

Borough of Doylestown Zoning & Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Monday, December 9, 2019
Scheduled Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Council Chambers

Present

Councilpersons present were Chairman Tim Brennan, Don Berk, and Ben Bell. Staff present was Karyn Hyland, Director of Building & Zoning, Phil Ehlinger, Deputy Borough Manager, and Jim Dougherty of Gilmore & Associates.

Call to Order

The December meeting of the Zoning & Planning Committee was held in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall, 57 W Court Street on Monday, December 9, 2019, and was called to order by Mr. Brennan at 7:01 PM.

Review and Approval of Minutes

On a motion from Mr. Brennan, seconded by Mr. Bell, the previous meetings' minutes were unanimously approved as submitted by a vote of 2 – 0 (Mr. Berk abstaining).

Zoning Hearing Board Recent Meeting – None.

Historic & Architectural Review Board Recommendations – November 21, 2019

SIGNS

29 S. Clinton Street, Sweetah's Gluten Free Bake Shop, business/applicant

Ms. Hyland reported that this was a straightforward sign application; there were no questions or comments from the Committee.

BUILDING

128 E. Ashland Street, Brian and Becky Vaughan, property owners

Ms. Hyland reported that this is an application to renovate and restore a garage that had suffered storm damage.

61 N. Church Street, Tim Mohen, property owner

Ms. Hyland noted that the Committee has seen this application several times now. It involves an addition to an existing home; the carport element was tabled during the initial application, and there is now a proposal for the carport.

100 Spruce Street, Robert & Char Hills, property owners

Ms. Hyland reported that this modern-style home is requesting approval to replace their existing clear glass garage doors with sliders in order to convert the area into a guest room.

156 E. Oakland Avenue, Ala & Carole Hubing, property owners

Ms. Hyland reported that the existing home has suffered tree damage from the May 29th storm. The proposal before the Committee last month included a brick façade, but the applicants have revised the plans to request HardiePlank siding. They are also adding a dormer.

255 W. Court Street, Chris & Helen Round, property owners

Ms. Hyland noted that this is the Margaret Mead house. The applicants are requesting approval to restore the garage on Beak Street, which is in fairly bad condition. The garage itself was constructed in the

1990s. The applicants will be replacing the siding and trim, and adding a cover over one of the entrances. Responding to a question from Mr. Brennan, Ms. Hyland confirmed that the restoration will maintain the same color and appearance. Mr. Bell stated that the owners are very careful stewards who understand the historical importance of the home.

On a motion from Mr. Brennan, seconded by Mr. Berk, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the HARB recommendations to the full Borough Council.

Land Development Waivers

SD/LD/W #2019-12, 300 (Three) Spruce Street, Doylestown LLC c/a Elliot Schunur, 300 Spruce Street, Doylestown PA 18901, TP #08-005-073

Ms. Hyland reported that this is an application for the demolition of an existing two-car garage and the reconfiguration of the parking lot. At last month's Zoning and Planning Committee meeting, the members present had agreed that the Land Development Waiver process was suitable. Ms. Hyland noted that she has prepared a draft recommendation for the Committee to use, should they do desire.

Responding to a question from Mr. Brennan, Ms. Kristen Holmes of Holmes Cunningham Engineering (representing the applicants) stated that the plan improves the circulation of the site and provides two additional surface parking spaces. Responding to a question from Mr. Bell, Ms. Hyland stated that the Shade Tree Commission's recommendations has been incorporated into the draft recommendation. Ms. Holmes added that there is only one foot of space along one side of the parking lot, although the applicants can add shrubbery to aid in buffering. They will then look into the areas behind or in front of the parking lot for potential trees.

On a motion from Mr. Brennan, seconded by Mr. Berk, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Land Development Waiver.

Land Development/Subdivision

SD/LD #2019-05 – Wood Street Lot Line Change and LD Revised Submission 93-95 Wood Street, TP #8-4-225 & 8-4-225-1, Lisa Pavlow, property owner

Ms. Hyland reported that this proposal is for an area directly behind the Wood Street playground. There is currently a twin home on the property, one half of which is vacant and in very poor condition. The applicant is proposing to demolish the vacant twin and shift the lot line to accommodate a new single family home; they would then construct another single family home on the other half of the proposed subdivision. The application was initially presented as a three-lot subdivision, but has since been scaled back. A garage was added to the applicant's half of the property.

Responding to questions from Mr. Brennan, Mr. Ehlinger stated that the applicant had rebuilt her half of the twin very nicely, anticipating that some day the other half would become available. The new single-family home would occupy the same footprint as the existing twins. Responding to a question from Mr. Brennan, Ms. Kristen Holmes of Holmes Cuning Engineering (representing the applicant) stated that trees exist along the back of the house and along the fence line of the parking lot. There will also be two trees added for additional buffering.

Responding to questions from Mr. Bell, Ms. Hyland stated that one of the trees referenced in the January application has fallen, and the remaining specimens are in very bad shape and would not count as removals. One significant ash tree has been treated, and an arborist is monitoring its condition with the hope of saving it. Responding to a question from Mr. Bell, Ms. Hyland stated that the recommendation from the Shade Tree Commission is not an ordinance requirement. Ms. Holmes stated that the applicant has agreed to try and fine space for an additional canopy shade tree. Responding to a question from Mr. Berk, Ms. Hyland confirmed that the draft memo references the Shade Tree recommendation.

