

Bern Township Planning Commission Meeting of April 13, 2021

Present: Planning Commission Members: Russ Adams, James Dailey, Glenn Sweigert, and Steve Tricarico

Keith Mooney, Solicitor; Kent Morey, Engineer, Spotts, Stevens and McCoy, Inc. (SSM)

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Steve Tricarico

2. Approval of Minutes: Russ Adams made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 9, 2021 meeting. Glenn Sweigert seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion was carried.

3. Subdivision and Land Development Plans:

A. Ammeraal Revised Sketch Plan Greg Bogia presented revisions to the Ammeraal sketch plan.

Kent Morey went through his comments in the April 8 letter. The first item noted was the lot frontage and cul-de-sac issue. The length of cul-de-sac exceeds 500 foot maximum. In addition, the existing water and gas line easements physically subdivides the property in an awkward way.

Steve Tricarico added that cul-de-sacs are an issue for the Township. Russ Adams asked what the purpose of cul-de-sac is? Greg Bogia answered that the cul-de-sac allows people to turn around.

Steve Tricarico noted that there is a preference for loop road, but there is no place for loop to connect north/south side with this new subdivision. Kent Morey discussed the loop road concept; that it provides access in and out of the subdivision without having to turn around in a cul-de-sac. The bigger issue is Township emergency services entering the facility from the river side would have to maneuver to exit, so the loop road should be continued regardless of point of entry.

Steve Tricarico asked if moving parking spaces closer to the river would provide access between the parking and the building. Kent Morey answered no because the area is in the flood plain.

Next, Kent Morey discussed the parking issue. Greg Bogia said that they have enough space to move the parking and the plan already shows maximum parking for the building's size.

Steve Tricarico asked about the facility's use, noting that last month Greg Bogia stated that it's not just a warehouse; it's also manufacturing and office space as well. Kent Morey asked Greg Bogia to identify the space allocation on the sketch plan. Specifically, how much space is for warehouse, manufacturing, and office use.

Mr. Tricarico pointed out that the Township has stringent noise restrictions because the property abuts a residential area. The limits are 60 dba during the day and 50 dba in the evening. He emphasized that Mr. Bogia must be aware of the noise restrictions because of the proximity to a residential area. Mr. Bogia noted that's why the loading dock is placed away from residential area.

B. SUNCAP Revised Sketch Plan Tom Ludgate reviewed the revised sketch plan noting that it reflects changes that enlarges the building from approximately 180,000 to 250,000 square feet. It also increases the parking, trailer, and van areas.

Steve Tricarico asked what else has changed from the previous submission. Tom Ludgate answered that the plan has the same access points, overall layout, usage of building and stormwater management. It is the same tract of land that has 3 lots. Russ Adams asked if it uses 3 of 7 lots from the original plan and Tom Ludgate answered that is correct.

Kent Morey reviewed the comments from his April 9 letter beginning with the vehicle maintenance garage on North side of property. He asked Keith Mooney if there should be a setback from the internal condominium lot lines? Keith Mooney's initial answer is no but will check on the specifics of that question. Kent Morey asked Tom Ludgate to check parking lot and paving setback lines especially in the southwest corner next to the airport property.

In addition, Kent Morey noted there should be 502 off-street parking spaces, but the plan only shows 477. Tom Ludgate responded that they'll add the extra parking spaces.

Tom Ludgate asked about the landscaping plan requirements regarding buffers along the property line because it's next to airport, not any residential area. In addition, the airport doesn't want additional trees along airport property line. He suggested the same logic for screening buffers in the parking lot. They will plant shade trees in the parking lot, but do not intend to plant buffers. James Dailey asked if they got that input directly from the airport. Tom Ludgate answered that they received the input informally but will get it in writing.

Glenn Sweigert asked about the "No Left Turn" sign that applies to trucks. Will there be a weight limit? What's designated a truck? Tom Ludgate answered that it applies to anything you need a commercial driver's license to drive, such as a box truck.

4. Discussion of Township Parking Ordinance as presented by Burkey Development Group, Berks IDA and the Greater Berks Development Fund.

The Township's current ordinance requires a minimum of 2 paved parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area and groups manufacturing, industrial, storage and wholesale facilities together. The April 12 SSM letter recommends the Township change the parking calculations for these facilities.

The letter specifically refers to *The Dimensions of Parking*, fifth edition, published in 2010 which recommends the following parking calculations:

- Manufacturing or industrial facilities: 1.85 parking spaces/1,000 square feet of gross floor area
- Storage or wholesale facilities: .67 parking spaces/1,000 square feet of gross floor area

Steve Tricarico asked the commission for any reaction to the April 12 SSM letter. Russ Adams asked if this is all going to be used as a zoning change and Kent Morey responded, that's correct.

Keith Mooney noted that the intent is to get a classification and a parking provision that works for different facilities to stop the flood of variance requests. A warehouse is a separate and distinct use from manufacturing and should have different requirements.

Kent Morey added that manufacturing and industrial uses require less parking and this change is a step in the right direction. The Planning Commission agreed with the SSM recommendations to change the calculations for the above-stated facilities and will notify the Supervisors accordingly.

Next, the commission discussed parking for general office space. Kent Morey suggested using 4.6 spaces/1,000 square feet of gross floor area as recommended by *The Dimensions of Parking*. Steve Tricarico recommended keeping the current requirement of 5 spaces/1000 square feet. The Planning Commission agreed with Mr. Tricarico's recommendation to keep the current ordinance.

The commissioners also discussed the parking lot paving requirement. The current ordinance requires that all off-street parking spaces must be paved. Kent Morey suggested that the Township could leave that decision up to the developer; that any stable surface would be reasonable. Or the township could specify how much of the parking can be unpaved, like a certain percentage.

The commissioners discussed the pros and cons of various pervious and impervious parking surfaces including the impact on maintenance, stormwater management, and potential road hazards.

Glenn Sweigert added that Minnesota's rules state that permeable pavement is only suitable for low volume roads or for overflow parking. Full time traffic isn't appropriate on a permeable surface due to oil leaking from cars. He will forward the reference link to Kent Morey for further review.

James Dailey suggested using the number of employees to determine the paving requirement. Kent Morey agreed stating that the Township could use the current number of parking space plus 5-10% to permit for expansion. Russ Adams added that Berks EIT can keep track of the number of employees in the building. Steve Tricarico suggested to pave a percentage of overall parking space to accommodate for the number of employees for two successive shifts.

Supervisor Irene Reed recommended further research to come up with a solution to the paved parking issue.

Solicitor: Keith Mooney is currently recording meetings at home but will be fully vaccinated and can attend future meetings in person. He can also continue to record the meetings at home if that's what the Township prefers.

Supervisor Irene Reed noted that we need to check with the Pandemic Safety Officer and follow State guidelines regarding Covid protocols. For the time being, she recommended the Township plan on hybrid meetings.

Public Comment: Regarding the parking requirements, Kathy Larue stated that a business doesn't need parking for all employees if they're working in shifts.

Adjournment: Glenn Sweigert made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Russ Adams seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned 8:32