

Bern Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of May 11, 2021

Present: Planning Commission Members: Russ Adams, James Dailey, Glenn Sweigert, and Steve Tricarico. Also present: Keith Mooney, Solicitor; Kent Morey, Engineer, Spotts, Stevens and McCoy, Inc. (SSM)

1. Call to order: The Meeting was called to order at 7:39 by Steve Tricarico

2. Minutes: A motion to accept the minutes of the April 13, 2021 meeting was made by Mr. Dailey and seconded by Mr. Adams. All voted in favor and the motion was carried.

3. Subdivision and Land Development Plans:

3A. SUNCAP Land Development Preliminary Plan Tom Ludgate stated that the building size hasn't changed. Kent Morey reviewed items from the May 7, 2021 SSM letter. Mr. Sweigert made a motion to approve a waiver to adjust the drawing's scale to one-inch equals 2,000 feet. Mr. Dailey seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Next, Mr. Sweigert made a motion to recommend waiver for relief from submitting the required following studies: Recreation, Fiscal, Hydrogeologic, and Historic. Mr. Adams seconded the motion. Mr. Tricarico asked about waiving the hydrogeologic report. Mr. Ludgate answered that they conducted studies for infiltration testing which showed that the ground was previously disturbed. He added that a hydrogeologic study wouldn't provide additional information. Mr. Dailey asked a question about the archaeological significance of the site. Mr. Ludgate replied that there is no record on file for this area having archaeological significance. The commission all voted in favor of granting the waiver request provided that the following note be added to the plan:

If evidence of archaeological resources is discovered during construction, the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission shall be notified and representatives of the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission shall be given the opportunity to photograph said archaeological resources in situ and shall be permitted to remove said archaeological resources in conformance with applicable law.

Mr. Morey discussed the waiver request to provide buffers and/or screens around the site. He indicated that plan shall be more concise with the waiver request and specifically reference the subsection in the ordinance with the intent of the request. He recommends that the buffer be planted with trees whose mature height is 20 feet. Mr. Morey added that planting trees provides environmental benefit that isn't provided by grass. Mr. Ludgate responded that the airport manager, Terry Sroka, prefers that there not be any trees planted near a runway. Mr. Morey instructed Mr. Ludgate to submit the plan anyway adding that if the airport has an objection, we will deal with it then.

Regarding van parking spaces, Mr. Morey noted that the plan states 75 van parking spaces are provided, but only shows 73 total van spaces and requested clarification. In addition, the proposed van parking spaces should not be counted as off-street parking spaces as these are spaces required for the operation of the facility,

Mr. Morey asked about the off-street loading and Mr. Ludgate answered that it is a 24-hour operation. Vans are taking products out without a specific loading schedule and added that this issue will be addressed in the traffic impact study.

Finally, Mr. Morey recommended that they investigate the possibility of providing the emergency access connection between the north end of the van parking area and the west terminus of the Industrial Metal Plating driveway. This would appear to impact less proposed parking spaces, may be a more logical area in which to prevent parking, and would allow emergency vehicles to enter the site aligned to a parking lot drive aisle. Mr. Morey stated that they should clearly mark "no parking" there with signage.

3B. MISCO Land Development Preliminary Plan Scott Miller represented Stackhouse Bensinger and Ben Gable represented MISCO Products Corporation regarding the building addition. The land development plan proposes to build an 80,925 square foot warehouse addition and associated new parking areas on a 13.628-acre lot that fronts on both Stinson Drive and Leisczs Bridge Road. The tract is zoned General Industrial. Zoning variances were granted by the Bern Township Zoning Hearing Board on March 2, 2021.

The facility currently uses entrances at Stinson Drive and Leisczs Bridge Road. Trucks enter Stinson Drive to the loading docks and exit turning left on Leisczs Bridge Road.

Mr. Sweigert asked what the building is used for and Mr. Gable answered that it is used for manufacturing and shipping. They are expanding their product line.

