

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Planning Commission
February 6, 2019
Room 304 / 12 p.m.

The State College Borough Planning Commission (PC) met on Tuesday, February 6, 2019 in the State College Municipal Building, 243 S. Allen Street. Ed LeClear called the meeting to order at 12 p.m. and introduced new members Mary Madden and Ron Madrid.

Members Present

Zoe Boniface; Scott Dutt; Jon Eich; Anita Genger; Richard Kalin; Mary Madden; and Ron Madrid.

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Ed LeClear, Planning Director; Anne Messner, Planning/Zoning Officer; Jenna Wargo, Planner; John Wilson, Zoning Officer; Amy Kerner, Borough Engineer; Steve Kirsch, Sweetland Engineering; Matt Harlow, ELA Group; Randy Brown, Bob O'Donnell, Amy Bader, Lori Bedell, Chris Weakland, Paul Leskowicz, and Ed Poprick, State College Area School District (SCASD); Neil Sullivan, Pennsylvania State University; James DeLattre, Happy Valley Launch Box; and Denise Dobo, Administrative Assistant.

Election of Officers

A motion was made by Ms. Genger and seconded by Mr. Eich to nominate Ms. Boniface as Chairman. The vote was unanimously in favor.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalin and seconded by Mr. Eich to nominate Ms. Genger as Vice-Chairman. The vote was unanimously in favor.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalin and seconded by Ms. Genger to nominate Mr. Eich as Centre Region Planning Commission (CRPC) Representative. The vote was unanimously in favor.

A motion was made by Mr. Dutt and seconded by Mr. Madrid to nominate Ms. Boniface as alternate CRPC Representative.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Dutt and seconded by Ms. Genger to approve the December 20, 2018 meeting minutes. The vote was unanimously approved.

Chair Report

Ms. Boniface thanked former members Mike Roedel and Charles Dumas as well as recognizing the late Mr. Roedel for his 19 years of service to the Borough serving on both the Zoning Hearing Board and Planning Commission. She also welcomed new members Ron Madrid and Mary Madden.

Public Hour - Hearing of Citizens

Mr. Eich requested a change to the format of the agenda for the process to be more formal when presented with plans for review. He suggested the agenda be formatted in the manner of applicant presentation, staff review, PC discussion, and public comment.

Land Development Plan(s)

Final Plan, Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrades, UPD Zoning District, Subdistrict the Pennsylvania State University, Owner, Penn State Physical Plant, Project Manager, Hazen, Project Designer

Mr. Kirsch's presentation included:

- The proposed final plan would renovate, upgrade and modernize the existing Penn State Waste Water Treatment Plant.
- The water quality would improve from Class C to Class A.
- The plant would be decreasing the capacity from 4 million gallons per day to 3 million gallons per day.
- The proposed project would remain in the existing footprint and there would be no major site development.
- Odor control would be improved since structures would be above the odor producing processes.
- The project would reduce the stormwater runoff by converting more than 20% of the impervious area to greenspace, from approximately 6.3 acres down to 5.1 acres.
- The existing stormwater lines and wastewater lines, owned by the Borough, would be relocated.
- The new structure would have a low profile and visibility.
- The colors and textures would reflect the current palette.

Staff comments included:

- Ms. Messner noted the plan meets ordinance requirements and there were minor clarifications on notes staff would be reviewing.
- Staff has been awaiting submission of the landscape plan for the arborist to review.
- The Design Review Board (DRB) reviewed the proposal recently and discussed the roof since it would be visible from the street as well as recommending the use of native plants if possible.

PC's comments included:

- Mr. Madrid asked the reason for the 25% reduction. Mr. Kirsch replied PSU believes there would be a reduction in water usage due to water conservation efforts on campus.
- Mr. Eich noted there was a natural heritage inventory site on the property. Mr. Eich would prefer the creation of a non-disturbance area for protection of the site so heavy equipment would not go through the area accidentally. Mr. Kirsh replied he would review the area with staff.

A motion was made by Mr. Eich and seconded by Mr. Dutt to recommend approval of the plan subject to the comments and conditions made by staff and PC. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Community Planning

State College Area School District Lighting Ordinance Text Amendment Request

Mr. LeClear's overview included:

- The SCASD would be presenting discussion and feedback from their public meeting held November 14, 2018.
- Technical points regarding the lighting which arose from the previous PC meeting would be reviewed.
- The objective was to address and mitigate the comments from meetings.
- A draft of an amendment would be prepared to present and discuss in February.

