

**SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
ZONING HEARING BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

February 8, 2021

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

1. ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER

On Monday, February 8, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., after due advertisement according to law, a public meeting of the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) was held in the Municipal Building, 550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301 and the following were present:

Art Sullivan, Chairperson – via Zoom
James Stewart, Vice-Chair – via Zoom
Andy Rembert, Member – via Zoom

Patrick Smider, Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor – via Zoom
Brandon Stanick, Township Manager/Zoning Officer – via Zoom
Shawn Smith, Site Enhancement Services (Applicant) – via Zoom

2. REORGANIZATION FOR 2021

Mr. Rembert moved to appoint Mr. Sullivan as Chair for the 2021 year. Mr. Stewart seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Chair Sullivan moved to appoint Mr. Stewart as Vice Chair for the 2021 year. Mr. Rembert seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

3. ZHB MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Stewart moved to approve the December 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes as presented. Chair Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

4. PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of an Application from Thomaston Land Co., LLC requesting two variances from Section 245-191 of the South Strabane Zoning Code concerning the number of electronic changeable copy signs and the maximum height of canopy sign letters for the property located at 100 Murtland Avenue in the C02 General Commercial Zoning District

Zoning Solicitor Smider swore in Mr. Shawn Smith of Site Enhancement Services representing the applicant, Thomaston Land Co., LLC. Solicitor Smider noted the following exhibits for the record: i) zoning application with all attached supporting materials; and ii) legal notice with proof of publication and letters to surrounding property owners.

Mr. Smith presented the application noting the rebranding from BP to Amoco at the Cohen-owned gas station. The request is for the installation of three LED changeable copy signs with two signs measuring 3.75 sq. ft. in surface area and one sign measuring 7.6 sq. ft., as well as the installation of three illuminated canopy signs on the gas station canopy with two signs measuring 30.83 sq. ft. and one sign measuring 24.29 sq. ft. He continued noting

the purpose of the signage is to provide advance notification to those accessing the property. The canopy signs will include the Amoco insignia with torch and "Amoco" channel letters with the addition of blue and red bars. The Amoco letters measure 22 in. in height. Mr. Smith continued to identify other changes to signage for the rebranding imitative, which do not require any zoning relief.

In response to a question from Mr. Rembert, Mr. Smith advised the Amoco insignia exceeds the canopy fascia by ~26 in. Chair Sullivan inquired how much the proposal exceeds the current signs. Mr. Smith advised there is currently one sign and the proposal is for three signs. He also concurred with Chair Sullivan's statement regarding the total size of the signage was increasing from 28 sq. ft. to ~86 sq. ft. Mr. Steward asked if the proposed signage is similar to other stations that are moving toward the Amoco brand. Mr. Smith confirmed it is similar; however, sizes are site specific.

Mr. Rembert stated that the same property was before the ZHB in June 2020 requesting a variance to increase signage on the property. It was confirmed that this signage was for the rebranding of the Cohen convenience store in addition to the car wash. Mr. Rembert continued noting that hardships were discussed at that time and that the owner wanted signage to be able to attract from both access points as it sits on two public streets. Mr. Rembert inquired of the change that would justify additional signage.

Mr. Smith stated that the station is rebranding from BP to Amoco noting the hardships have not changed and stated he is not aware of the previous applications. Chair Sullivan clarified that the car wash signage was the focus of the previous application.

In response to a comment from Mr. Rembert regarding the use of the same signs, Mr. Smith advised that the size could decrease but the three canopy signs would be better for business.

Chair Sullivan asked if Coen could maintain and not increase from what is currently on site. Mr. Smith advised he will review with his client.

Mr. Smith presented information for the request to allow three changeable copy signs noting one sign is advertising the Club Cohen price. Chair Sullivan advised the hardship with this request is not sufficiently justified. Mr. Smider advised that the ZHB is constrained by the standards for hardship when considering variances. Chair Sullivan inquired what is it about the property that necessitates the hardship. A discussion ensued regarding the additional changeable message sign.

Mr. Rembert noted the Code does not permit a changeable message sign within 500 ft. of a signalized intersection.

Chair Sullivan encouraged Coen to make the site more compliant, safer and work for both Coen and the Township. Mr. Smith advised he will pass these concerns onto the owner.

Mr. Smider inquired if there was any input from the public in attendance. Ms. Tysiak stated she has nothing to say and is interested in the process.

Following a brief discussion, Chair Sullivan moved to continue the consideration of the application to another date after the applicant reviews the proposal with Township Staff. Mr. Stewart seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

In response to Mr. Smider, Mr. Smit confirmed he will communicate via email to the Township Manager to ask for a continuance.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Consideration of an Application of Thomaston Land Co., LLC requesting two variances from Section 245-191 of the South Strabane Zoning Code concerning the number of electronic changeable copy signs and the maximum height of canopy sign letters for the property located at 481 Washington Road in the C-2 General Commercial Zoning District

Solicitor Smider advised that the testimony from the previous item this meeting be applied to this application as well.

As such, Chair Sullivan moved to continue the hearing for this application. Mr. Stewart seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

6. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No were no public comments.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

As there was no further business to come before the Zoning Hearing Board, Mr. Stewart moved to adjourn. Mr. Rembert seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandon J. Stanick
Township Manager / Zoning Officer