

**LOWER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes for December 18, 2006

The Lower Pottsgrove Township Planning Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 18, 2006. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Geoffrey Dailey, at 6:27 p.m. and the following were in attendance:

Geoffrey Dailey, Chair
Frank Cebular, Vice Chair
Nick Hiriak
Rich Wood
Ron Dinnocenti

Rodney P. Hawthorne, Township Manager
Alyson Elliott, Assistant Manager
Thomas Yuhas, Township Engineer
Matthew Edmond, MCPC

A motion was made by Mr. Dinnocenti, seconded by Mr. Hiriak, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2006 meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

(#06-17) Buchert Ridge Community Phase I, *Amended Site Development Plan*: Proposal to remove the bus turnaround from the entrance and other resulting changes in a mixed-use, age-restricted development consisting of 40 dwelling units, including singles, twins, and triplexes; a converted office building on 7.5 acres at 2011 Buchert Road in an R-2 Residential District. The Board of Commissioners approved the original site plan on July 7, 2007. [Plan prepared by ProTract Engineering, Inc., dated 11-20-2006, and consisting of 31 pages].

The applicant, Wil Hallman, and the applicant's engineer, John McMenamin, represented this application. Mr. McMenamin presented a plan showing revisions to Phase I, which is currently under construction. Revisions to this phase include modifying the alignment of Bard's Way so they could allow connection of some of the driveways of the existing properties connection to the internal roadways, which will enhance safety on Buchert Road. The most significant change for this project the removal of the bus turnaround from the Phase I entrance, which will be move the entrance for Phase II. This change will improve safety. Mr. McMenamin said they are waiting for PennDOT approval of the Highway Occupancy Permit showing the revisions to the entranceway.

Mr. Yuhas pointed out to the applicant that, in a staff meeting, he agreed to remove units 10, 11, and 12 and the stub road from the Phase I plan and that Phase II gave Phase I an easement for some of the development that will cross over.

Action: The Planning Commission took no action on this application. The applicant will wait for the HOP approval and revise plans as necessary.

(#06-05) Buchert Ridge Community II, *Preliminary Land Development Plan*: Proposal for a 44-unit, mixed-use, age-restricted development consisting of 40 dwelling units, including garden apartments, singles, twins, and triplexes; community center; offices; accessory buildings; and a bus turnaround on 5.86 acres at 2011 Buchert Road in an R-2 Residential District. [Plan prepared by ProTract Engineering, Inc., dated 12-04-2006, and consisting of 17 pages].

The applicant, Wil Hallman, and the applicant's engineer, John McMenamin, represented this application. Mr. McMenamin presented a revised plan for Phase II. He discussed the relocation of the bus turnaround,

the internal sidewalk plan, the need for a conditional use hearing to build the two apartment/community center buildings and stormwater system on slopes greater than 25 percent, and how the roof drains for the two apartment/community center buildings are connected and channeled into the basin located at the corner of the property near Buchert and Kepler Roads. Mr. Edmond asked the applicant if the plans indicated a dry stream bed or wetland area between the two apartment/community center buildings. Mr. McMenamain said it was a natural area that channeled water to the stream below, but is typically dry. It is considered a Waters of the Commonwealth, but he thinks riprap may be an appropriate solution to prevent erosion. Mr. Wood expressed concern about this treatment of the area and requested further review. Mr. Yuhas asked if the buildings will be built into the hill and if they were staying out of the 20 foot buffer. Mr. McMenamain explained how the buildings will be situated into the hill and affirmed that they will not impact the 20 foot buffer.

- Action:** The Planning Commission took no action on this application as it is waiting on various review letters. The applicant will address the following items:
- Apply for a conditional use for development on steep slopes
 - Review treatment of the natural swale between the two buildings

Mr. Dinnocenti left the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

(#06-15) Tanager Woods Development LLC, *Minor Land Development Plan*: Proposal to develop a 6,1741 sq. ft. drive and parking area, 399 sq. ft. of sidewalks and stormwater system on .448 acres in an R-4 Residential District with a VC Sanatoga Village District Overlay. [Plan prepared by ProTract Engineering, Inc., dated 10-06-2006 and consisting of 7 sheets].

The applicant John McMenamain represented this application. Mr. McMenamain presented a plan demonstrating shared parking between his property and the Foot & Ankle property and said he is working on a meeting with Dr. Rinaldi to discuss a cooperative agreement. He expressed reservations about sharing parking, saying he believes it will benefit Dr. Rinaldi more than him.

- Action:** The Planning Commission took no action on this application and said it would wait to hear from the applicant about discussions with Dr. Rinaldi.

NEW BUSINESS

(#06-16) Sunnyville Office Complex II, *Preliminary Land Development Plan*: Proposal to convert a residence into a 4,750 sq. ft. commercial office building on a 19,500 sq. ft. parcel at 1954 East High Street in an R-4 Residential District with a Sanatoga Village District Overlay. [Plan prepared by Aston Surveyors/Engineers, Inc., dated 12-15-2003, last revised 06-12-2006, and consisting of 5 pages].

