

## **Bern Township Planning Commission Meeting of June 8, 2021**

Present: Planning Commission Members: Russ Adams, James Dailey, Jim Rumbaugh, Glenn Sweigert, and Steve Tricarico, Keith Mooney, Solicitor; Todd Greenawalt, Engineer, Spotts, Stevens and McCoy, Inc. (SSM).

The Meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Steve Mr. Tricarico.

**Minutes:** A motion to accept the minutes of the meeting of May 11, 2021 was made by Mr. Adams. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dailey. All voted in favor and the motion was carried.

### **Subdivision and Land Development Plans:**

**Eaton Farms Residential Subdivision Preliminary Plan.** Mr. John Hoffert presented the plan. He noted that there were no zoning comments and the SALDO planning module has been submitted. Mr. Hoffert stated that the driveways on lots 7,8,9 have been shifted slightly to meet the township grading requirements. The final plan will have sight distances added. The existing lane on lot 1 is the only access to the lot and they are treating it as a driveway for residential use. Mr. Greenawalt stated that a note must be added to the plan stating that the developer of the lot would have to provide assurances that, if any of the driveway locations would change, the driveway will meet township standards. Mr. Hoffert confirmed that solid waste storage and collection is an individual household responsibility. Mr. Greenawalt stated that the stormwater plan will be required when the building permit application is submitted.

Mr. Hoffert noted that driveway screening is inappropriate in this case because it will block views. He suggested that they plant pine trees every 25 feet so the views aren't blocked. The planning commission members agreed with that suggestion to plant pine trees every 25 feet in lieu of screening along the driveway.

Mr. Tricarico confirmed that the planning modules are ready for signature. Mr. Hoffert requested the planning commission approve the preliminary plan contingent upon complying with the notes in the June 4 SSM letter. Mr. Adams made the motion to approve the preliminary plan and Mr. Dailey seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### **SUNCAP land Development Preliminary Plan.**

Mr. Tom Ludgate presented the preliminary plan and noted that the most significant change is additional landscaping.

Mr. Greenawalt discussed their request for relief from providing buffers and/or screens around the site. The plan notes that this represents a "partial waiver request for areas that (due to grade) will be difficult to plant." Mr. Greenawalt noted that the landscape designer has not demonstrated that a partial waiver is required. As a minimum, contours must be shown on the landscaping plan so that they can clearly note why grades (slopes) will make it difficult too difficult to plant. Mr. Greenawalt concluded that we cannot support the waiver request at this time. Mr. Ludgate said that they will comply with this note.

Next, Mr. Greenawalt explained that a decorative building façade treatment and site modeling of the proposed development to the site and its visual impact on adjacent properties has been submitted. He recommended that the Township should review this submission.

The next topic discussed was the requirement to screen plantings shall be a minimum of five feet in height when planted. Typically, screens shall consist of two staggered rows of evergreen trees such as white spruce, Colorado spruce, scotch pine, Swiss stone pine, Serbian spruce, Douglas fir, Canadian hemlock, Norway spruce, eastern white pine, or Japanese white pine. The rows shall be spaced 10 feet on center and trees within rows shall be spaced eight feet to 10 feet on center. Mr. Mooney added that the Board of Supervisors may allow alternative designs.

- a. The proposed buffer plantings shall be specified as a minimum of five feet in height when planted.
- b. The Planting Schedule indicates that the proposed trees on the property, including those in the buffer, shall be Serviceberry, Red Maple and Eastern Red Bud. The legend indicates that all trees are to be three different types of maple trees. It appears that the legend should be corrected.
- c. In the buffer area, the trees are proposed to be planted in a single row on about 30' center to center.

Mr. Greenawalt also discussed the specific trees in planting schedule and noted that "proposed trees along RRAA property line to be changed to Serviceberry if requested by RRAA due to limited height." He explained Serviceberry is a tree that is loved by many birds, including Cedar Waxwings that feed in groups. For this reason, we do not recommend the use of Serviceberry trees as it seems counter to the rationale proposed by the design engineer for not planting trees along the runway. Township Supervisor and nurseryman Jeff Thompson suggested an alternative to serviceberry: Hot wings maple will not attract birds and will be an appropriate height.

