

MINUTES

LOWER SWATARA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 23, 2014, 7:00 P.M.**

Meeting was called to order by Chauncey Knopp at 7:00 P.M. with the following present:

Chauncey Knopp, Chairman
Eric A. Breon, Vice Chairman
Christopher DeHart
Kimber Latsha
Paul Wagner
Robert Greene, Planning & Zoning Coordinator
Peter Henninger, Solicitor
Erin Letavic, Herbert Rowland & Grubic, Inc., Township Engineer
Leah Pearlman-Storch, Tri-County Planning Commission
Tonya Bibb-Sakr, Recording Secretary

Others in Attendance:

Catherine Hoover, Raudenbush Engineering
Sean Fernandez, Raudenbush Engineering
Don Holtzman, PSU-SEC
Jason Morris, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson
Jason Hinz, HRG

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. DeHart and seconded by Mr. Latsha to approve the Minutes of the August 28, 2014 meeting.

Motion unanimously approved.

PENN STATE HARRISBURG CAMPUS – STUDENT ENRICHMENT CENTER PRELIMINARY/FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Planning Commission reviewed the revised Land Development Plan for the Penn State Student Enrichment Center, 777 W. Harrisburg Pike, submitted by The Pennsylvania State University and prepared by Raudenbush Engineering, Inc.

Catherine Hoover from Raudenbush Engineering introduced herself as well as Sean Fernandez, also from Raudenbush Engineering; Don Holtzman from Penn State; and Jason Morris from Bohlin Cywinski Jackson who are the architects.

Ms. Hoover then said she would give a quick synopsis of the project. She went on to say that they did meet with a representative from HRG this morning to go over the comments that they received and that they do anticipate getting a motion to table tonight until November's meeting.

Ms. Hoover went on to report that, in total, the new construction of the Student Enrichment Center (SEC) is a 32,500 square foot building in the existing area of the Penn State Bookstore in the heart of the campus. The SEC will be for existing students to use as a meeting place, bookstore, and café. It will also be used as the "Campus Living Room" which will be a place to watch football games, host meetings, and have recreational space. There will also be student organizational offices in the building as well as a Spiritual Center and an auditorium. So the SEC will incorporate a lot of activities that are spread all over campus at this time. Ms. Hoover also stated that this SEC will be for current enrollment, it will not increase enrollment as there will not be any new classrooms or any other facilities that would actually increase enrollment on the campus.

Ms. Hoover informed the commission that they went in front of the Zoning Hearing Board (on August 27, 2014) for a setback encroachment along the front for a wall that would permit a 53.3' front yard setback from the adjacent street centerline and also for a cheek-wall that buffers the service and loading parking area. The Zoning Hearing Board did approve the variance and gave them a special exception for that use.

Ms. Hoover went on to explain that the SEC was designed to make use of the existing grade and they actually have a net increase of about .8 acres of imperviousness on the site. The location of the SEC on campus does not anticipate any new connections to state highways and will have no highway impact. The demolition plan is that the bookstore will be demolished, the parking lot for the current bookstore will be demolished, and there are some utilities that will be affected and two storm lines that run through the site will be re-routed. There are new sanitary and water connections.

Mr. Breon asked how much bigger the SEC building will be than the bookstore.

Ms. Hoover turned that question over to the architect who explained that the new building would be 32,500 sq.ft. with 3 floors. A few of the existing bookstore will be eliminated but there will be ample parking from neighboring buildings. The actual "footprint" is approximately 60,000 sq. ft.

Mr. Knopp asked where the actual parking would be.

Ms. Hoover explained that the public parking would be by Olmstead Building and coming in from Wharton Ave. The architect said the main parking would be by the library. Ms. Hoover explained that some of the parking area would be permit parking only.

Mr. Breon added that we want to make sure there is access for emergency services.

Mr. DeHart pointed out that they would need a new home for their bonfire.

