

The regular meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 pm on the above date by Chairman Edward Huber. Other Commission members present included Jeffrey Gross, Calvin Munden and Andrew Schlosser. The meeting was attended by Borough Manager P. Michael Coll, Chloe Mohr, AICP, Montgomery County Planning Commission and Erik Garton, P. E., Gilmore & Associates.

Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that this is the first meeting of the Planning Commission for the 2023 calendar year. The first order of business should be the election of officers for the 2023 calendar year. A motion was made by Andrew Schlosser, seconded by Calvin Munden, to retain the same officers, Edward Huber, Chairman; Andrew Schlosser, Vice Chairman; and Jeffrey Gross, Secretary through the 2023 calendar year. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Chairman Huber asked for consideration of the minutes from the December 7, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. A motion was made by Jeffrey Gross and seconded by Andrew Schlosser, to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2022 meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission as presented. The motion was approved.

Chairman Edward Huber first recognized Nate Clemmer, owner and developer of Branch Creek Brewery Taproom at 30 W. Chestnut Street. Nate Clemmer reported that he will comply with the Commission's recommendations to direct the storm water overflow under the sidewalk and he will add the seating area from the outdoor spaces into the overall parking calculation. His engineer has not finalized the structural design for the retaining walls, but he will comply with the request to obtain a temporary construction easement from neighboring Uninvest Bank if necessary.

Nate Clemmer noted that he understands the recommendation to provide a pathway connecting his property to the adjacent Uninvest Bank parking lot. Rather than constructing stairs in the neighboring lot, there is an exiting alley that connects into the Uninvest property that runs along the eastern boundary line. The alley does have some grade challenges, but overall it is in good condition. The alley could be cleaned up and lighting can be provided from the building. This seems to be the best alternative to address the connecting path concern raised by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission expressed general agreement with this direction.

Borough Manager Michael Coll presented a proposal from School Lane Development to located a Starbucks restaurant on a commercial pad site fronting East Broad Street. Starbucks requires provisions for a drive through service window. This use is only permitted by Conditional Use approval from Borough Council. The developer prepared a site plan for the Starbucks restaurant, drive through service window and adjacent parking. The developer had a traffic engineer evaluate the design and circulation for the drive through window as required for the Conditional Use application.

Planning Commission members noted that the size of the proposed Starbucks restaurant appear to have a smaller footprint to the original proposed restaurant on the pad site. The developer should note that the smaller commercial building may affect the ratio requirement for overall residential density on the site. The Planning Commission also noted that the developer will need to open the last remaining development phase to accommodate the commercial building. Following discussion, the Planning Commission expressed support for the project and drive through service window.

Chloe Mohr discussed the revised draft of the Sign Guidelines and will add page numbers as requested by the Planning Commission. Chloe Mohr will summarize the text changes as proposed for the Sign ordinance including the current recommendation concerning murals for consideration of Borough Council.

The Planning Commission discussed next Zoning Ordinance review projects. The C-1 Commercial and the Light Industrial Districts have been discussed previously and should be the next review priority. In preparation, the Planning Commission discussed certain definitions, office uses, medical marijuana facilities and bed and breakfast uses for the C-1 Commercial District. The Light Industrial District was discussed and might not be needed given participation in the Indian Valley regional Planning Commission. The Planning Commission discussed maintaining the industrial district with different types of smaller or lighter scale industrial and commercial uses.

Chloe Mohr reported on the recent open house at the Broad Theater concerning the Souderton Economic Development and Revitalization Plan. The public comments expressed support for historic preservation initiatives, connectivity to trails systems, pedestrian safety and traffic calming initiatives and consideration to upgrade the Chestnut Street municipal parking lot.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll
Recording Secretary