

Planning Agency Meeting

April 2, 2014

The Plymouth Township Planning Agency held a public meeting at the Plymouth Township Building on Wednesday, April 2, 2014.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following were present:

Clem Monacelli	Chairman
Dee Mellor	Vice Chairman
Dominic Aprile	Member
Jeff Branagh	Member
Joe Prestia	Member
Dave Conroy	Zoning Officer
Lonnie Manai	Engineer, Woodrow & Associates
Tom Speers	Township Solicitor
Absent:	Greg Ensslin
	Ed Costello
	David Raimondo

The Agency heard the following:

Michael & Wendy DeSanto

Chairman Monacelli stated that this is an application for a variance from Plymouth Township Zoning Ordinance No. 342, as amended, Article II, Section 200. The variance requested is to permit employees, that do not reside in the dwelling, to work in the proposed no-impact home-based business. The property is located at 355 Jefferson Street in a "D" Residential Zoning District.

Michael & Wendy DeSanto were present to explain that they are seeking to operation a home-based business with more than the required two employees.

Chairman Monacelli asked if there is macadam around the entire building on the property. Mr. & Mrs. DeSanto explained that there was and that off street parking was provided for the business. They also explained that their business would be from 9am-5pm, Monday - Friday.

Mr. Prestia asked if there was a favorable petition signed by the neighbors. Mr. & Mrs. DeSanto said that there was and would be brought to the Zoning Hearing Board meeting.

Mr. Branagh would like to see a condition, if an approval is granted, for no more than 7 total employees on site.

Mr. Aprile confirmed with Mr. & Mrs. DeSanto that 355 Jefferson Street was their primary residence.

A Plymouth Township resident, Nancy Benowitz, asked exactly what type of business would be conducted on the property. Mr. & Mrs. DeSanto explained that it would be a dispatch center for service calls for off-site contractors.

Chairman Monacelli made a motion to approve the Variance requested, with the condition that no more than 7 total employees be on site. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mellor; a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Monacelli, Ms. Mellor, Mr. Aprile, Mr. Branagh and Mr. Prestia in favor. Mr. Ensslin, Mr. Costello, Mr. Raimondo were absent.

Cold Point Village Conditional Use - Signage

Ms. Bernadette Kearney was present on behalf of the applicant, Mr. Sal Paone, who was present as well. Ms. Kearney & Mr. Paone explained the need for a Conditional Use for the overall signage at Cold Point Village, at the intersection of Plymouth Road and Butler Pike. They also stated that each wall sign for the individual tenants would not be larger than 18 square feet, and that their identification on the entrance signs to the community would not be larger than 5 square feet.

Mr. Branagh confirmed with Mr. Paone on the exact location of the wall signs. He also questioned whether the existing landscaping on the property would be a hindrance to the visibility of the proposed signage. Mr. Paone stated it would not be an issue.

Mr. Aprile and Ms. Mellor commended Mr. Paone on the overall project at Cold Point Village.

Chairman Monacelli made a motion to approve the Conditional Use. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mellor; a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Monacelli, Ms. Mellor, Mr. Aprile, Mr. Branagh and Mr. Prestia in favor. Mr. Ensslin, Mr. Costello, Mr. Raimondo were absent.

2005 Chemical Road Rezoning & Text Amendment

Mr. Tom Speers, Township Solicitor, was present representing Plymouth Township. The property is located at 2005 Chemical Road. The application was to re-zone the existing property from Limited Industrial and C-Residential to all Limited Industrial, as well as to add Self-Storage facilities as a permitted use, with conditions, in the Limited Industrial zoning district.

Mr. Speers explained that 4.2 acres of the property was zoned Limited Industrial and 3.2 acres was zoned C-Residential. He stated the reason that this application has come forward was due to the fact that a public meeting took place in 2013 by the property owner looking for possible uses for the property. After feedback from the residents at the meeting, he gathered his best option was to pursue a self-storage facility. Mr. Speers stated the conditions in the proposed text amendment for the self-storage facilities in the Limited Industrial district. He also addressed the Montgomery County Planning Commission's concerns in their review letter. He stated that access to Chemical Road on the property would be granted through an easement and stated there were several ways to safeguard the property from other uses, such as covenants.

Mr. Manai asked if there were environmental standards that had to be adhered to on the property. Mr. Speers stated that they would have to abide by the Performance Standards in the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Branagh asked if any other uses could be permitted if the property is zoned all Limited Industrial and why the application could not be a Zoning Hearing Board appeal. Mr. Speers explained that no other new uses could be permitted, since 4.2 acres are already zoned Limited Industrial, and that Township Council could not vote on a Zoning Hearing Board application.

Mr. Aprile asked how much of the land on the tract is actually developable. Mr. Speers stated there were several environmental and easement restrictions on where the property owner could build. Mr. Aprile also asked what would happen to the hotel ZHB case if this application was approved. Mr. Speers stated that the application would become mute.

Ms. Mellor stated that Township Council is trying to protect the residents with this application proposal.

A Plymouth Township resident, Robert Benowitz, stated that this property was zoned before I-476 was constructed and that he is against this current application.

A Conshohocken Borough resident, Cheryl Darby, stated that she has a child at Ridge Park Elementary School and has safety concerns on how close a self-storage facility would be to the school.

A Plymouth Township resident, Beth Petrino, stated that she has a child at Ridge Park Elementary School and would rather see the property owner apply to the Zoning Hearing Board for a variance.

A Plymouth Township resident, Christine Edwin, stated that she has a child at Ridge Park Elementary School and that the property owner should have known what the property was zoned for before buying it.

A Plymouth Township resident, Bob Delanger, stated that he wants the Planning Agency to be cautious about their decision considering the noise issues that his neighborhood is already experiencing.

A Plymouth Township resident, Joe Prieto, asked why the Township needed more self-storage facilities and why this current proposal could not be built on the existing Limited Industrial section of the property now.

Mr. Prestia stated that this property was proposed as a park several years ago but was never approved.

Discussion headed by Mr. Speers ensued regarding the difference between rezoning applications and ZHB applications and why this application in particular is being pursued. Mr. Speers also stated that ZHB standards are very strict.

Chairman Monacelli made a motion to approve the Rezoning application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mellor; a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 4-1 with Mr. Monacelli, Ms. Mellor, Mr. Aprile, and Mr. Prestia in favor. Mr. Branagh was against. Mr. Ensslin, Mr. Costello, Mr. Raimondo were absent.

Chairman Monacelli made a motion to approve the Text Amendment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Aprile; a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Monacelli, Ms. Mellor, Mr. Aprile, Mr. Branagh and Mr. Prestia in favor. Mr. Ensslin, Mr. Costello, Mr. Raimondo were absent.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted



David P. Conroy

Interim Recording Secretary