

MINUTES

HARRISBURG PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

June 7, 2023

**THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CITY GOVERNMENT CENTER
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joseph Alsberry, Chair
Shaun E. O'Toole
Jamesetta Reed
Anne Marek
DeRon Jordan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vern McKissick, Vice Chair

STAFF PRESENT: Geoffrey Knight, Planning Director
Emily Farren, Assistant City Solicitor

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Reed seconded the motion, to approve the minutes from the May 3, 2023 meeting without corrections. The motion was adopted by a unanimous (5-0) vote.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Special Exception Application for 2609 North Front Street, zoned Riverfront (RF), filed by David Butcher with WCI Partners, LP, to establish a second "Fitness Center" use on-site and to request relief from the off-street parking requirements for such uses, which require Special Exception approvals per Section 7-305.7 of the Zoning Code.**

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, recommending Approval.

The case was represented by David Butcher & Lori Fortini with WCI Partners, LP (the property owner), 1900 North 2nd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102; and Noah Parsons with Triple P Fitness (the business owner), 593 Nauvoo Road, Lewisberry, PA 17339 (aka "the Applicants"). They noted that Beth Seitz, the owner of the existing "Fitness Center" use on-site (Sculpt Pilates & Barre), was also in attendance to give testimony on the parking demand generated by her business, if such information would be useful to the commissioners.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that he had no questions regarding the project, and asked whether any of the commissioners had comments, questions, or concerns about the project.

Commissioner O'Toole noted that the Planning Commission had reviewed a zoning relief application for the existing "Fitness Center" use on site several years ago, and asked whether that business was still operating; the Applicants confirmed that it was.

Commissioner Reed stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Marek noted that they were essentially expanding the existing use on-site and that since the businesses were by appointment only, parking would likely not be an issue. She asked how many clients would be on-site at a time; the Applicants confirmed that they worked with clients in a one-on-one basis, so they would not have large groups of people.

Commissioner Jordan stated that he had no questions.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public for or against the project; there were no comments.

Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Marek seconded the motion, to Approve the request. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

2. Lot Consolidation & Land Development Plan for 1933 & 1951 Herr Street, zoned Commercial Neighborhood (CN) and Industrial (IND), filed by Nirmal Singh and Mohinder Kaur Gill with M&N, Inc., to demolish the existing diner and gas station structures on-site, consolidate the lots, and construct a new gas station and convenience store on-site, along with associated site and access improvements.

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, recommending Approval with Conditions; the conditions were that:

1. The Applicants must address the comments from the City Engineer's Office prior to the application being heard by City Council; this includes aspects such as the proposed retaining wall; truck circulation on-site; PennDOT approval of a Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP); and approval from Capital Region Water (CRW). This also includes the provision of a photometric plan to confirm that the site lighting will be in conformance with the Environmental Performance Standards in Chapter 7-331 of the Zoning Code.
2. The Applicant will reconstruct or install new, ADA-compliant sidewalks along the northern, and eastern frontages of the project site, as well as appropriate curb face reveals, and the vehicular access will be treated as a driveway curb cut, in which the driveway elevates to the height of the sidewalk. The Applicants should provide a direct pedestrian connection to the convenience store to the sidewalk along Herr Street.
3. The Applicant must provide bike racks on-site; the Bureau recommends that these be installed near the entrance to the convenience store and accessible from the Herr Street sidewalk.
4. Any new signage on-site will be in conformance with the applicable regulations of the Zoning Code or, if not, will receive approval for a zoning relief request, as necessary, from the Zoning Hearing Board.
5. The Applicant should provide a landscaping plan indicating whether any landscaping will be installed in the areas around the proposed convenience store building.

6. The Applicants should consider the inclusion of publicly-accessible EV chargers on-site, to accommodate the growing number of electric vehicles, and also in consideration of the property's proximity to Interstate 81.

The case was represented by Max Stoner with Glace Associates, Inc. (the project engineer), 3705 Trindle Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011; and Aman Gill (the property owner's daughter), 150 Creekside Drive, Enola, PA 17025 (aka "the Applicants").

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they confirmed that they were. Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicants wanted to add anything to the case report; they stated that the project would be a benefit to the city and that the proposed site access improvements would make the area safer for pedestrians.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicants had engaged the community or spoken with nearby neighbors. The Applicants stated that they had informed customers of the existing gas station of the proposed project, and that they were all supportive of the proposed changes. They noted that there was a fairly steep slope at the rear of the property up to Kunkle Street, which would screen the property from the neighborhood and minimize impacts. They also noted that the large convenience store would increase food, beverage, and product options for the surrounding residents, and that newer facilities would increase the efficiency of the site and the services provided to the community.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that the Planning Commission always advised Applicants to coordinate with the surrounding community because they might learn things that could help improve the project. He advised them to more directly engage the residents of the surrounding community moving forward. Commissioner Alsberry also inquired about the lighting associated with the project, noting that the commissioners wanted to ensure that there was no spillover onto neighboring residential properties. The Applicants confirmed that they were developing a photometric plan for the project and that they would ensure that there was no spillover into adjacent homes.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments, questions, or concerns about the project.

Commissioner O'Toole asked Planning Bureau staff to clarify language in Conditions #5 & #6. Mr. Knight noted that Condition #5 was a requirement of the Land Development Plan process, but that Condition #6 was more of a recommendation for their consideration.

Commissioner O'Toole asked whether the diner structure had to be demolished and inquired as to whether it could be relocated; the Applicants confirmed that their discussions with consultants had recommended that the diner be relocated. He stated that he was in support of the overall project.

Commissioner Reed stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Marek agreed that the project was an improvement to the site, and stated that she was happy to hear the Applicants were considering relocating the diner. She referenced comments provided by the City Engineer and asked how the Applicants intended to handle truck traffic on-site; she noted that the site plan indicated a small island of parking near the gas station canopy and stated that she wasn't sure how vehicles parked there might impact truck access and circulation movements on-site. The Applicants noted that they had provided the additional parking to meet the off-street parking requirements of the Zoning Code, but noted that the proposed design better accommodated truck movements on-site than the existing configuration. They noted that they did not receive a significant volume of truck traffic aside from regularly-scheduled fuel deliveries. Mr. Knight noted that the project engineers could utilize modeling software to confirm the site design could appropriately accommodate truck movements on-site.

Commissioner Jordan referenced Condition #6 in the case report and noted that the site plan appeared to show a location for the future installation of EV charging stations and asked whether that was the Applicant's plan. They stated that the current plan involved installing conduits to eventually accommodate fast-charging EV stations; they noted that they cost approximately \$500,000 and that they were expecting the price to decrease eventually. The Applicants confirmed that the project design would allow them to easily install those in the future. Commissioner Jordan stated that he was supportive of the Applicant's proposals to reconstruct and improve the pedestrian infrastructure around and through the site, as it would reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.

The Applicants referenced Condition #1 and asked Planning Bureau staff whether they needed to secure an HOP before the project could commence. Mr. Knight noted that PennDOT required an HOP any time a project would impact a State right-of-way, but stated that it would likely be a fairly simple and straightforward process for something like curb cut removal.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public for or against the project; there were no comments.

Commissioner Alsberry referenced Commissioner Marek's concerns about truck movements around and through the site, but noted that there were several industrial facilities just to the east along Herr Street that generated a significant amount of truck traffic that required complex turning movements along the street.

Commissioner Reed moved, and Commissioner O'Toole seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Alsberry asked Planning Bureau staff whether there was any other business to discuss. Mr. Knight stated that there were no formal matters to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:53 PM

Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Jordan seconded the motion, to adjourn. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).