Responding to a question from Mr. Brennan, Ms. Holmes stated that there are only five feet between the back of the house and the wall of the parking lot; they are hoping that the ash tree, which provides buffering for that area, will survive.

There was no public comment. On a motion from Mr. Brennan, seconded by Mr. Berk, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval for the Land Development and Subdivision application.

SD/LD #2019-09 – 50 N. Main Street, Preliminary and Final Review, TP #s 8-8-198 & 8-4-360, Worth & Worth LP property owners

Ms. Hyland stated that the Committee had seen this application last month; the same application (with updated dates) has been submitted for this meeting. It involves the demolition of the “red building” on Shewell Avenue, expanding the parking lot along Shewell, and adding a vertical addition to the rear of the existing structure. Architecturally, the applicants wish to restore some of the original appearance of the building. A Certificate of Appropriateness was granted by the Historic and Architectural Review Board, and zoning relief was also granted.

Responding to a question from Mr. Brennan, Ms. Kristen Holmes of Holmes Cunning Engineering (representing the applicants) stated that the grade steeper than 4% would be the parking area along Shewell, where pull-in and pull-out is directly off the street. Rear access will be through the bank property (for which there is an easement). Mr. Brennan asked if the existing parking spaces are impacted by the same issue, which Ms. Holmes confirmed. Responding to a question from Mr. Berk, Ms. Holmes stated that there will be 31 parking spaces compared to only 15 today.

Responding to a question from Mr. Brennan, Ms. Holmes stated that the siren would remain in place, perhaps with a slight adjustment in its location. Mr. Brennan hoped that something could be put in place that would maintain the siren. Ms. Hyland stated that she has not seen an agreement between the fire department and the property owner; it is a “handshake deal.” She cautioned that the siren may not be something that the Borough wishes to enforce. Mr. Ehlinger stated that he does not anticipate a problem with the current owner and the siren; either way, it is not part of the current proposal and should not be rolled into the Land Development. In response to a question from Mr. Berk, it was stated that the siren is used as an alert when fire engines are being dispatched; the fire-fighting personnel are notified by radio.

Mr. Brennan noted that the County Planning Commission had referenced 49 parking spaces, and asked if reserve spots would be located in the bank parking lot. Ms. Holmes stated reserve spots would likely be located there. She noted that there is a net gain of spaces and an improvement over the existing situation. Responding to questions from Mr. Brennan, Ms. Holmes stated that the parking spaces along Shewell may be designated with signage (although this is yet to be determined), and would specifically be for residents. No public parking spaces will be lost.

Responding to a question from Mr. Bell, Ms. Hyland stated that the Shade Tree Commission recommendations are included in the draft memo under Item 1. Mr. Bell noted that, at the previous Committee meeting, there had been discussion of a \$5,400 voluntary donation to the Borough’s Shade Tree Fund. Ms. Hyland stated that the requested tree waivers resulted in 54 caliper inches of tree; historically, there has been a \$100-per-inch donation to the fund, which is a starting point for conversation. Ms. Holmes stated that the applicants are looking to provide additional trees within the parking strip as well.

Mr. Bell made a motion to add a \$5,400 voluntary contribution to the Shade Tree Fund as an additional condition of Subdivision and Land Development approval. Mr. Brennan seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Brennan expressed a concern regarding the need for additional signage in the area. Mr. Ehlinger noted that the area in question is a transitional neighborhood between the Central Commercial district and residential areas. He stated that tactile strips (such as Belgian block or textured pavement), curb bump-outs, and enhanced striping are all tools that could be used to calm potential traffic. Mr. Ehlinger noted that they could also employ signage that follows the MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices). He added that Shewell is a one-way street, which is generally safer, and there is on-street parking, which helps to limit speeding issues. After some discussion, it was suggested that potential traffic-calming measures could be taken to the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Brennan made a motion to

include a traffic control sign – or other traffic calming measure – to the satisfaction of Borough staff as an additional condition of approval. Mr. Berk seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Responding to a question from Mr. Bell, Ms. Hyland stated that there was a trip generation study performed. She added that the parking evaluation performed by the Bucks County Planning Commission was not consistent with how Doylestown historically evaluates parking. Ms. Holmes stated that the trip generation analysis showed an existing 24 trips in the morning, and 23 trips in the afternoon. The proposal would generate 24 trips in the morning and 24 in the afternoon.

There was some additional discussion of signage and traffic calming. Mr. Ehlinger noted that the applicant has agreed to make significant public contributions, perhaps beyond what is typical for a project of this scale. Dr. Dougherty noted that the Borough had reviewed the applicants' trip generation study, and that they had used all of the standard rates. Mr. Brennan agreed that the number and type of signage could be placed in the capable hands of Borough staff.

On a motion from Mr. Brennan, seconded by Mr. Berk, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Subdivision and Land Development application, including the additional amendments related to Shade Tree contributions and signage.

Ordinances, Amendments & Resolutions None.

New/Old Business Responding to a question from Mr. Bell, Mr. Ehlinger stated that a draft ordinance on the issue of Air Bed and Breakfasts (Air B&Bs) will be completed by the first quarter of 2020.

Adjournment

On a motion from Mr. Berk, seconded by Mr. Bell, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dirk A. Linthicum

Meeting Minutes Secretary