



Township of Northampton
55 Township Road
Richboro, PA 18954

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF
APRIL 13, 2021
MINUTES

Members Present

Paul Constantini
Mike Enz
Andrew Gannon
Edward Ingle
Patrick McGuigan
Steve Saddlemire
Mark Shapiro

Others Present

Joseph Pizzo, Esq., Township Solicitor
Amanda Fuller, PE, Township Engineer
Craig Bryson, PLA, Township Planner
Joe DeSantis, PE, Township Traffic Engineer
Mike Solomon, Director of Planning & Zoning
Janet Kifolo, Planning Commission Alternate

Mr. Shapiro called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. There was also a moment of silence for those in our armed forces. The meeting was held via Zoom per the Governor's Declaration given the coronavirus pandemic.

Minutes

A motion (Gannon/McGuigan) was made to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2021 meeting.

Approved - 7-0

Consideration of Preliminary/Final Plan of Subdivision and Land Development, WaWa (Provco), SLD 20-2, 287 Holland Road

Mr. Joseph Pizzo, Esq., Township Solicitor, gave an overview of the process and legal requirements with respect to the subject application. Specifically, Mr. Pizzo discussed the Zoning Hearing Board meeting last night dealing with a limited issue related to the determination of whether Wawa is a retail use or a gasoline service station. He added that the hearing last night has no impact on the Planning Commission's review of the application this evening.

Julie Von Spreckelsen, Esq., was present on behalf of the applicant. She noted that the land development aspects of the project will be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Ms. Von Spreckelsen gave an overview of the proposed project which is to construct a 5,585 square foot retail store for Wawa with accessory gasoline sales. She referenced the Holland Master Plan, which notes the realignment of Holland Road. She added that this has been incorporated into the plan.

At this point, the applicant's engineer, C.J. Bock, PE, gave a summary of the proposed project. This overview discussed design, signage, landscaping, and interior layout. He noted that all items within the engineer, planner, and traffic consultant review letters are all will-comply items.

He also addressed the waivers that are being requested with the subject application. Specifically, the waiver requests are as follows: to provide an aerial plan; to permit parking within 20 feet of the proposed building; to permit the use of bollards in lieu of required curb stops; to permit the parking lot to exceed 110% of the minimum required number of spaces; to alleviate the requirement of providing decorative pavement treatments into the main entrance of the building, pedestrian access areas, and public roads; to permit parking within 30 feet of the street right-of-way

line; to permit the dumpster enclosure to be in the front yard in lieu of the rear yard; to permit off-street parking spaces and loading along the front of the building; to permit less than the required amount of parking lot landscaping; to permit street trees to be planted beyond two feet from the street right-of-way line; to permit fewer than the required amount of replacement trees; and to not permit parking lots and loading areas to be screened and landscaped.

With respect to design, Mr. Bock noted that the Wawa will be very similar to the Richboro store that was recently constructed.

At this point, Ms. Von Spreckelsen requested preliminary and final land development approval from the Planning Commission.

Mr. McGuigan discussed the Holland Master Plan, including giving specific language as well as discussing the development scenarios in the plan. He stated that the proposed concept is not a good idea for the site and is not consistent with the Master Plan.

Mr. Constantini reiterated that the proposal is not consistent with the Master Plan as well. He added that the proposed Wawa doesn't fit with the plan and the site was envisioned to be developed differently. He further added that the subject property is more of a buffer area before getting into the commercial area of Holland.

Mr. Ingle provided an historical prospective of the subject property, which includes previous proposals to construct an Amoco and a pharmacy. He stated that he sees this use as very intensive and views the subject property as a transitional zone. He added that the corner of the subject property could serve as a gateway into Holland.

Mr. Saddlemire inquired if the applicant will incorporate the items identified in the Bucks County Planning Commission review. Ms. Von Spreckelsen added that she was confident that the applicant will comply with these requirements. Mr. Saddlemire further added that the Master Plan should serve as a guide with respect to the development of the subject property.

