

Bern Township Planning Commission Meeting of July 13, 2021

Present: Planning Commission: Russ Adams, James Dailey, Jim Rumbaugh, Glenn Sweigert, and Steve Tricarico Also attending: Keith Mooney, Solicitor; Todd Grenawalt, Spotts, Stevens & McCoy, Inc.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by Mr. Tricarico.

Minutes: A motion to accept the minutes of the meeting of June 8, 2021 was made by Mr. Dailey. The motion was seconded by Mr. Adams. All voted in favor and the motion was carried.

Energys Land Development Plan Michael Becker was present to answer questions about the waiver request for a solar panel structure at 2400 Old Bernville Rd. They want to add a 20 x 40-foot solar array for vehicle charging. It will be an open carport structure with solar panels on top. Mr. Adams asked what's there now? Mr. Becker answered it's a partially stone lot. Mr. Mooney noted that this waiver needs Planning Commission approval because it's a new structure. Mr. Dailey made a motion to recommend the waiver request as shown in drawings. Mr. Adams seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Subdivision and Land Development Plans:

a. Eberly Sketch Plan Mr. Matt Eberly was present to answer questions about the sketch plan. The intent of the plan is for the property owners, Leon B. and Mary Z. Eberly to subdivide an existing 6.89-acre parcel into two separate lots. Two separate dwellings exist on the 6.89 parcel. The proposed subdivision will allow each dwelling to be on its own lot and continue to be used as a single-family home. Both existing dwellings use their own on-lot sewer system and have their own well. No other improvements are proposed on either lot. The property is located at 1264 West Leesport Road and is in the Agricultural Business Zoning District.

Mr. Greenawalt noted that although it appears enough off-street parking spaces are provided for the existing single-family dwellings, the plan must state a minimum of three off-street parking spaces shall be provided on each lot.

Mr. Greenawalt also stated that an Environmental Assessment Statement shall be submitted to the Township. Since no physical improvements are proposed nor will the subdivision lead to the new construction of buildings, structures, roads, driveways, parking areas or other site improvements, the Environmental Assessment Statement shall at a minimum, state the intent of the plan and the minimal impacts (if any) it will have on the environment. In addition, soil types must be identified on the plan as well as an owner certification.

The Planning Commission next discussed the right-of-way issue. West Leesport Road is considered a Collector Street, requiring a cartway half-width of 20 feet and a right-of way half-width of 30 feet. Where a subdivision abuts an existing street which does not meet the standards, the Township may require the dedication of land sufficient to widen the street and/or dedicate right-of-way to meet the standards. Mr. Tricarico asked about increasing the size of right of way. Mr. Eberly answered that they are willing to increase size of right of way. Mr. Greenawalt said this solution would be OK. Mr. Dailey made a motion to provide a waiver regarding the right of way. Mr. Adams seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

b. Mengel Sketch Plan Mr. Michael Hartman from dH Enterprises, Inc. was present to answer questions about the sketch plan. The intent of the plan is to convey a portion of lot 1 to lot 2 of properties owned by Gary L. Mengel, Jr. The property is located on Rick Road between West Leesport Road and Fairview Drive within the Rural Residential Zoning District. The proposed lot will be served by on-lot water supply and on-lot sewage disposal.

Mr. Greenawalt stated that the distance from the closest corner of the proposed shed to the property line shall be dimensioned on the plan. The plan shall also contain a note stating three off-street parking spaces shall be provided on the lot. Furthermore, the grades of private driveways shall not exceed 15%. Driveways shall be so located as to provide reasonable sight distance at intersections with streets, in accordance with the latest PennDOT standards. It appears the site may have existing slopes that have a minimum of 20% slope. Therefore, the Plan is subject to the slope controls regulations.

Mr. Greenawalt also noted that the Environmental Assessment Statement need not be detailed unless the driveway slope has an environmental impact. Mr. Mooney explained that the environmental assessment submitted previously may be used.

The existing street right-of-way width and cartway width for Rick Road shall be included on the plan. The plan shall also indicate the location of the on-lot well. In addition, the existing lot corner markers shall be shown on the plan.

c. Penske Sketch Plan Mr. James Gavin from Masano-Bradley is the attorney for Penske. Mr. Sean Yentz represented Penske and Mr. Scott Miller from Stackhouse Bensinger was also present to answer questions.

