

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, September 2, 2020

PUBLIC MEETING

PRESENT: Colleen Leonard, Council President
Tina Sokolowski, Council Vice-President
Robert Stokley, Senior Council Member
Anita Barton, Council Member
Jane Flanagan, Council Member
James Griffin, Council Member
Karen Tutino, Council Member
Yaniv Aronson, Mayor

ALSO PRESENT: Michael E. Peters, Borough Solicitor

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Meeting of the Conshohocken Borough Council duly advertised, was held as a hybrid meeting. Borough elected officials, staff and professionals were physically in attendance at Borough Hall, and the public participated through GoToMeeting video and telephone conferencing. Colleen Leonard, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Leonard thanked everyone for attending the hybrid Council meeting. She reviewed the meeting logistics and participation instructions.

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

LAND USE MATTERS, PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES

a.) Conditional Use Hearing for 541 East Hector Street: Craft Custom Homes, Applicant

Mr. Peters opened the public hearing for the conditional use application for 541 East Hector Street. He explained that the application for conditional use is to permit a building height of 40 feet in the Residential Overlay District. Mr. Peters shared that Martin Magid, 544 East Elm Street, who was present and participating remotely, entered party status.

Edward Hughes, applicant for the attorney, identified his two (2) witnesses, Ryan Alexaki, the applicant, and Nick Vastardis, the applicant's engineer.

Mr. Hughes introduced Ryan Alexaki who described the current use of the site and the proposed project, which consists of a 4-story building containing twelve (12) residential units with twenty-five (25) on-site surface parking spaces on the first level. He explained that the Zoning Hearing Board granted zoning relief in 2018. He added that a condition of the relief was that the units are limited to two (2) bedroom residences. He described the proposed floor plans for the units. Mr. Alexaki identified additional buildings in the area of similar or greater height.

Ms. Flanagan voiced concerns related to the vehicular access plan, which consists of vehicles entering from East Elm Street and exiting onto East Hector Street. Mr. Alexaki responded that traffic studies conducted in the area show a reduction in daily trip generation from commercial use to residential use. He offered to provide a traffic study for this project. Mr. Alexaki explained that he had met with surrounding neighbors and there was a high level of support of the project.

Ms. Barton spoke in opposition of the proposed height. Ms. Sokolowski replied that this proposal is consistent with the housing and future land use plans of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Magid, owner at 544 East Elm Street, asked what the applicant will do if conditional use for the height is not granted. Mr. Alexaki responded that he would redesign the building to comply with the zoning ordinance. Mr. Magid asked questions related to parking for guests. Mr. Alexaki responded that the project meets the parking requirement.

Mr. Hughes introduced Nicholas Vastardis who testified that the proposed height of the building would not have an adverse impact on the community. Mr. Madgid asked questions related to the design of the building.

Mr. Magid made a final statement regarding the proposed project. He voiced concerns related to parking and stormwater management.

Mr. Peters closed and continued the hearing to September 16, 2020.

b.) Preliminary/Final Land Development Application for 541 East Hector Street: Craft Custom Homes, Applicant

Mr. Hughes explained that the all comments in the Borough professional review letters would be complied with.

Council had several questions related to the list of requested waivers. Ms. Leonard asked why the applicant is requesting a wavier to permit a 3-foot curb radius for the curbing near the accessible parking spaces, rather than the required 5-foot radius. Mr. Vastardis explained that waiver provides for additional parking spaces on site.

Ms. Leonard inquired about the requested waiver related to street trees. Mr. Alexaki explained that most of the waivers being requested were caused by the existing nonconformities associated with redevelopment of the property. Ms. Leonard also inquired about the waiver from providing pedestrian lighting along East Hector Street and East Elm Street. Ms. Flanagan mentioned the importance of pedestrian safety. Mr. Alexaki explained that Mr. Vastardis and Ms. MacNair, the Borough Engineer, could work through lighting options to illuminate the sidewalk without adversely impacting neighbors.

Ms. Leonard inquired about the finish of the separation wall in the parking area. Mr. Alexaki replied that a more decorative finish could be applied to the Hector Street side of the proposed stucco wall.

