25 years. Ms. Boniface asked if non-PSU people could use the garage after hours and Mr. Saville stated it could be a possibility. Ms. Boniface stated she had been interested in the speculation as to what self-driven cars were going to mean for traffic seeing that estimates for personal cars would go down and that Borough streets would become parking lots if the self-driven cars did not have any place to park and asked if that had been considered in any part of all of the traffic and parking deliberations. Mr. Saville stated he would pass it along.
- Mr. Madrid stated any deliberation at this point was premature. The question of what the impact on the community would be had not been answered. The PC should have an opportunity to investigate all the negatives that might occur and find a solution. Mr. LeClear stated there had been a meeting with the Neighborhood Coalition, PSU, PennDOT and the Borough and a precedent had been set. Mr. Madrid's final comment was to recall what happened to the Highlands neighborhood when a gas line was put in. He noted this project was similar and the community would rise up and complain.
- Ms. Genger stated the PC should not be voting today without more information from the TIS.
- Ms. Boniface reminded the members that the Borough had no control over Ferguson Township's comments, opinions, etc. She suggested a possible joint meeting might need to be arranged.

DRB comments:

Mr. Garthe stated the DRB questioned the bicycle traffic during construction.

Public Comment

David Stone, 539 East Foster Avenue, stated he agreed with Mr. Madrid. He noted there was not copy of the West Campus master plan available and it should be made available to the Borough.

Christine Bair, Ferguson Township, stated she was concerned about how this was going to impact the bicycle and pedestrian paths. She noted there were no sidewalks for pedestrians. She would be talking to Ferguson Township to have them install sidewalks. She also noted this was not a bicycle and pedestrian friendly town contrary to other reports.

Eric Boeldt, 400 South Gill Street noted this plan should be for the long-term future. He noted, with the proposed way the traffic would be lined up, the building should not be approved in that location.

Official Reports and Correspondence

Borough Council (BC): Mr. Garthe stated at BC's August 5, 2019 regular meeting, they reviewed the following subdivision and lot consolidation plan: Final Plan: Minor Lot Line Adjustment for 415 Nimitz Avenue and 1282 Smithfield Street Approved

Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB): Variance - 235 Ridge Avenue: Mr. Garthe stated on August 13, 2019 at Noon, the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) would hear a request for a variance from Ch. XIX, Section 603.a: "Height, Dwellings not to exceed 25 feet, 2 stories." The property owners wish to remodel the attic of their two-story home to create more living space. The property is located in the R-2 zoning district.

Special Exception - 129 S. Sparks Street: Mr. Garthe stated on August 27, 2019 at Noon, the ZHB would hear a request for a special exception to allow an expansion of an existing office use located at 129 S. Sparks Street Per Ch. XIX, Section 965: Mixed Use District of the zoning ordinance, the ZHB is authorized to grant special exceptions in the mixed-use area of the R-3H district.

Upcoming Land Development Plans: Received a preliminary/final plan for the proposed Queenstown restaurant at 142 East College Avenue.

Staff Updates: Mr. LeClear reported the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance program passed Council but failed to pass the school board. He also noted the current sign ordinance was distributed for review. Mr. Boeldt stated the DRB should look at the sign ordinance and Mr. LeClear stated he agreed.

Upcoming Meetings

Thursday, August 22, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at Noon

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Madrid adjourned the meeting at 1:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise L. Rhoads
Administrative Assistant