

MEETING MINUTES

June 28, 2022

7:00 PM

A meeting of the New Britain Township Planning Commission was held on June 28, 2022, at the Township Administration Building, 207 Park Avenue, New Britain Township, PA beginning at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were members Chair Marco Tustanowsky, Vice Chair Jim Scanzillo, Secretary Deb Rendon, Board Liaison Stephanie Shortall, and members Kristen Ives, Kenneth Onsa and Theresa Rizzo-Grimes. Township Assistant Planning & Zoning Officer Ryan Gehman and Township Engineer Craig Kennard were also in attendance.

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Approval of the Minutes from the Meeting of April 26, 2022

MOTION: Upon motion of Mr. Scanzillo, seconded by Ms. Rendon, and unanimously carried, the April 26, 2022 meeting minutes were approved.

III. 700 Manor Dr – Sketch Plan Review

Bill Rearden from Bohler Engineering introduced the project on behalf of J.G. Petrucci, Inc. Rearden stated that the lot in question is Lot 4 of the New Britain Corporate Center. Rearden discussed the history of the property, noting that Lot 4 previously included the property which is now The Madison apartments, the property which is now AWeber, and the property which is now the CHOP Primary Care building at the intersection of Manor Dr and Schoolhouse Rd. The proposed building would be located on the large lot adjacent to AWeber which is currently a parking lot (TMP 26-005-049-014), with a loading dock area located on the empty lot adjacent to the parking lot (TMP 26-005-049-013).

Rearden continued to discuss the proposed improvements, stating that the grass area which the loading docks are proposed was initially approved for roughly a 60,000 SF office building. The applicant is proposing a building of the same size, but with a K18 Flex Space Use (office/warehouse). Rearden indicated that he was seeking feedback on the project from the planning commission and noted that he received a review letter from Gilmore & Associates, Inc., most of which the applicant is willing to comply with, aside from a few Zoning comments which he wanted to discuss.

Before discussing the review letter, Mr. Tustanowsky asked to see an elevation of the proposed building. Rearden displayed an initial elevation of the proposed building, noting that it is subject to change as the building does not currently have a tenant. Rearden went on to explain that Worldwide Stereo initially expressed interest in the building, but is no longer planning to use the space. Rearden noted that the design of the building utilizes brick to try and match the facades of the nearby buildings in the Corporate Center, and that the building is geared towards smaller tenants, not a major distribution operation. Mr. Tustanowsky asked if the buildings would be retrofitted on need or if there are a certain amount proposed. Rearden stated that the current plan is designed to accommodate roughly 20 loading docks at the rear of the building with drive in bays on both ends, but they do not necessarily need to be built until tenants are found.

A discussion ensued about potentially limiting vehicles over a certain size from accessing the site. Rearden indicated that any restrictions on Manor Dr would be dictated by local regulations, but noted that one benefit of the location is that trucks would be able to access the site via County Line Rd to Manor Dr and would not have to use Schoolhouse Rd.

A discussion ensued about the proposed use of the site and its classification as an F6 Business Campus. Rearden stated that in an F6 Business Campus, both I3 General Office and K3 Warehousing are permitted uses, but a K18 Flex Space that utilizes both of these uses is not permitted, even though it is permitted in the underlying C-3 Zoning District. A conversation ensued about if 2 uses can be conducted in the proposed building, or if the applicant would need Zoning relief as the K18 use is not permitted in the F6 Business Campus and two uses cannot be conducted in one building.

Mr. Onsa expressed concerns about truck movements from Manor Dr onto Schoolhouse Rd, and from Schoolhouse Rd onto Butler Ave. Rearden stated that trucks would not be utilizing Schoolhouse Rd and would instead leave the loading area and travel down Manor Dr to County Line Rd. Rearden also stated that confirming the truck turning movements will be part of their design process to ensure trucks can safely navigate to and from the site.

Mr. Tustanowsky asked about the layout of the building and how many stories the building will be. Rearden stated that the building would be 1 story. He went on to indicate that the building could be used as a K3 Warehouse use with an office space component, which Mr. Kennard stated would be permitted as long as the amount of warehouse and amount of office space complies with the Zoning Ordinance. Rearden noted that there is a box shown on the plan that is meant to demonstrate the maximum amount of office space permitted for a K18 Flex Space Use, which would be determined by the tenant that moves in.

A discussion ensued about the lots that the building is proposed to be located on. Rearden noted that Lot 4 as a whole is one lot which consists of smaller units within it, but it is not necessarily subdivided. Rearden stated that it is governed by regulations that were imposed when the site was initially developed,

Rearden stated that the proposed plan meets the parking requirements for the proposed use.

Rearden asked for input from the Planning Commission regarding the Butler Avenue Corridor Overlay District, noting the site's distance from Butler Avenue. Mr. Kennard advised the applicant that they may need waivers from certain requirements of the Overlay District, but as long as the applicant meets the general spirit of the Overlay District there shouldn't be major issues.

Mr. Tustanowsky asked why the site was laid out with the loading docks closer to Manor Dr where they may be more visible from the road. Rearden stated that one reason was because of the physical characteristics of the site, and noted that the part of the site where the loading docks are proposed is at a much lower elevation than the proposed location of the building, allowing for better screening of the docks from Manor Dr. Additionally, Rearden stated that the proposed layout would orient the front of the proposed building towards the front of the AWeber building.

Mr. Kennard suggested that the applicant try and address some comments received from the Planning Commission, and then go in front the of Board of Supervisors for input on the plan.