The intent of the plan is to subdivide the Hartman Family Partnership, LTD tract of land into one lot (Lot1) and a Residue Lot. The Hartman tract which consists of three separate parcels will be combined into one tract and then subdivided into the two lots. Lot 1 consists of 30.655 acres and the residue lot will be the remaining 32.038 acres. Penske proposes to develop lot 1 into a facility consisting of two separate buildings. One building approximately 9,500 square feet is proposed to be a Penske District Service Facility handling vehicle rental and leasing, vehicle repair and service and fueling island. The other building approximately 14,742 square feet will function as an Advanced Technical Education Development and Training Facility. The Hartman property lies in the southern quadrant bounded by Van Reed Road to the west; Bernville Road (PA 183) to the north and Red Bridge Road to the east. Lot 1 is located between Van Reed Road and Red Bridge Road and is proposed to have access onto both roads. No development is currently proposed for the residue lot. The property is in the Office/Research zoning District and is within the Town Center Overlay District.

Public sewer and public water service are proposed. The property will be LEED certified and sustainable with solar power and electric vehicle charging.

Mr. Tricarico asked if they plan to replace the facility? Mr. Yentz answered that it will be stand-alone facility and that 75-100 new employees are planned.

Mr. Adams asked if the town center overlay district still exists? Mr. Mooney answered that it has the appearance of being dead; it was an overlay with office research. He added that they will need to get variance or get the Township Supervisors to amend the ordinance for its intended use. Neither currently

allows auto leasing. Mr. Mooney stated that the overlay was intended to be retail shopping and apartments at the other end.

Mr. Greenawalt commented that the Plan list the use of one of the proposed buildings as a District Service Facility handling vehicle rental and leasing, vehicle repair and service with a customer-only fueling island. A vehicle repair use and fueling island appears to be a permitted use within the Town Center Zoning District. The Zoning Officer shall determine whether the vehicle rental and leasing aspect of the proposed facility is an allowed component within this zoning district or within the Office/Research Zoning District. Mr. Miller stated that they need clarification from the zoning officer.

Mr. Miller confirmed that they will comply with open space requirement. He added that they need zoning officer clarification for regarding outdoor storage of motor vehicles or vehicles under repair. Mr. Tricarico emphasized that clarification is not needed because outdoor storage of motor vehicles is not permitted. Mr. Mooney added that they can't leave partially assembled vehicles in the parking lot. Mr. Yentz stated that any repairs will be done inside a bay, not outdoors. He added that there will be rental fleet parking on site and they will meet the parking requirements.

Permitted use on a property requires minimum lot area, which is 30 acres. Intent to allow multiple uses on the property.

Mr. Greenawalt stated in any district, more than one structure housing a permitted or permissible principal use may be erected on a single lot, provided that the area, yard and other requirements applicable to the district in which the lot is located shall be met for each structure as though it were on an individual lot, unless otherwise specifically provided in the "land development" definition. A 30 acre minimum lot size is required within the Town Center Zoning District. The Zoning Officer shall provide an interpretation to determine whether both proposed buildings are allowed on the proposed 30 acre lot or a zoning variance will be required.

Mr. Adams asked Mr. Greenawalt if the number of off-street parking spaces required for the Advanced Technical Education Development and Training Facility is 74 spaces but only 59 spaces are provided on the Plan. Mr. Miller answered they will double check parking and will comply with parking requirements.

Mr. Potts stated that there is a traffic concern about trucks coming from Red Bridge Rd. Mr. Miller replied that most of the traffic will be from employees. Mr. Potts emphasized that ambulances must be able to get through.

Mr. Miller added that they will conduct traffic impact study. Mr. Potts recommends three lanes to permit ambulances. Mr. Miller assured that a traffic impact study will look at that. Mr. Rumbaugh asked about fuel storage. Mr. Miller answered that they will have gas, diesel, and diesel emission fluid. He added that they plan to use a 20,000-gallon double wall, 30-year tanks.

d. Eaton Farms Residential Subdivision Final Plan Mr. John Hoffert was present to answer questions about the plan. The intent of the plan is for the property owner, Empire Group of Reading to subdivide a 50.896 acre lot into 9 residential lots for single family detached dwellings. The proposed dwelling units will utilize on lot water and on lot sewer facilities. The subject property is located around the intersection of White Oak Lane and Seidels Run with most of the lot in the northeast quadrant of this intersection. Another section of the lot lies in the southeast quadrant of the aforementioned

intersection and a little over 10 acres is situated on the western side of White Oak Lane. The tract is zoned as Agricultural Business Zoning District.

Mr. Greenawalt stated that Lot 1 is a concern. The existing gravel lanes come out on White Oak Lane and the sight distance exiting from lot 1 is a concern, it's manageable. Mr. Hoffert noted that the neighboring property agreed to do landscaping that would improve sight distance looking to the left. There will be ample sight distance in either direction.

