

MEETING MINUTES
January 24, 2023
7:00 PM

A Meeting of the New Britain Township Planning Commission was held on January 24, 2023, at the Township Administration Building, 207 Park Avenue, New Britain Township, PA beginning at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were Chair Marco Tustanowsky, members Theresa Rizzo Grimes, Michelle Martin and Kristen Ives, and Board Liaison Stephanie Shortall. Township Director of Planning & Zoning David Conroy and Township Assistant Planning & Zoning Officer Ryan Gehman were also in attendance.

I. Reorganization

1. Nomination & Appointment of Temporary Chair: Upon nomination by Mr. Tustanowsky, seconded by Ms. Rizzo-Grimes, and unanimously carried, Stephanie Shortall was appointed as Temporary Chair.

2. Nomination & Appointment of Chair: Upon nomination by Ms. Rizzo-Grimes, seconded by Ms. Martin, Marco Tustanowsky was nominated as Chair. No other nominations were presented.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ms. Martin, seconded by Ms. Rizzo-Grimes, and unanimously carried, to close nominations and appoint Marco Tustanowsky as Chair.

3. Nomination & Appointment of Vice Chair: Upon nomination by Mr. Tustanowsky, seconded by Ms. Martin, A. James Scanzillo was nominated as Vice Chair. No other nominations were presented.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Tustanowsky, seconded by Ms. Rizzo-Grimes, and unanimously carried, to close the nominations and appoint Jim Scanzillo as Vice Chair.

4. Nomination & Appointment of Secretary: Upon nomination by Ms. Rizzo-Grimes, seconded by Ms. Ives, Deborah Rendon was nominated as Secretary. No other nominations were presented.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ms. Rizzo-Grimes, seconded by Mr. Tustanowsky, and unanimously carried, to close the nominations and appoint Deborah Rendon as Secretary.

II. Public Meeting Agenda

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Minutes from 10/25/2022 Planning Commission Meeting:

MOTION: Upon motion of Ms. Martin, seconded by Mr. Tustanowsky, the October 25, 2022 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

3. 180 New Britain Blvd/354 Schoolhouse Rd – Sketch Plan

Mr. Tustanowsky introduced the project and noted that the applicants presented to the Planning Commission in 2022 for the initial parking lot expansion. Kim Fasnacht of Rettew Associates introduced herself and project, noting that the proposal is part of the applicant's previous project at the site. Fasnacht

stated that the applicant recently purchased the 354 Schoolhouse Rd parcel in order to expand the existing parking on site. Fasnacht stated that the site currently contains 3 loading docks, and the plans are to add 5 additional loading docks, 18 trailer parking spaces and 43 additional parking spaces. Fasnacht stated that the applicant is looking for feedback on the sketch plan, noting that zoning relief is needed. Fasnacht also indicated that the applicant would be presenting a proposed conservation easement swap to the Board of Supervisors. She also noted that an underground infiltration basin is proposed similar to what was installed for the previous parking lot expansion.

Andy Miller of Catalyst Commercial Development expanded on the intentions for the site, stating that they wish to clean up the lot lines and also expand parking on the site. Miller stated that they are proposing more dock doors to create a more attractive and leasable building, as well as proposing more car parking as the existing tenant's business expands. Miller noted that the proposed expansion would allow vehicles to create a full loop around the building.

Mr. Tustanowsky asked if the 18 proposed spaces are intended for use by 18-wheelers. Miller responded that the spaces would be primarily for the trailers that are currently used to load the pre-made bathroom and kitchen pods onto. Mr. Tustanowsky asked if there would be trailers in the parking spaces on a permanent basis, to which Miller responded there would be.

Mr. Tustanowsky asked for clarification on the proposed easement swap. Miller stated that as part of their proposal, the lot lines would be extinguished between the 180 New Britain Blvd and 354 Schoolhouse Rd parcels, which would provide additional open space that would be able to be added to the conservation easement on the existing lot.

Mr. Tustanowsky asked if there are plans to buffer the property from Schoolhouse Rd. Fasnacht responded that there is an existing buffer that will be maintained, though it is largely deciduous trees. Because of this, Fasnacht explained, the applicant plans to supplement the buffer and conservation easement area with evergreen trees.

Mr. Tustanowsky asked if the site would still take access from New Britain Blvd. Fasnacht responded that there will be no circulation change and the site would still utilize the existing driveway off of New Britain Blvd. Fasnacht also noted that the applicant plans to prohibit truck circulation counter-clockwise around the building.

Mr. Tustanowsky asked if the applicant conducted any studies to determine if the site needed additional trailer parking. Miller responded that the proposal is partially based on the need for more parking and partially based on the available space on the property. Mr. Tustanowsky stated that his main concerns with the project are regarding buffering the views of the trucks from Schoolhouse Rd. Ms. Rizzo-Grimes noted that the existing house on the 354 Schoolhouse Rd parcel had no buffering. Fasnacht responded that they will comply with the buffering requirements in the Township's ordinances.

A discussion about neighbor notifications for land development ensued. Mr. Tustanowsky reiterated his concerns about buffering along Schoolhouse Rd due to the residential areas that are nearby. Fasnacht responded that there is no truck traffic allowed on Schoolhouse Rd, but that the applicant will be sure to look into how the proposal will impact neighboring views and will buffer accordingly. Mr. Tustanowsky responded that he feels the buffer should include trees that shield the view year-round. Fasnacht responded that the buffer would likely be similar to what currently exists at the corner of Schoolhouse and Trewigtown Rd, where there are large evergreen trees.

Mr. Tustanowsky asked how long an average 18-wheeler is. Miller responded that they are roughly 65' long with the cab, and Fasnacht noted that the parking is primarily for trailers only, not the truck itself. Fasnacht further clarified that the proposed spaces would be where the trailers are picked up when loaded and dropped off when the business is receiving a delivery. Miller further noted that the finished product likely will not sit out longer than overnight as the applicant does not want their products exposed to the elements.

Ms. Rizzo-Grimes stated that she felt the consolidation of the two lots was a good idea, and that the home on the 354 Schoolhouse Rd parcel was in an awkward spot.

4. Other Business

Mr. Tustanowsky introduced the Planning Commission to Dave Conroy, newly appointed Director of Planning & Zoning for the Township. Marco noted that Dave previously worked for Plymouth Township, and that he is hopeful that Dave will be able to aid in overseeing both Planning and Zoning matters.

Ms. Shortall noted that the position was created after a suggestion by the Township Manager. Mr. Tustanowsky asked if Mr. Gehman will continue to be the Assistant Planning & Zoning Officer. Mr. Conroy replied that Mr. Gehman would remain as Assistant Planning & Zoning Officer. Mr. Conroy indicated that for more significant projects, he would be appearing at the Planning Commission meetings with Mr. Gehman.

Mr. Tustanowsky inquired about Mr. Conroy's job description. Mr. Conroy stated that he would be overseeing all zoning and land development related matters in the Township, as well as the Building Department and Code Enforcement. Mr. Tustanowsky welcomed Mr. Conroy to the Township.

4. Public Comment

5. Adjournment

MOTION: A motion was made by Ms. Martin, seconded by Ms. Rizzo-Grimes, and unanimously carried to adjourn the January 24, 2023 Meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marco Tustanowsky, Chair



Ryan Gehman, Assistant Planning & Zoning Officer