Ms. Hoover went on to explain the re-routed pipes of storm collection system. She said there is a series of inlets and a large rate control system. All rate control is handled on the site. For infiltration, they used the existing swale with some modifications along the eastern side of First Avenue. There will be a stone trench with a perforated pipe on the bottom. It meets all requirements for the site.

Ms. Hoover then turned the floor over to the architect, Jason Morris.

Mr. Morris showed the Commission the drawings of the new building and explained what everything was made of. Primarily, the architectural expression of the building is brick. He said it will be the same kind of brick as the rest of the campus. He then went on to point out what the specific areas of the building would be used for (bookstore, dining, living room space, auditorium, spiritual center, etc.).

Mr. Breon asked if the dining area was meant to replace the Dining Hall.

Mr. Morris replied that it is more like a café-type setting with soup and sandwiches, coffees, etc. and it seats approximately 125 students. It would not be a full cafeteria so it will not replace the Dining Hall.

Mr. Morris then continued to point out certain items on the plan drawings and explained what each space would be used for and what the occupancy load was for each area. He said there is a lot of mechanical-space because there are a lot of different functions in this building and they all need different temperature controls.

Mr. DeHart asked what the height of the building was.

Mr. Morris explained that it had different heights at different spots. At the Vartran Plaza side, it is approximately 35 feet. The highest part of the building is about 45 feet. The lowest point is about 23 feet. He also stated that there is no equipment on the roof of this building. The area above the mechanical room pops up about 6 feet above the rest of the roof, but that will be the only thing you would see on the roof.

Mr. DeHart asked what the widest part of the building was.

Mr. Morris said that is was close to 250 feet.

Mr. DeHart asked what “Future Quad” meant.

Mr. Morris explained that the area of the hill is envisioned as the campus quad which means there will be additional buildings proposed for that site in the years ahead.

Mr. DeHart said he saw the requirements call for three dock doors but they only have two shown.

Mr. Morris said they have a loading zone. The loading dock consists of two loading bays and a stairway leading to the door that would open up into the bookstore. The service court is approximately 42 inches lower than the dock.

Mr. Wagner asked if there was a back-up electrical supply.

Mr. Morris replied that there is an emergency generator.

Mr. Breon asked if the intent of the generator was to run HVAC as well.

Mr. Morris said no, it was primarily just to supply emergency power for the food area and such. It is not a total building power generator.

Mr. Wagner asked if the fuel would be natural gas.

Mr. Morris replied that it would.

Mr. Knopp asked if there were any other questions from the Planning Commission. He then asked Mr. Greene if he had any comments from the township's point of view.

Mr. Greene informed that he had submitted his list of comments.

Mr. Knopp then asked Ms. Letavic if she had any comments that she would like to cover.

Ms. Letavic said that since we would be discussing this at least one more time, she would rather wait until then to go over her comments. She did state that they do have significant stormwater concerns but they have worked with Raudenbush before and they know that they can get through it. She also said they have made two comments that might reciprocate two waivers but it's their choice. One waiver is Preliminary Plan that has already been requested. The other is regarding inlets that would basically be built outside of a road. The waiver is this not being of PennDOT construction. Ms. Letavic said that HRG is ok with it.

Ms. Pearlman-Storch added that County just has additional SALDO comments but they are comfortable with waivers of these types of projects.

Mr. Knopp then asked Mr. Henninger if he had any comments.

Mr. Henninger said he had just one thing. He asked Ms. Hoover if she could include him in on the memorandum about the easements for stormwater facilities.

Mr. Knopp asked if there were any more questions/comments.

Mr. Breon stressed to the engineers and architect that lighting is a huge issue with the township.

Mr. Knopp asked if there was a motion to table this.

Mr. Latsha made motion and Mr. DeHart seconded it.

Motion unanimously approved.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mr. DeHart and seconded by Mr. Breon to adjourn the meeting.

Motion unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert S. Greene
Planning and Zoning Coordinator