The applicant, Jim Vlahos, and applicant's engineer, John Aston, represented this application. Mr. Aston explained that this lot had significant constraints in regard to parking and stormwater due to the narrow shape of the lot. He had received several variances and a special exception in April 2006 to allow him to change the use to commercial and provide relief from certain parking and landscaping requirements. The special exception and variances, however, have expired since the applicant had not applied for a building permit within six months of the Zoning Hearing Board's Decision & Order, as per §2111: Expiration of Special Exceptions and Variances. Mr. Yuhas distributed the engineer's review letter, dated December 15, 2006, to the applicant and Planning Commission prior to the meeting and the applicant addressed some of the comments in the letter.

Zoning Comment #2:

Mr. Aston reported that the property cannot provide an eight foot buffer and provide ample parking and driveway space; therefore it is important that he receives zoning relief. Mr. Vlahos said he will maintain the fence line to provide a buffer between his driveway and his neighbor's. Currently, there is a low stone wall that separates the two drives, which Mr. Vlahos said might be removed to match the driveway grades.

Mr. Yuhas asked if Mr. Vlahos had spoken with his neighbors about sharing the driveways so they can both one driveway that moves in both directions. Mr. Vlahos said the neighbor had given him a significant amount of grief during the zoning hearing process because she was against him converting the property to a commercial use.

Mr. Edmond suggested that the applicant might want to reduce the drive from 14 feet to 10 or 12 feet to allow a two- to four-foot buffer between the properties. There was general concern over reducing the drive to less than 12 feet for emergency vehicle access. Mr. Vlahos also said he believes there are several residential properties a few homes to west of his that are for sale and could be converted to commercial uses for which he may be able to create shared drives or parking in the future. The Planning Commission generally agreed that a 12 foot driveway with a fence and arbor vita might be an option for Mr. Vlahos to explore because it would provide a buffer and make it relatively easy to connect his drive to the neighboring drive, should it become an option. Mr. Dailey suggested that the Planning Commission would be willing to support some sort of compromise.

Subdivision & Land Development Comments:

The applicant discussed the need for waivers from §504.4.E and 507.1.G to allow parking three feet from the side property lines, §504.4.H to reduce landscaping size and quantity, §504.4.K to reduce aisle width from 25 to 22 feet, and §1003.2.A to eliminate landscape islands from parking lot. Because the property is so tight, the applicant has set parking spaces at 10x18 feet to enable a reduction in aisle size and maximize parking spaces.

The Bursich review letter also discussed the architectural elements of the proposed addition and deferred comment to the Township Architect. Mr. Vlahos presented the Township with an architectural plan of the project, which resembles the Visiting Nurses Association building on High Street.

Stormwater Management Comments:

Because the property is an odd lot, the applicant needs to be creative in stormwater management solutions. Mr. Yuhas reported that this property is also located in an area that takes a great deal of water from High Street, which is thereby funneled down First Avenue and other properties on the south side of High Street, straining the stormwater system in Maple Ridge and flooding properties on First Avenue. Mr. Yuhas said the applicant will need to produce a stormwater management solution that will not produce anymore stormwater than the property currently produces and possibly contribute to the improvement of the current stormwater solution. There was discussion about certain types of stormwater management ideas, including porous pavement, grassy pavers, using the berm at the back of the property to direct the water which would require an easement with Maple Ridge, and infiltration. Mr. Hawthorne requested that the applicant provide calculations for infiltration and an on lot detention/retention system to see if that would work. If these calculations did not yield adequate results, the Township would work with the Applicant to negotiate with Maple Ridge. Mr. Dinnocenti said he would strongly favor the applicant working with Maple Ridge.

Action: The Planning Commission took no action on this application, but asked the applicant to explore the following possibilities:

- Creative buffering between his driveway and the neighboring property
- Explore creative stormwater management techniques

Planning Module Reviews

Mr. Hawthorne explained that since the Township is now operating under a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to alleviate some of its Inflow & Infiltration problems in the sanitary sewer system, applicants must now complete a Planning Module, which must receive approval from the Planning Commission. He explained that both applications have been reviewed by the Township's Authority Engineer and the Montgomery County Planning Commission. The Sewer Authority approved both Planning Modules at their December meeting. The Board of Commissioners will consider the Bruster's Ice Cream Module at their first January meeting. Mr. Hawthorne said he has no reservations about the Planning Commission recommending approval of both Planning Modules.

Bruster's Ice Cream Planning Module

Action: A motion was made by Mr. Hiriak, seconded by Mr. Cebular, and unanimously approved by a 4-0 vote, to recommend approval of the Bruster's Ice Cream Planning Module.

Buchert Ridge Phase II Planning Module

Action: A motion was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Hiriak, and unanimously approved by a 4-0 vote, to recommend approval of the Buchert Ridge Phase II Planning Module.

OTHER BUSINESS

Zoning Ordinance Rewrite

Mr. Edmond said he completed a draft of the sign section of the Zoning Ordinance, which the staff has begun to review. They are approximately halfway through their review and should finish at their January meeting. Mr. Edmond said he anticipates the Planning Commission receiving a copy of the sign ordinance early in February for review.

Joint Lower Pottsgrove and Limerick Township 422 Sanatoga Exit Area Master Plan

Ms. Elliott reported that and Mr. Hawthorne met with Limerick and John Cover of MCPC to further discuss the types of items they would like to the study to cover. It was a good session and they expect to begin work on a Request for Proposal shortly.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m. by a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Cebular, and unanimously approved by a 4-0 vote.

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for January 22, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Alyson Elliott, Assistant Manager