Mr. Greenawalt concluded that the current plan does not comply with the intent of the ordinance and recommends that the design be revised to better represent the intent before presenting it to the Board of Supervisors. The initial design is proposed in preliminary plan and specific tree species are provided in the final plan.

The next topic discussed was the parking space requirement. The ordinance states that no more than 12 parking spaces shall be permitted in a continuous row without being interrupted by landscaping, unless alternative landscaping arrangements are approved by the Township Supervisors. The Zoning Officer determined that this requirement applies to the proposed van spaces and to the proposed trailer spaces. Mr. Ludgate said that they will add islands to van parking spaces and there will be an island every 12 parking spaces.

Mr. Ludgate asked for a waiver for plantings in the trailer parking area because an island will just get destroyed by the trucks. He suggested planting trees around the perimeter of the trailer parking spaces. The number of trees will be the same; but they won't be in an island configuration. Mr. Greenawalt stated that this issue is a zoning ordinance, not a planning commission issue. Mr. Mooney confirmed that an alternative landscape plan falls under the zoning ordinance, but the planning commission can make recommendation to Board of Supervisors regarding a zoning waiver. Mr. Adams made a motion to recommend the alternative landscape plan and Mr. Sweigert seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Tricarico asked if the storm water basin needs fence? Mr. Greenawalt answered that it can be a concern when they're deep enough; but it may not be applicable here. Mr. Ludgate stated that the stormwater basin is over 3 ft deep. Mr. Mooney asked if they are planning to install a fence? Mr. Ludgate answered that they will install a fence anywhere it is required. Mr. Tricarico stated that the ordinance requires a fence, but screening is not needed due to the remote location of the basin.

Mr. Ludgate noted that woods were removed by phase 1 clearing. Thirty two acres were disturbed under phase 1 and SunCap can't disturb more acreage.

The industrial driveway requirement was discussed next. The current ordinance states that an industrial driveway must exceed 16 ft. Mr. Mooney suggested that the township consider revising ordinance to state that an industrial driveway should be at least 16 feet.

Stormwater Management: Mr. Greenawalt address comments on plan. Mr. Ludgate stated that the Managed Release Concept is up to the State. It's not a Township ordinance function. Mr. Tricarico emphasized that SSM and SunCap need to agree on the strategy because it will impact how they do the site design.

Mr. Rumbaugh asked a question about the risk of sinkholes because the property is on a limestone formation that is prone to sinkholes. He asked if they factored sinkholes into stormwater drainage? Mr. Ludgate answered that airport manager, Terry Sroka, said that there are sinkholes on property according to the geotechnical engineer. He added that the formation changes near property line and goes from limestone to a clay cap over the limestone. After 100 borings, there were no concerns about sinkholes from Geotech.

Mr. Ludgate added that of the three sinkholes identified, two were from old pipes. He concluded that the historical and physical evidence does not indicate sinkholes will be an issue. He acknowledged that old sinkholes exist but haven't gotten worse.

Mr. Potts asked about a landscape retaining wall? Mr. Ludgate answered that it wasn't graded properly and caused an undercut in the berm.

Mr. Greenawalt recommended that the applicant 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. Sweigart asked about an Environmental impact study and Steep slope analysis. Mr. Mooney answered that it is in the conditional use plan and conforms with the ordinance. Mr. Ludgate added that they will request waivers. Mr. Greenawalt noted that the industrial development proposed use doesn't violate Township environmental standards.

Mr. Ludgate concluded the presentation by stating he will discuss the alternate landscape plan to Board of Supervisors.

**Solicitor:** No comment

**Public Comment:** Jeff Thompson commented that he endorses trailer parking change, but doesn't agree with eliminating plants around stormwater basin.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Dailey made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Sweigert. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned 8:50pm.