Mr. Harlow, Mr. Weakland, Ms. Bader & Dr. O'Donnell's presentation included:

- Mr. Barlow explained a presentation was given at a public meeting which provided technical points, the meeting was then opened to comments.
- Mr. Barlow went on to say most concerns were related to the activities which would occur on the property and mainly noise in general.
- Dr. O'Donnell noted the majority of the key points from the meeting was noise.
- The goal was to enable students to arrive home in a timely manner.
- Lights would be used for scheduled school events during the school year. The lights would be turned off no later than 10 p.m. and noted most events end closer to 9 p.m.
- Athletic practices would be completed by 8:30 p.m.
- The band, whose complex was located at the back of the new facility, would practice twice weekly in September and October.
- Practice could be held at the North parking lot while the new field was being constructed but poses a challenge due to lack of parking.
- Memorial Field may be lost for the fall season for one year which would possibly create a savings but also increase usage of the South Field if taller lights were permitted.
- Shifting events to Community Field nearly eliminates the growing season for the field and adjustments to practices would be needed to reduce damage to the field.
- Proposed to install more evergreens near the homes at the South Track.

PC's comments included:

- Mr. Kalin asked about the limitations of Community Field. Dr. O'Donnell noted the damage to the field from overuse.
- Mr. Kalen inquired what cost would be incurred if turf were placed on Community Field and Mr. Harlow quoted in excess of \$1,000,000.
- Mr. Weakland answered further to the question about limitations and explained additionally the damage to the field as well as injuries to athletes since more injuries occur on natural grass than turf.
- Mr. Madrid noted the lack of written impact data such as time of use, duration, and impact on the neighborhood. Mr. Harlow replied that technical data was presented at the December 5 meeting.
- Ms. Genger remarked on a resident's written comments to PC noting their equal concern for light and noise. The resident suggested perhaps the request be delayed for an additional year for further evaluation. Ms. Genger felt importance should be placed on minimizing the impact on the neighbors.
- Mr. Dutt inquired when North Field would be online. Dr. O'Donnell replied the field would be completed this spring before Memorial Field goes offline.

- Ms. Boniface noted the area in question lies within four different zoning districts. Ms. Boniface said the zoning re-write may make the concern disappear. Ms. Boniface also explained she attended the meeting for the community and suggested a wall to shield noise and light to several individuals but received only negative feedback.
- Mr. Dutt commented the SCASD band could currently utilize the field and emphasized lights were the issue. Mr. Dutt asked the reason for raising the lights. Mr. Harlow replied it would be for athletics since lower lights would create shadows therefore causing a safety issue for the athletes.
- Ms. Bader explained lights would aid in better scheduling opportunities
- Ms. Boniface asked about stadium glow and Mr. Harlow replied there would be an impact from glow. Ms. Boniface noted the lighting would also involve an increase in loud speaker usage. Mr. Weakland replied they had previously been using the loud speaker for track events. Mr. Leskowitz, band director at SCASD, remarked the use of North Field presents a safety concern for students; those concerns include crossing a street late at night, inclement weather, and low lighting.

Public comments included:

- Chris Parglio recommended yellow lights which have daylight tones versus blue lights and suggested light mitigation.
- Ted Reutzel had concerns about lighting, noise and community teams requesting the use of the fields which would increase the events. Mr. Reutzel asked the decision to be delayed for further thought.
- Debra Anderson expressed her concern for the safety of the students crossing the street and remarked the intersection was dangerous.
- Derek Canova discussed the impact of 70-foot lights in the neighborhood which would be equivalent to 7 stories on a building. Mr. Canova mentioned that planting trees would take a long time before any substantial impact would be made and felt property values would be negatively impacted.
- Chris English suggested definite stop times be established as well as the crossing at Westerly Parkway be addressed. Mr. LeClear noted there would be a light installed soon.
- Mr. Weakland, SCASD, noted North Field would be primarily scheduled for varsity events and South Field would be middle school events.
- Mr. Eich explained the location was zoned R3B and asked if the amendment would be limited to this site or throughout the district. Mr. LeClear explained it would be drafted for this particular situation only. Mr. Eich also discussed unifying the district property into one zone and considering this for the zoning re-write.
- Abe Falcone stated noise was a large issue and believes lights would enable more noise later into the evening. Mr. Falcone believed the noise ordinance needed to be reviewed and that he would also see glow from the lights.
Brenden Bagley emphasized the importance of safety. He noted that from a safety, logistics, and cost perspective this would be the smartest and most efficient solution.

Mr. LeClear summarized:

- The need for specifics of scheduling, use, and frequency of the field.
- The need to have in writing strictly SCASD events would be held there.
- Contingencies needed to be in writing, such as overtime and how often.
- Additional modeling of the lights for better evaluation.
- Possibly speaking with Bellefonte School District to evaluate their lights.
- Scenario discussions needed to be held.
- Mr. Eich added he would like to see a modeling showing different heights of lighting.