Mr. Hoffert stated that they need 239 feet sight distance and they have 257 feet, so they exceed the requirements. They contacted the neighbor asking to trim down landscaping to improve sight distance. Mr. Tricarico asked about the steep slope driveway of 15% grade. Mr. Hoffert said they addressed it by grading to 12-13% grade. It is under the Township maximum going up to lot 4. Mr. Greenawalt recommended staggering deciduous trees for landscaping.

Mr. Adams made a motion to recommend approval by Supervisors on the condition that outstanding comments from SSM letter are addressed. Mr. Sweigert seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

e. SUNCAP Land Development Preliminary Plan Mr. Tom Ludgate from Ludgate Engineering was present to answer questions about the plan.

SUNCAP is proposing to construct a 250,955 square feet industrial building with associated parking, paving, and trailer parking area. The building is located off of Aviation Road next to the Reading Regional Airport. The tract is owned by Berks County Industrial Development Authority and lies within the Limited Industrial Zoning District with a slight portion of the site on the northern end within the Airport Special Use Zoning District. Public sewer and public water service are proposed. This site was part of a larger tract of land subject to a Conditional Use Order and Decision dated October 4, 2016 to allow the BCIDA to locate a large scale industrial park. The Decision also relaxed the protected area standards of the Township's Ordinances.

Mr. Greenawalt expressed concern about the slope of the parking lot and noted that , a Steep Slope Analysis should be included in the plan.

Mr. Greenawalt stated that the plan is proposing a secondary means of access to the facility from the proposed adjacent land development facility to the east. The emergency access drive profile shall demonstrate that emergency access vehicles can negotiate the proposed profile/terrain. In order to properly demonstrate this, the profile must be extended into the van parking lot. Vertical curves should be provided where changes in grade exceed 1%. Mr. Ludgate stated they will lower grade to slope 5% down to 4% at the bottom. Mr. Greenawalt emphasized the need to make sure emergency vehicles can get through.

Mr. Potts asked about the number of employees? Mr. Ludgate answered that they estimate total of 400 employees including all shifts.

f. BCIDA Berks 183 Bldg. H Preliminary Plan Mr. Tom Ludgate from Ludgate Engineering was present to answer questions about the plan.

The intent of the plan is to develop an industrial facility on the lot. The developer is proposing to construct a 234,880 square feet industrial building and associated parking on a tract off of Aviation Road next to the Reading Regional Airport. This tract is owned by the Berks County Industrial Development Authority. The proposed facility includes truck parking spaces, trailer parking spaces and 181 off-street parking spaces. The property lies within the Limited Industrial Zoning District with a slight portion of the site on the northern end within the Airport Special Use Zoning District. Public sewer and public water service are proposed.

This site was part of a larger tract of land subject to a Conditional Use Order and Decision dated October 4, 2016 to allow the BCIDA to locate a large scale industrial park. The Decision also relaxed the protected area standards of the Township's Ordinances.

Mr. Greenawalt discussed compliance with zoning, specifically that the plan lists the use of the proposed building to be industrial or warehouse. The plan shall list the actual industrial use in order to demonstrate it is allowed industrial use within the Limited Industrial Zoning District. He also addressed parking requirements: The number of off-street parking spaces required for an industrial use shall be adequate to accommodate the needs of the proposed use; in addition, a minimum of 2 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area.

Next, the planning commission discussed the utility easement. The plan shows a 60 foot wide utility easement along the southern boundary line. The water line that services the proposed building, however, is not completely within this easement at the eastern and western ends of this lot and continuing into the adjacent tracts. It appears the easement may need to be changed. Two driveways are planned: one for trucks one for cars. Mr. Greenawalt noted that they need to indicate the available and required sight distances for both proposed driveways based on PennDOT methodology on the plan.

Mr. Greenawalt also addressed the need to adjust sewer and water lines. Approval will be required from the appropriate Authorities for the proposed sewer (RRAA) connection and water (RAWA) connection.

Regarding traffic, Mr. Ludgate noted that this building was included in the previous traffic study. Mr. Potts asked about a left turn onto Aviation Way. Mr. Ludgate replied that they can put up a sign and lane markings. Mr. Tricarico agreed with this approach.

Solicitor: Mr. Mooney stated that he is drafting an amendment to the ordinance for parking in warehouse facility. The draft should be available between August and September.

Adjournment: Mr. Adams made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Dailey seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.