

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

April 7, 2022

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

The Planning Commission of South Strabane Township held its Regular Meeting on Thursday, March 3, 2022 at 7:05 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Building, 550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301.

Present: Jay Gordon, Vice Chair; Joe Kopko (via Zoom); Paula Phillis; Fred Pozzuto; and Dan Reitz

Not Present: Tom Steele, Chair

Also Present: Jim Sutter, Assistant to the Township Manager; Scott Groom, Engineer; and Dennis Makel, Solicitor

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Gordon led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Chair Gordon took this opportunity to introduce and welcome new member Dan Reitz.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Planning Commission allocates a period of time during this item for those individuals who would like the opportunity to address the Planning Commission on any matter. Each person addressing the Planning Commission is asked to limit their comments to a maximum of three (3) minutes.

There were no comments from the Public.

3. APPROVAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES MARCH 3, 2022

Mr. Pozzuto moved to approve the March 3, 2022 meeting minutes. Ms. Phillis seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

4. PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE CONTINUED CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR A TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE ZONING CODE FROM AMERCO REAL ESTATE COMPANY TO ALLOW “MINI WAREHOUSE OR SELF-STORAGE FACILITY” AS A CONDITIONAL USE IN THE C-2 ZONING DISTRICT

Vice Chair Gordon introduced the item. On December 17, 2021 the Township received an application for a text amendment from Amerco Real Estate Company (“Applicant”) for a text amendment to Section 245-63B of the Zoning Code to allow “Mini Warehouse or Self-storage Facility” as a Conditional Use in the C-2 Commercial Zoning District. The Applicant represents the U-Haul Vehicle Rental Facility located at 960 Washington Road (“Facility”) and was under contract to purchase two adjacent parcels (Parcel Nos. 600-001-01-02-0013-01 & 600-001-01-

02-0013-00) to the northeast (“Property”) at the time the application was submitted. The Facility and Property are both located in the C-2 Zoning District along the Route 19 corridor.

The Public Hearing to consider the application commenced at the January 6, 2022 meeting where the Applicant provided an overview of their request. It was agreed more documentation specifying the request and displaying how the structure would ultimately appear should be provided by the Applicant. The Planning Commission unanimously moved to continue the Public Hearing to provide the Applicant the opportunity to provide a draft of the proposed text amendment and drawings of the proposed facility.

Mr. Bernard Rabik, legal counsel for the Applicant, stated they have already provided the requested documentation to Township Staff and have forwarded the proposed amendment to the Washington County Planning Commission. He reiterated they are requesting the Planning Commission forward a positive recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. He also noted they have a prepared traffic study which can be provided upon request.

Mr. Michael Zemba, Area District Vice President for U-Haul, was in attendance and it was noted he was still under oath from initial session of this Public Hearing which took place on January 6, 2022.

Mr. Zemba presented the proposed site plan which had previously been provided. Mr. Pozzuto asked what the Applicant plans to do with the existing buildings located on the site. Mr. Zemba stated they would be completely demolished. He then highlighted two changes between the proposed text amendment and the existing standards and criteria for “Mini Warehouse and Self-Storage Facilities” in the I-1 Zoning District. The proposed differences include greater height and giving the Township final design review of the building(s). Mr. Zemba shared proposed elevations for the structures. He stated they took inspiration from the medical facilities on the opposite side of Route 19 from the Property. Mr. Zemba noted it is also their intention to make updates to the existing facility. A discussion ensued on the nearby medical facility.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission the existing height restrictions for self-storage facilities in the I-1 Zoning District is low and reached a consensus the proposed 3-story and 40-foot maximum height is acceptable. Ms. Phillis expressed her preference for recreational storage of vehicles to be kept inside. Vice Chair Gordon stated he shares her concern and doesn’t feel outside storage is appropriate for the C-2 Zoning District. Mr. Zemba stated they have no issue changing Item Q to completely restrict outside storage.