Mr. Morey recommended that the commission allow a variance so the plan can be drawn at a scale of one-inch equals 30 feet instead of the required scale of one-inch equals 50 feet because the proposed scale provides better legibility. Mr. Sweigert made a motion to grant waiver and Mr. Adams seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

The plan also includes a waiver request from submitting the required following impact studies: Utilities, Recreation, Fiscal, Environmental, Hydrogeologic, and Historic and Archeological Resources. Mr. Miller stated that they will get approval for utilities, but sewer, water, and gas don't need to have separate studies. Mr. Miller added that an environmental assessment is submitted as part of the development process. Mr. Miller recommended tabling the variance request until next month.

Mr. Morey noted that a residential use exists on the opposite side of Leisczs Bridge Road across from the proposed entrance to the light duty parking lot. A minimum 100-foot-wide open area

must be provided along the street right-of-way. Mr. Miller asked if there is room for interpretation of this requirement? Specifically, could property be grandfathered because of pre-existing development/residence? Mr. Mooney and Mr. Morey will discuss the requirement.

Mr. Morey also stated that the Township should determine whether sidewalks should be provided along Stinson Drive and Leiszc's Bridge Road. Mr. Sweigert noted that currently there are none. Mr. Miller responded that they are looking for a deferral rather than waiver explaining that the Township can come back later and ask for sidewalk. Mr. Tricarico stated that this was a reasonable approach.

Mr. Morey asked about curbing parking lots and driveway entrances; that they should provide construction detail for the curb. Mr. Miller stated that they will provide curbing when it helps with stormwater flow and will clarify the plan accordingly.

Regarding sewer and water connections, Mr. Miller noted that they are connected to public sewer and water, and the septic tanks have been removed. He added that they are still working on determining if new connections be made through existing facilities.

Mr. Morey noted that they must provide construction detail of the proposed gravel fire access lane He emphasized that all travel lanes must be paved. Mr. Morey asked how they are going to prevent traffic from travelling on a gravel fire access lane? Mr. Miller answered that the lane will be chained with breakaway chain so that it is just used for fire access. Mr. Morey responded that they need to put up signage stating the lane is a fire lane only.

Mr. Miller said that they will resubmit the plan in June.

3C. Eaton Farms Residential Subdivision Preliminary Plan. The intent of the plan is for the property owner, Empire Group of Reading, to subdivide a 50.896-acre lot into nine residential lots for single family detached dwellings. The proposed dwelling units will use on-lot water and on-lot sewer facilities. The subject property is located around the intersection of White Oak Lane and Seidels Run. The tract is zoned as an Agricultural Business Zoning District.

Mr. John Hoffert, professional land surveyor, was present to discuss the plan and stated that they have started correcting items listed in the May 7, 2021 SSM review letter. Specifically, that Liberty Environmental is working on environmental assessment statement.

Mr. Hoffert requested the planning commission provide contingent approval of the planning modules. Mr. Sweigert made a motion to provide contingent approval of the planning modules and Mr. Dailey seconded the motion. Mr. Morey will review the planning modules as requested.

Mr. Hoffert discussed the driveway location proposed for Lot #4. Mr. Morey recommended the developer plant trees on lot 4 to screen lots 5 and 6 from the proposed driveway.

4. Clarification of Township parking ordinance

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, 2021 SSM letter discussed at April's planning commission meeting 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

Mr. Morey stated that the township's ordinance only provides a definition for storage, but not a warehouse. Mr. Potts recommended that the township create definition for a warehouse. Mr. Mooney suggested that the township also add a warehouse as an accepted use in the industrial zoning district.

The planning commissioners all agreed to the following calculations for parking spaces:

- 1.85 parking spaces/1,000 square feet of gross floor area for manufacturing or industrial facilities;
- 0.67 parking spaces/1,000 square feet of gross floor area for storage or wholesale facilities; and
- keeping the current requirement of 5 spaces/1,000 square feet for general office space.

Regarding pervious vs. impervious surface for parking, Mr. Morey stated that block pavers and other pervious surfaces do not hold up and aren't suited for parking lots. Mr. Tricarico emphasized that he is not willing to make a change until there's a better alternative. Mr. Morey replied that what the township has now is fine.

5. Solicitor: No Report

6. Adjourn: Mr. Dailey made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Sweigert seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.