

EAST NORRITON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING OF WEDNESDAY JULY 17, 2024

A meeting of the East Norriton Township Planning Commission was held at the East Norriton Township Municipal Building, 2501 Stanbridge Street in East Norriton, Pennsylvania at 7pm on Wednesday July 17, 2024. In attendance were Planning Commission Officers Kandy Heckman (Chair) and Jeffrey Moller (Secretary) and Members John Barrett, Keith Tornetta and Ed Cavanaugh. Vice Chair Person Kenneth Grimes was absent. Township Zoning Officer Bryan Hart and Township Engineer Krista Heinrich of Gilmour Associates were also present. In addition to the applicants and representatives identified below, there was one unidentified member of the public present.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Person Heckman called the meeting to order precisely at 7 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Heckman led the assembly in the recitation of the national Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Cavanaugh to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Commission of June 26, 2024, which was duly seconded by Mr. Barrett and agreed upon unanimously.

4. Presentation regarding ZHB Application #2024-11 (301 E. Johnson Highway)

The applicant, Trinetra Realty Holdings PA LP, was represented by Mr. Scott Mills and its counsel, David Shafkowitz, Esq. They discussed the need for relief from the Zoning Hearing Board that they feel is necessary to make renovations to the property in order to increase the number of gasoline dispensing stations from 4 to 6 and to convert the use of the existing building to a small convenience store. Although the application dated June 11, 2024 states that only one use variance is being requested, Mr. Shafkowitz corrected this by saying that all of the relief discussed in Ms. Monica Wall's response letter of July 9, 2024 was needed and is being requested. Ms. Wall's letter indicates that in addition to the relief from Zoning Ordinance Section 205-66.E listed on the application, 14 other "Anticipated" or "Additional" forms of relief would be needed.

Most of the needed variances are required by the fact that this is an undersized lot (14,295 vs 15,000 sq. ft.), although the preexisting use as a gas station is being carried forward. Other variances are required because the property technically exists in a flood plain. It was noted that the impervious cover on the site would be reduced by about 1,000 square feet. The applicant also stated that they would be complying with all lighting and signage requirements.

Mr. Moller asked whether or not the owner of the adjacent residential property on E. Johnson Highway had been contacted and informed of the applicant's plans. The answer was "we haven't yet but we'd be happy to reach out" to see if they want a supplemental buffer or whatever. The applicant indicated a willingness to hold a meeting with all surrounding neighbors in case they would be unwilling to attend a public hearing.

The applicant's counsel discussed each of the first 9 variances listed in Ms. Wall's letter in context of their plans. Arguments were made that the variances should be allowed because the

actual impact of the project would be *de minimus*. Questions from Mr. Barrett and Mr. Moller regarding building use, control of truck traffic for deliveries and trash removal, and compliance of the storage tanks with federal and state environmental regulations were addressed. Mr. Moller also raised a question regarding the possibility of installing a shelter at the corner of Old Arch Road for the SEPTA bus stop.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked about lighting for the parking spaces at the rear of the site. The applicant gave assurances that the lighting requirements would be complied with.

Mr. Tornetta commented that the site was a difficult one to squeeze six pumps on.

After some further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Tornetta that a recommendation be made to the ZHB for approval on the condition that the Township officials are satisfied with the applicant's arguments as to compliance and impact. The motion was seconded by Mr. Moller and passed unanimously.

5. Presentation Regarding ZHB Application #2024-12 (2302 Rahway Ave.)

The Applicant, property owner Ms. Semya Anderson, was present, accompanied by her mother, Ms. Mabeline Anderson. Brynn Schaffer, P.E. from Carta Engineering was also present and was the principal presenter. Mr. Schaffer had submitted a letter to the Township dated July 2, 2024 which laid out the case for the variances being requested. Essentially, the project is to construct a second single family home on the existing property even though the existing lot size is only 40% of the now-existing requirement of 10,000 sq. ft.. A review letter from Ms. Wall dated July 15, 2024 was among the other documents before the Commission. The applicant had submitted a copy of a survey dated December 5, 1921 showing an original development plan for a project named "Norristown Heights" that shows plot sizes of 20' by 100'.

Mr. Schaffer emphasized that the applicant was not making a land development application because the lot in question, though non-conforming for the building of a stand-alone home, was indeed a distinctly dedicated lot.

Mr. Moller stated that in cases of this type the Planning Commission is most concerned with the points of view of the owners of neighboring properties. He asked whether or not the applicant had informed her neighbor on Hazelton Street of the intended construction and obtained that neighbor's "OK". The applicant replied that it had been too hot recently to go next door and ask. Mr. Cavanaugh commented that the intended house was, at 900 sq.ft., a very small house. He asked whether or not houses in the neighborhood were that small. Discussion ensued to the effect that most of the houses were much larger than 900 sq. ft. Mr. Barrett commented that the lot was extremely small and that a tree on it was so beautiful it should not be disturbed. Mr. Schaffer stated that the plan could be accomplished without removing the tree but simply pruning it slightly.

Mr. Tornetta asked whether or not the right of way along Hazelton Street would require shifting the house 2-3 feet to comply.

Mr. Cavanaugh said that from the submitted plan that the area would be very crowded.

The unidentified gentleman in attendance said he had no questions.

A motion was made by Mr. Moller that the Planning Commission recommend allowance of the various necessary variances so long as the consent of the closest neighbor on Hazelton Street is obtained. Mr. Barrett seconded. The motion was passed with Mr. Cavanaugh being the sole dissenter.

6. Next Meeting

Ms. Heckman announced that the next meeting of the ENT Planning Commission would take place on August 21, 2024.

7. Adjournment

On motion duly seconded, the membership unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 pm.



Ms. Kandy Heckman, Chair Person



Mr. Jeffrey Moller, Secretary