Mr. McGuigan raised concerns with respect to the road improvements. Mr. DeSantis, the Township's traffic engineer, explained the project. In addition, Mr. Fran Haney from PennDOT stated that they endorse the proposed road realignment to improve the entire traffic configuration within Holland. He added that the completion of the realignment on day one would be the main objective.

Ms. Kifolo inquired why the proposed Wawa has more pumps than Richboro. Mr. Bock noted that it is a different prototype. Ms. Kifolo added that the viability of businesses is important as we are in a different era from when the Master Plan was developed.

Mr. Gannon added that he is opposed to the project. He stated that the other alternatives within the Master Plan should be considered, such as a park or a gateway use. He also added that there are concerns with respect to traffic and that the number of pumps should be reduced as the automobile industry is looking toward electric vehicles. He stated that this is not the legacy that he would like to leave serving on the Planning Commission.

Mr. Shapiro stated that he has a lot of concerns with the subject proposal as well, especially as it relates to the impact on the surrounding area.

Mr. Constantini added that the project would be a better fit without gas pumps. In addition, he raised concerns with respect to the 24/7 operation of the proposed store.

Mr. Ingle stated that he does have concerns with respect to the impact on other gas stations as well. In addition, he raised questions with respect to the buffering and landscaping on the property.

At this point, the meeting was open to public comment. The following residents spoke:

Jay Bowen, 108 Hope Road, raised concerns with respect to security and the impact on the surrounding area. In addition, he was concerned about the impact to the small retail shops throughout the Township.

Pam Duffey, 125 Hope Road, raised her concerns with respect to the Zoning Hearing Board meeting last evening. She added that the subject proposal is not consistent with the Holland Master Plan, raised concerns about potential crime, and discussed her proposal for the site that she emailed to Wawa representatives.

Ilya Breyman, 290 Holland Road, stated that he disagreed with respect to the determination of the proposed use. He also raised concerns with respect to zoning ordinance interpretations and the C-2 district.

Arvind Cavale, 90 Hope Road, raised concerns with respect to the Supervisors and Zoning Hearing Board roles in the project. He stated that he has significant concerns with respect to the impacts of the proposed development and added that it is not consistent with the Master Plan.

Joe Kruczynski, 131 Hope Road, raised concerns with respect to the environmental impacts of the proposed project, especially in proximity to residential properties.

Gerry Duffey, 125 Hope Road, thanked the Commission members and raised numerous topics of concern including traffic, flow, volume, and access.

Gisela Cruz, 327 Buck Road, stated that she has traffic concerns with respect to the subject proposal.

Brian Kubala, 187 Wooden Bridge Road, stated that he has concerns with the environmental aspect of the project, safety of customers and residents, and raised the point that the project isn't going green in accordance with current initiatives in the automobile industry.

Sanjay Dalal, 12 Hope Road, raised concerns with respect to the traffic impacts and PennDOT.

Ms. Von Spreckelsen noted that the applicant will work with the neighbors and will take many of these points under consideration. She added that the project will comply with the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance.

Mr. McGuigan raised concerns with respect to the pending Zoning Hearing Board application and the applicant noted that the Commission is required to review the plan in accordance with the MPC requirements. Mr. Pizzo once again explained that the pending Zoning Hearing Board application has no impact on the Commission this evening.

There being no comment from the public, the following motion was made by Mr. Shapiro and restated by Ms. Kifolo after extensive discussion:

I move that we recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval for WaWa, SLD 20-2, subject to the Township Engineer's review letter dated March 17, 2021, the Township Planner's review letter dated March 17, 2021, the Township Traffic Engineer's review letter dated March 16, 2021, the Fire Marshal Review Memo dated March 9, 2021, and the Police Department Memo of March 4, 2021. It is further recommended that the requested waivers be approved, deliveries be limited to between 6 AM and 11 PM, and additional landscaping be installed along Rocksville Road.

Motion - Shapiro Second – Ingle

Not Approved

6 – Voted against the Motion

1 – Voted in Favor of the Motion (Enz)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Michael T. Solomon
Director of Planning and Zoning