EAST NORRITON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 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, March 18, 2009. Vice-Chairman, Joe Gavanus, called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m. Attending were Township Planning Commission members Keith Tornetta, Joseph Gavanus, William Griffin, Colleen Henderson, Joan Morello, Robert Schottmiller Kristl Wiernicki, Derek Bell and Kevin McDevitt. Zoning Officer, Bryan Bortnichak was also in attendance.

1. Approve Minutes of the February 18, 2009 Planning Commission Meeting:

Vice-Chairman Gavanus called for a motion to approve the February 18, 2009, meeting minutes. Mr. Schottmiller made a motion to approve the minutes with two corrections regarding comments he made on the Act 537 Special Study. Mr. Griffin seconded the motion and the motion passed 8-0.

2. Review of ZHB Case #2009-3, 3313 Knoeller Road:

Present: Richard Godshall, Applicant

Mr. Godshall described his request for a variance to allow a shed to be installed on his property noting the fact that his property has three front yards and that he is restricted as to where the shed could be located. He would like to install the shed in the yard along Township Line Road approximately 25' back from the edge of the roadway. Mr. Godshall further added that he has no basement and is looking for some extra storage space.

Vice-Chairman Gavanus noted the presence of trees in the area on which the shed is proposed to be installed and asked if the trees would be removed. Mr. Godshall responded that 25' back would be clear of the trees and that they would not have to be removed. Vice-Chairman Gavanus also asked if Mr. Godshall had contacted his neighbors and recommended that Mr. Godshall obtain a letter from his neighbor in support of the variance before going to the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Godshall responded that he had spoken with the affected neighbor and that he would attempt to get a letter from them.

Vice-Chairman Gavanus made a motion to recommend approval of the variance with a condition that the trees remain as a buffer. Mrs. Morello seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

3. **Review of ZHB Case #2009-4, 480 East Germantown Pike:**

Present: Steve Tornetta, Applicant
Ed Kamenec, Gwynedd-Mercy College

Mr. Tornetta identified himself as the applicant and owner of the property at 480 E. Germantown Pike and described his request for a use variance to allow a non-traditional educational institution as a night school to occupy the first and second floors of the building.

Mr. Tornetta advised that Gwynedd-Mercy College is the prospective tenant and that they would operate an adult night school from approximately 6:00p.m. to 10:00p.m. on Monday through Thursday evenings and added that the program is geared toward working adults who are interested in retraining for a new field or those seeking to improve their current situation.

In response to a question from Vice-Chairman Gavanus regarding how much of the building would be occupied by the night school, Mr. Tornetta noted that Gwynedd-Mercy College would occupy 2/3 of the building, the first and second floors.

Chairman Keith Tornetta Joined the meeting already in progress.
Vice-Chairman Gavanus continued to chair the meeting.

Mrs. Wiernicki inquired about signage and Mr. Tornetta responded that whatever signs installed by the tenant would comply with the Township's requirements. Mrs. Wiernicki also asked if the program would be limited strictly to evening programs. In response, Mr. Kamenec explained that their intent is only to provide night time programs and that there is no desire to compete with other colleges offering daytime programs. Mr. Kamenec added that this is a desirable location as it is close enough to provide name recognition with their main college location.

In response to questions from Vice-Chairman Gavanus regarding time of operation and class size, Mr. Kamenec explained that classes would be held from 6:00p.m. to 10:00p.m. and that class sizes range from ten to twenty students. Vice-Chairman Gavanus then asked what curriculum is offered. Mr. Tornetta explained that the programs offered will be aimed at students who have not succeeded at a typical college campus. Gwynedd-Mercy will likely offer Associates, Bachelor's in Nursing and Master's in Business programs.

Mr. Griffin asked about ingress and egress from the parking lot and also about parking. Mr. Tornetta explained that the driveway on Germantown Pike is limited to right-in and right-out movements while the driveway on Arch Road is a full access driveway and that there are approximately 180 parking spaces on the site. In response to a question from Mr. Griffin about the daytime use of the school and daytime programs, Mr. Kamenec responded that about twenty employees would

be in the office during the day and that the possibility of day time programs has not been discussed.

Mrs. Henderson asked if the programs would run year round. Mr. Kamenec noted that they would. Mrs. Henderson then inquired about parking lot lighting. Mr. Tornetta noted that lighting was installed when the parking lots were constructed.

Mrs. Morello asked about a buffer between the parking lot and the Jamestown development. Mr. Tornetta explained that the existing trees will remain in place.

Mrs. Wiernicki asked about security. Mr. Kamenec explained that on site security would be provided.

Mrs. Henderson asked about parking. Mr. Tornetta explained that after the building was constructed and occupied by Indy Mac Bank, the bank required that an additional 80 parking spaces be provided. After the additional spaces were installed, the bank tenant left. Mr. Tornetta added that when the building was built they had approximately 3.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor space, as a result of the added parking; the ratio is now about 4.9 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet.

Mr. Bortnichak reminded the members of the Planning Commission that the applicant is seeking a use variance and that he has discussed the parking situation and potential need for a parking variance with Mr. Paul Tornetta when he submitted the variance application. Mr. Bortnichak explained that he would review the architectural plans when they are submitted and make a determination at that time as to whether or not the proposal meets the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Viglianese asked what would be done with the third floor of the building. Mr. Tornetta noted that he has a prospective tenant to use the third floor as a medical office. Mr. Viglianese asked about hazardous chemicals being stored on the third floor and what measures would be taken to restrict student access to the third floor. Mr. Viglianese also expressed concerns about headlights shining into the homes of residents on Arch Road in Plymouth Township and about restrictions on the building when it was constructed.

Mr. Griffin asked Mr. Bortnichak what other uses could go into the building if the use variance were granted. Mr. Bortnichak responded that the use would have to be similar in nature, such as another college night school.

Following a discussion about placing restrictions on the night school use Mrs. Morello made a motion to recommend approval of the variance with a condition that the use be restricted to the first two floors of the building and that the applicant submit a letter agreeing to the restriction. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Henderson and passed 8-1 with Mr. Griffin opposed.

4. **Other Business:**

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

Following an announcement of the scheduled April 1st and April 8th Planning Commission meetings to be held at the East Norriton Middle School at 7:00p.m., a discussion ensued about the format of the meetings. It was agreed that the public would be afforded a 5 minute period during which they could ask questions and offer comment about the final land development plans which were submitted by Einstein.

5. **Adjournment:**

Mrs. Wiernicki made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Henderson, and passed 9-0. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Bortnichak
Zoning Officer

Joe Gavanus
Vice-Chairman