- Ms. Genger requested information from an arborist about landscaping and types of trees, such as fast-growing trees.
- Mr. LeClear suggested an operational agreement within the ordinance, so changes can be made without going through ordinance amendments

Ms. Boniface remarked one additional meeting would be needed before a recommendation could be made on the project.

Zoning Text Amendment related to New Construction of Commercial Buildings in the Downtown

Mr. LeClear noted this item was moved from BC to get feedback from PC about their interests and concerns in order to get a text amendment formulated.

Mr. Sullivan & Mr. DeLattre's presentation included:

- Mr. Sullivan explained the James Building was located on Burrowes Street and has 17,000 square feet.
- The plan was to create a "lighthouse destination" as the cornerstone of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- The goal was to share knowledge and ideas to grow businesses for the region.
- The building would be a beacon for the university and community.
- Construction would begin fall/winter 2019 and be completed by summer/fall 2021.
- Launch Box would be utilizing the space for its expansion.
- Total occupancy for the building would be 366 occupants and up to 576 occupants during events.
- Parking consisted of 2 levels of underground parking totaling 70 spaces.
- Requested a text amendment allowing for a reduction to the required parking in the zoning ordinance.

PC's comments included:

- Ms. Boniface asked if they were asking for a reduction in the two floors of parking. Mr. Sullivan replied they were looking to build one level of parking. Removing the parking will give more flexibility to use in the building and would create a savings.
- Mr. Kalin asked if the building would be a real estate taxable building. Mr. LeClear said preliminarily it would be taxable.
- Ms. Genger inquired about spot zoning and pointed out if there was a usage change to the building, how would the parking demand be met.
- Mr. Kalin noted:
 - No information on parking requirements for the use proposed.
 - There would be parking concerns if the use of the building was changed.
 - The construction of additional buildings on campus forces parking further into the downtown.
 - Other developers requesting text amendments have been asked to wait for the zoning re-write.
 - The Borough would be setting a precedent if text amendment granted.
- Mr. LeClear remarked that any change of use would not be permitted until parking standards were met; he went on stating no precedent would be set as all text amendments must be entertained.
- Mr. Kalin asked why innovation would require less space. Mr. Sullivan replied the clientele would park at other facilities and walk to the building. Mr. Kalen continued by asking why this was different than other companies. Mr. DeLattre stated the clientele favors walking or biking.

- Ms. Madden stated there was a growing trend for innovation districts and had been common for downtown areas to eliminate all requirements for parking. Ms. Madden also noted there has been an emphasis on Rideshare and cycling. Ms. Madden went on to explain builders would determine their own parking needs and it had been a burden for municipalities to try to provide parking space. Ms. Madden believed there would be similar requests in the future and the question would be if there would be requests for text amendments or would the zoning re-write address shared parking downtown.
- Mr. LeClear added PSU and Borough Staff needed to have a sense of the difference between reducing the total number of spaces available or provide an allowance for them to be built off-site.
- Mr. Eich asked if drone deliveries were being considered and Mr. Sullivan replied it was.
- Mr. Kalin inquired if there had been a reduction in the use of parking downtown and Mr. LeClear replied he would check with Parking Director Rick Ward.
- Ms. Boniface remarked additional data was needed but it would be hard to obtain since it may be part of a new emerging trend. Mr. LeClear stated he would speak about innovation districts with other cities and acknowledged this was a national trend.
- Mr. Sullivan stated Launch Box would be losing their lease at their current location and they would need to move at the end of 2021.

Public comments included:

- Eric Boeldt explained the design requirements were not for the University but for the building and suggested space should be included for deliveries as well.

State of Planning Report

Mr. LeClear asked the Planning Report to be reviewed and edits would be discussed at the next meeting.

Official Reports and Correspondence

Borough Council

Mr. LeClear reported BC adopted the vacation of Laurel Alley and allowed for outdoor dining at Baby's Burgers & Shakes. Mr. LeClear noted that Ms. Boniface would be presenting the State of Planning Report to BC in April.

Land Development Plans

Ms. Messner noted the upcoming plans for review were the Willard Building's final plan, an apartment located at Fraser Street behind the Hamilton shopping center, and a single-family home at the townhome development at 805 Old Boalsburg Road.

Mr. Eich reported Centre Region Planning was scheduled for a meeting February 7, 2019; this would be a reorganizational meeting and orientation for the new members on the Board.

Staff Updates

Mr. LeClear remarked an invitation had been extended to PC to attend the Transportation Commission (TC) meeting on February 12, 2019 at 12:15 p.m. to discuss the long-range transportation plan.

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 12:15 p.m. – Transportation Commission
Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 7 p.m. – Planning Commission
Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 12 p.m. – Planning Commission

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Boniface adjourned the meeting at 2:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Dobo
Administrative Assistant