EAST NORRITON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2009

A meeting of the East Norriton Township Planning Commission was held at the East Norriton Township Building, 2501 Stanbridge Street in East Norriton, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, November 18, 2009. Chairman Keith Tornetta called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m. Attending were Township Planning Commission members Keith Tornetta, Joseph Gavanus, Bill Griffin, Colleen Henderson, Robert Schottmiller, Kevin McDevitt and Judy Belkowski. Zoning Officer, Bryan Bortnichak was also in attendance.

1. Approve Minutes of the October 21, 2009 Planning Commission Meeting:

Mrs. Henderson made a motion to approve the October 21, 2009 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin and the motion passed 7-0.

2. Review of ZHB Case #2009-23, 180 West Germantown Pike:

Present: Neil Stein, Attorney
Robert Blue, Engineer

Mr. Stein acknowledged that he had received the Township Planner's review letter on this application and distributed a response letter. He reviewed the site noting that there is approximately 77,000 square feet of office space on seven acres of land. He added that there is no plan to create greater density or to build another building. The need for additional parking results from three tenants, the District Justice office, Mission Kids and Lifepath. Mr. Stein presented a revised plan that was changed in response to the Township Planner's review letter.

Mr. Blue referred to an exhibit showing the existing site plan and described the proposal to rework the parking to allow for additional parking spaces. Mr. Blue noted that a 6' fence is proposed to shield the neighbors where parking spaces are to be located closer to the adjacent residential dwellings. Mr. Blue added that all parking lot lighting is to remain and that any additional lighting which may be required would be provided with low bollard lighting.

Mr. Blue presented the proposed plan which showed relocated parking spaces to allow steps to grade at the door referenced in the Township Planner's letter. Mr. Blue noted that additional storm water pipe and inlets would be added as necessary and added that the tree referenced in the Planner's letter could be relocated or replaced with multiple trees to match the caliper of the existing tree.

Mrs. Henderson asked about green space within the parking lot and also if the applicant had met with the neighbors. Mr. Bortnichak noted that as a whole, the site complies with this requirement. In response to the second question, Mr.

Stein noted that they would be willing to meet with the neighbors, but that they had not yet done so. Mrs. Henderson also asked about the trash enclosure which is to be removed. Mr. Blue noted that is currently used as a parking space and that another trash enclosure is provided on the property.

Mr. Gavanus referred to the Township Planner's letter and suggested that one parking space be removed to save the mature tree. Mr. Stein responded by noting that the tree may be relocated on the site.

Chairman Tornetta asked about the buffer referenced in the Township Planner's letter. Mr. Bortnichak noted that the SALDO requires a 25' landscape buffer adjacent to residential properties. The Applicant would have to request a waiver from providing the 25' buffer as they proceed through the land development process.

Mr. Schottmiller expressed a concern about parking on both sides of the radius in the parking lot and noted that drivers who do not pull close enough to the building will stick out into the 25' driveway aisle. Mrs. Belkowski noted that the arrangement with parking on both sides of the drive aisle may cause a line of sight issue and be a hazard to pedestrians.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the elimination or relocation of certain spaces. The Applicant agreed to relocate five parking spaces from around the inside radius to the perimeter of the site.

Chairman Tornetta made a motion to recommend approval of the revised plan showing five parking spaces being relocated or eliminated with a condition that the Applicant contact the adjacent neighbors regarding proposed parking and buffering changes and obtain their approval of the plan. Chairman Tornetta noted specifically, that he is opposed to the plan if the neighbors do not agree to the fence in lieu of the buffer area. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Henderson and the motion passed 7-0.

3. **Review of ZHB Case #2009-24, 538 Barbara Drive:**

Present: Richard Shirk, Contractor

Mr. Shirk noted that he had receive conflicting information from the Township regarding the front yard setback and that he had submitted a building permit for a ramp and deck which was denied because it projected into the front yard setback. Mr. Shirk noted that this application is for a ramp and deck which would project 10' into the front yard setback. Mr. Shirk discussed the need for the ramp which is for the resident who is bedridden and handicapped and added that he had discussed with the property owner that they may be able to get the variance if the owner agreed that the deck and ramp would have to be removed before the property is sold.

Chairman Tornetta made a motion to recommend approval of the requested variance with a condition that the deck and ramp be removed before the property is sold. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gavanus and passed 7-0.

4. **Review of ZHB Case #2009-19, 8 East Germantown Pike:**

Present: Donna Langel, Service Select Signs

Ms. Langel explained the proposal to install two additional wall signs on the southern and northern faces of the building and to install a second pylon sign on the property along the DeKalb Pike side of the frontage. She noted that the property is essentially a corner property because of the PennDOT taking. She noted the Planning Commission's dislike of the second pylon sign from their prior meeting and noted that she would be willing to amend the application by eliminating the request for the second pylon sign.

Chairman Tornetta advised that he would be willing to grant one more additional wall sign, but noted that he does not think that two additional wall signs are warranted.

Mr. Bortnichak advised that the proposed wall signs would also require a variance for the size of the signs which are proposed to be approximately 58 square feet where only approximately 32 square feet would be allowed.

Mr. Griffin expressed support for the idea that only one additional wall sign is appropriate because of the fact that traffic coming southbound on DeKalb Pike has a better view of the west elevation of the building than they do the north elevation of the building.

Chairman Tornetta made a motion to recommend approval of two variances, one for a second wall sign on either the north or south face of the building and a second variance to allow the sign at approximately 58 square feet. The motion was seconded by Mr. Schottmiller and passed 7-0.

5. **Review of Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment:**

Mr. Bortnichak reviewed a proposed text amendment to the zoning ordinance which will affect political signs and briefed the Planning Commission on the origin of the ordinance noting that it was initiated by a lawsuit filed against the Township by the ACLU and a citizen who was running of political office in the Township.

Mr. Bortnichak explained that the ordinance would provide for only three requirements for political signs: 1) That signs be no larger than 32 square feet; 2) That they be placed at least 10' back from the edge of the street; and 3) That they

not be permitted on Township property. We will no longer be able to regulate the number of signs displayed, when they can be displayed, when they should be removed, or that a permit be obtained to display political signs. We will only be able to remove political signs when they are in violation of the ordinance or when they pose a hazard to traffic such as sight obstruction.

Mr. Griffin noted that he is fundamentally opposed to the amendment because the Township will be littered with political signs, but that he will support the amendment because it will bring our ordinance into compliance with the Federal Court's decisions in this matter.

Chairman Tornetta made a motion to recommend adoption of the amendment to the Board of Supervisors. The motion was seconded by Mr. Griffin and passed 6-1 with Mr. Schottmiller opposed.

6. Other Business:

Planning Commission members reviewed the construction and land development update provided by Mr. Bortnichak.

Chairman Tornetta acknowledged Mrs. Belkowski's appointment to the Planning Commission and also thanked Derek Bell for his service as a member of the Planning Commission.

7. Adjournment:

Chairman Tornetta made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Henderson, and passed 7-0. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:31p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Bortnichak
Zoning Officer

Keith Tornetta
Chairman