Mr. Peters announced that Borough Council would consider the application for approval at the meeting on September 16, 2020.

c.) 261-263 East Elm Street Land Development Sketch Plan Presentation: Craft Custom Homes, Applicant

Ryan Alexaki, the applicant, reviewed the current use of the site, which contains mixed-use businesses. He discussed the proposed project which includes the demolition of all existing features and construction of a twenty-one (21) unit residential building with a forty-two (42) space parking lot located on the ground level below the building. Mr. Alexaki shared the results of a traffic generation analysis, which indicated that the proposed development would generate less morning and afternoon peak hour traffic than the prior uses on the property. The applicant explained that he plans to discuss the proposed project with neighboring property owners prior to seeking zoning approval. Mr. Alexaki discussed the zoning relief that would be required for the proposed redevelopment. He stated that the proposed development meets the parking requirement and discussed implementing scissor parking lifts to maximize parking.

Ms. Flanagan asked questions regarding the current building area and impervious coverage. Mr. Alexaki responded that the current building area is approximately half of the building area being proposed. He stated that the proposed development reduces the current impervious coverage and establishes a stormwater management plan, which does not currently exist.

Ms. Sokolowski mentioned transit-focused amenities, such as a shuttle service offered by the building's Homeowner Association. Mr. Alexaki discussed the idea of designated ride-sharing parking spots.

Ms. Leonard voiced a concern about the proposed plan not complying with the street tree, landscaping or buffering requirement. Mr. Alexaki replied that plantings, planters or other landscaping elements around that perimeter of the property could be provided.

Ms. Flanagan stressed the importance of pedestrian lighting. Mr. Alexaki responded that alternative lighting could be provided to improve pedestrian visibility around the property.

Mr. Hughes summarized next steps in the land use approval process.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

There was no Council business.

MANAGER MATTERS

a.) Consider authorizing Hough Associates to collect residential and commercial recycling data for 2020, 2021 and 2022

Ms. Leonard shared that the data is used to prepare and submit for grant monies on behalf of the Borough for recycling programs.

b.) Consider reappointing Bee, Bergvall & Co., P.C. to conduct the Borough's annual financial audit for fiscal years ending 2021, 2022 and 2023

Ms. Leonard shared that the services of Bee, Bergvall & Co. were originally obtained through an RFP process. She commented that Borough Administration supports the renewal of the contact for a three (3) year period.

c.) Consider approving a tuition reimbursement for Detective Walter and Officer Hall for the 2020 Fall Semester

Ms. Barton made a motion to approve a tuition reimbursement for Detective Walter and Officer Hall for the 2020 Fall Semester, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.

- d.) **Consider approving Resolution 2020-22 approving an extension of the local disaster emergency until October 7**

Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-22 approving an extension of the local disaster emergency until October 7, 2020, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.

- e.) **Consider approving the Borough's 2021 Minimum Municipal Obligations (MMO) as required by Act 205**

Ms. Leonard explained that the Borough is required to adopt the Commonwealth's Minimum Municipal Obligation for Police, Fire and Non-Uniform employees in September of each year.

- f.) **Consider accepting the resignation of a Planning Commission member**

Ms. Barton made a motion to accept the resignation of Jacqueline Rocco from the Planning Commission, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.

DEPARTMENT MATTERS

There were no department matters.

LEGAL MATTERS

There were no legal matters.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

- a.) **Borough Special Events for remainder of FY2020 (Vice President Sokolowski)**

Ms. Sokolowski discussed the remainder of special events for FY2020. Council asked Administration to find innovative and creative ways to celebrate some of the events without large gatherings of people. Ray Sokolowski, Executive Director of Operations, mentioned that Administration has already started working on ideas and would present suggestions to Council on September 16, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brittany Rogers, Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager, stated that no public comment was received via email submission.

Mayor Aronson announced that the Police Department would be sponsoring a shredding event at Coldwell Banker on Saturday, September 12, 2020. He reminded residents that non-political signs are prohibited from being placed between the street curb and the sidewalk.

Mr. Stokley inquired about the status of the 2019 Road Program. Mr. Sokolowski explained that there has been a delay in the project due to the relocation of the PECO line and the pandemic.

Ms. Flanagan shared that the Conshohocken Authority made a \$1,000.00 donation to the Colonial Neighborhood Council.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Cecco,
Borough Secretary