IV. 267 Creek Rd – Preliminary Plan Review

Adam Crews of Crews Surveying introduced himself and one of the applicants, Caleb Frankel of 267 Creek Rd. Crews stated that Frankel's property is currently nonconforming in regard to lot area and impervious, and that Frankel is proposing a lot line change with his neighbor at 283 Creek Rd to acquire slightly less than half an acre of land. Crews stated that the additional lot area would bring Frankel's property into compliance with the Zoning Ordinance by bringing the lot area above 80,000 SF net and bringing the impervious surface ratio on the property below 12%.

Ms. Rendon asked if the nonconforming status of Frankel's lot is why he wants to do the lot line change. Crews stated that Frankel is considering installing a pool on his property and he would not be able to do so without doing the lot line change or receiving a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board. Crews indicated that all of the comments on the Gilmore letter are "will comply," and stated that he had no further comments on the review. Mr. Kennard did not have any additional comments.

Crews noted that the review letter recommended the Township require a fee in lieu of public improvements, and indicated that the applicant would be looking for a waiver from this requirement due to the fact that there is no actual work being done on the property. Mr. Kennard stated that the Planning Commission would not vote on the granting of the waiver directly and that the Board of Supervisors would be the ones who decide if the waiver is granted, but he feels that the waiver would be supported as no new lots are being created and there is no land development proposed. Ms. Rendon asked if the natural resources on site will have to be protected, to which Mr. Kennard answered yes.

Ms. Rendon made a motion to recommend approval of the project, and Mr. Scanzillo seconded the motion.

V. 396 King Rd – Sketch Plan Review

Rob Cunningham of Holmes Cunningham Engineering introduced the applicant, Joe Casadonti of Casadonti Homes. Cunningham stated that the applicant is proposing a subdivision and land development in the Watershed district that contemplates 5 new lots and retains an existing home for 6 lots total. Cunningham stated that the site is about 36 acres, and that the applicant's intent is to come in with a by-right plan that requires no variances.

Cunningham explained the project further, noting the proposed private road to service the 6 lots along with on-lot water and septic. Cunningham noted that each lot will have individual stormwater management facilities. Casadonti noted that the Water Resource Impact Study is underway and is going well, and also noted that perc tests for the septic systems are underway as well.

Cunningham discussed the Gilmore review letter. He stated that in response to a comment about the agricultural fields on site, the applicant plans to let the fields naturalize. Ms. Rendon noted that farming has already ceased in the agricultural fields on site. Cunningham noted the conservation easements shown on the plan, stating that the applicant plans to provide enough area on the lots to install additional improvements while meeting the requirements for conservation easements. Cunningham noted the

stream that runs along King Rd and the culvert at the driveway of the site. He stated that the applicant plans to repair the culvert as needed and ensure that the existing facilities are in good repair.

A discussion about waivers that may be required ensued. Cunningham indicated that the applicant will likely request a partial waiver from curbing, sidewalk and widening as SALDO requires a 48' width which is wider than may be necessary on this section of King Rd. Cunningham noted that Gilmore recommended cleaning up the trees and vegetation along the frontage of the site on King Rd if a waiver is granted, as well as adding a shoulder per the recommendation of Public Works. Casadonti expressed support for these suggestions. Mr. Kennard suggested requesting a partial waiver subject to the improvements suggested in the letter.

Ms. Rizzo-Grimes asked if the neighbors of the property have been notified. Cunningham stated that they have not been notified as the applicant has only submitted a Sketch Plan so the notifications are not required. Casadonti stated that he has been in touch with some neighbors and has communicated with them about the project.

A discussion ensued about the interior of the development and if sidewalks are desired. Casadonti stated that the layout he prefers does not include sidewalks within the cul-de-sac. Ms. Rendon asked if there would be an HOA to maintain the road, to which Casadonti responded yes. Cunningham stated that a waiver will be needed for the design of the road and cul-de-sac, but noted an intention to comply with truck turning requirements and the Fire Marshal's comments requiring road width of 20 feet.

Cunningham noted a comment in the Gilmore letter about adding trails to the site and asked if the Township had any intention of adding trail to this part of King Rd. Mr. Kennard stated that there are no plans for a trail on this section of King Rd at this time.

Cunningham noted a comment in the Gilmore letter about buffering of the site and noted that the existing conditions provide a fairly good buffer, but indicated that the applicant will supplement any tree disturbance with replacements. Casadonti noted that there is limited space for screening along King Rd, but internally there will be more room to work with.

Ms. Rendon asked if there will be issues in regard to lighting reaching neighboring properties. Casadonti stated that the layout of the site works to create a natural buffer. Mr. Tustanowsky noted that any regulations on lighting would have to be established by the HOA.

Mr. Tustanowsky asked about the size of the homes. Mr. Casadonti stated they will be at least 3-4,000 SF, possibly bigger, with 3 car garages.

Mr. Kennard recommended identifying areas that supplement per Gilmore's direction. Additionally, Mr. Kennard recommended putting together a landscape package for each lot with field located trees, noting a partial waiver from the requirement for street trees that will be supplemented by preserving woodlands. Cunningham suggested planting trees along the boundaries of the conservation easements so that residents can have a clear boundary of where improvements are permitted.

Ms. Rizzo-Grimes asked if the houses will be identical. Casadonti stated that all of the houses will be slightly different. Ms. Rendon asked about the condition of the existing house. Casadonti said the house needs some work as it is getting old but it is nicely built. Ms. Rendon noted some resident concerns about the wells on site but noted that the well ordinance provides protection to residents, and Casadonti noted that the Water Resource Impact Study requirements also ensures that neighboring wells are not affected as well. Ms. Rendon asked about the depths of the wells that have been drilled. Casadonti said it varies, but they have drilled up to 700 feet.

VI. Public Comment

VII. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion of Mr. Scanzillo, seconded by Ms. Rizzo-Grimes, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marco Tustanowsky, Chair

Ryan Gehman, Assistant Planning & Zoning Officer