Vice Chair Gordon inquired on access hours for clients. Mr. Zemba stated their standard contract allows for access from 5:00 a.m. through 10:00 p.m. Clients can also be granted 24-hour access upon request. Ms. Phillis asked where the administration offices for the facility will be located. Mr. Zemba stated they will be in the existing building. Mr. Pozzuto noted U-Haul is a longtime business operating in the Township and expressed the opinion this is something to consider as a part of the application. He also stated he has never heard a complaint regarding the current facility. Mr. Kopko noted Item T, which provides a restriction on the storage of hazardous materials and substances, and states written notice shall be given to potential clients informing them of this

restriction. Mr. Kopko expressed concern over the ability to enforce this provision and asked if their contract has provisions for inspection of units. Mr. Zemba stated the contract does not have this specific provision. Mr. Kopko reiterated his concern for the lack of enforcement and for fire and safety officials. Mr. Zemba noted they do have the ability to evict tenants for probable cause, but they legally have to provide 48 hours' notice. Solicitor Dennis Makel inquired on the ability to install a Knox Box so the Fire Department would have access in case of and emergency. A discussion ensued on the proposed fire prevention measures for the facility.

Vice Chair Gordon asked if it would be possible to edit the customer contract to include a provision that allows for inspection upon suspicion of hazardous materials or substances being stored. Mr. Zemba stated they can provide the current contract for the Commission's review. Vice Chair Gordon restated Mr. Kopko's concern regarding enforcement. Mr. Reitz inquired on a sprinkler system for the proposed facility. Mr. Zemba noted they will have one installed and then reviewed the mechanics of the system. Ms. Phillis inquired of the required setbacks for the facility. Assistant to the Township Manager Sutter stated they would need to adhere to those provided in the Area and Bulk requirements for the C-2 Zoning District where none are specified in the Conditional Use standards and criteria.

Mr. Makel expressed concern over Item Z indicating the Planning Commission has the authority to approve the design of the structure. Mr. Sutter noted it was the direction of the Planning Commission to include the ability for the Planning Commission to review the design of the structure(s) in the text amendment. A discussion ensued on the wording and intent of this item. A consensus was reached the wording should make it clear the Planning Commission is to review the design and provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, who have final authority to approve the design.

There were no comments from the Public.

Mr. Pozzuto moved to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Phillis seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Pozzuto moved to recommend the Board approve the application for a Text Amendment to the Zoning Code from Amerco Real Estate Company to allow "Mini Warehouse or Self-Storage Facility" as a Conditional Use in the C-2 Zoning District with the condition Item Q is reworded to completely restrict outside storage and Item Z is reworded to make it clear the Planning Commission is to review the design and provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, who have final authority to approve the design. Mr. Reitz seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

5. CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR PRELIMINARY AND FINAL MINOR SUBDIVISION APPROVAL FROM SCOTT MURPHY FOR THE SCOTT MURPHY CONSOLIDATION PLAN LOCATED AT 607-639 EAST NATIONAL PIKE, FURTHER

IDENTIFIED AS PARCEL NOS. 600-012-00-00-0001-00 AND 600-013-02-02-0022-00, IN THE A-1 ZONING DISTRICT

Vice Chair Gordon introduced the item. On March 17, 2022 the Township received an application for Preliminary and Final Minor Subdivision approval from Scott Murphy (“Applicant”) for the Scott Murphy Consolidation Plan (“Subdivision”) located at 607-639 East National Pike, further identified as Parcel Nos. 600-012-00-00-0001-00 and 600-013-02-02-0022-00 (“Property”) in the A-1 Zoning District. The Applicant, who owns both parcels, is seeking to consolidate both into one, so that he may construct an accessory structure on the currently vacant parcel.

The Applicant nor any representative of them were in attendance to address the application and respond to questions from the Commissioners. An attempt was made to contact the Applicant in order to have them respond via phone. During these attempts, a discussion ensued on the deficiencies in the submitted plan. Attempts to contact the Applicant were unsuccessful.

Mr. Pozzuto moved to table the application to allow for deficiencies in the Application to be corrected and provide the Planning Commission an opportunity to make inquiries to the Applicant. Mr. Reitz seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

6. STAFF UPDATE

Mr. Sutter provided updates on an anticipated application from Snuffy Investments, LP. for a Planned Residential Development at Quarry and Lakeview Drive. He then updated the Commissioners on an anticipated application from Menard, Inc. for Land Development at a site at the Old Mill Shopping Center. Mr. Sutter also also provided updates on currently tabled applications from Thomas and Yvette Kisling for a 5-lot Subdivision and Pankratos, Inc a Juvenile Personal Care Home Conditional Use.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Ms. Phillis moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. Mr. Reitz seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully,

Jim Sutter
Assistant to the Township Manager