

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

PUBLIC MEETING held via GoToMeeting video/teleconference

PRESENT: Colleen Leonard, Council President  
Tina Sokolowski, Council Vice-President  
Robert Stokley, Senior Council Member  
Anita Barton, Council Member  
Jane Flanagan, Council Member  
James Griffin, Council Member  
Karen Tutino, Council Member  
Yaniv Aronson, Mayor

ALSO PRESENT: Stephanie Cecco, Borough Manager  
Michael E. Peters, Borough Solicitor

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Public Meeting of the Conshohocken Borough Council duly advertised, was held remotely using the GoToMeeting platform. Colleen Leonard, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Leonard thanked everyone for attending the virtual Council meeting. She reviewed the meeting logistics and participation instructions. She announced that Council held Executive Session prior to the regularly scheduled meeting on legal matters.

**PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations.

**LAND USE MATTERS, PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES**

**a.) Conditional Use Hearing for 400 West Elm Street: Corson Street Acquisition LP, Applicant**

Mr. Peters opened the public hearing on the conditional use application for 400 West Elm Street. He stated that the applicant is seeking conditional use approval to permit a multifamily residential development in the SP-3 Zoning District. Mr. Peters noted that one (1) individual submitted a request for party status, however that individual was not present at the hearing.

Louis Colagreco, the applicant's attorney, summarized the history of the project.

Bob Dwyer, representative for the applicant, testified to the legal ownership of the property. He discussed the three (3) prior sets of approvals that were obtained for development on the site, including a 252-unit multifamily residential building in 2013, a 320,000 sq. ft. office building in 2015 and a 400,000 sq. ft. office building in 2018. He also discussed the various reasons why these projects were not completed. Mr. Dwyer added that zoning relief for building bulk was approved for this current proposal and for the prior development projects. He provided an overview of the current proposal for a 352-unit multifamily residential building. He stated that the proposed plan meets the amenities and public space requirements. He explained that the existing riverside trail would be relocated closer to the riverfront and that there would be several connections to the trail through the development and at either end. Mr. Dwyer explained how development on the property is significantly constrained by existing power lines, steep slopes, a utility easement held by Aqua and the floodplain associated with the river. He confirmed that the proposed residential building would not be in the floodplain encroachment. Mr. Dwyer stated that height bonuses had previously been secured for the three (3) prior development proposals. He explained that the applicant is requesting that Borough Council grant two (2) 25-foot height bonuses to allow for a maximum building height of 135 feet.

Bill Reardon, the applicant's engineer, explained that a portion of the proposed development, specifically the realigned Schuylkill River Trail, a small number of surface parking spaces and drive aisles are located within the limits of the Floodplain Conservation District. He confirmed that the proposed improvements have a negligible impact to the base flood elevation. Mr. Reardon reviewed the circulation plan and discussed parking on site, which includes a total of 439 parking spaces.

Mr. Dwyer reviewed the amenity plan, which consists of several parks throughout the property. He stated that the entire portion of the property located in Plymouth Township would be preserved as either a park or public open space. Ms. Sokolowski asked about maintenance of the proposed amenities. Mr. Dwyer responded that maintenance would depend on the type of amenity that is approved.

Mayor Aronson commented on the proposed realignment of the Schuylkill River Trail. He encouraged the applicant to revisit the design to ensure the safety of the trail users.

Patrick Stuart, the applicant's landscape architect, reviewed the proposed landscaping plan.

Christopher Williams, the applicant's traffic engineer, discussed the traffic generation for the project. He reported that the projected traffic generation by this development is 53% less than the previously proposed office developments. Mr. Williams discussed traffic improvement contributions to be made by the applicant.

Mr. Peters asked for public comment. Scott Langstein, 200 West Elm Street, asked that the Grande be included in discussions about the proposed amenity located behind the Grande.

There were no additional comments from the public.

Mr. Peters closed the hearing and continued the matter to January 20, 2021.

**b.) Public Hearing on the Residential Overlay District Ordinance Amendment**

Mr. Peters opened the public hearing on the Residential Overlay District Ordinance Amendment. He stated that the proposed ordinance amends the Borough's Zoning Ordinance by repealing the Residential Overlay District in its entirety. He explained that Part 19-B of the Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2010 when Borough Council was looking to create multifamily housing as redevelopment of properties located within the Borough's Limited Industrial Zoning District. He explained that Administration has performed a review of this part of the Zoning Ordinance from a housing stock perspective and an emergency management perspective and recommends the adoption of this zoning amendment.

Mr. Sokolowski shared that the Borough experienced substantial flooding-related impacts recently along the Schuylkill Riverfront and areas along Colwell Lane. He explained that the Borough is concerned about the capacity of its emergency management resources and its obligation to ensure public safety in light of increase in residential development along the Schuylkill Riverfront or in adjacent floodplain areas. He recommended limiting dense development in other areas of the Borough to avoid spreading the Borough emergency services thin.

Mr. Peters called for any public comment. Rob Lewis, attorney for Dryden Court Development and owner of the property located at 450 Colwell Lane, objected the repeal of the Part 19-B Residential Overlay District of the Borough Zoning Ordinance. He requested that matter be tabled for reconsideration. He mentioned that projects seeking to develop under this provision of the Zoning Ordinance would be rendered lawfully non-conforming. He disagreed with Borough Administration's recommendation to repeal the ordinance in its entirety and suggested that concerns related to residential development in the Limited Industrial Zoning District be addressed in a more appropriate manner.

There was no additional public comment.

Mr. Peters closed the hearing and continued the matter to January 20, 2021.

**c.) Seven Tower Bridge Zoning Hearing Board Application**

Eric Johnson, Zoning Officer, explained that the applicant is seeking a variance to permit the installation of a monument sign at the Washington Street driveway entrance to the Seven Tower Bridge development. He added that the proposed monument sign would be located off-premises, on the Six Tower Bridge property, which requires a variance to permit the Seven Tower Bridge sign on the Six Tower Bridge property.

Ross Weiss, the applicant's attorney, stated that the applicant is seeking variances for signage relief to permit the installation of a freestanding monument sign on the property of Six Tower Bridge. He shared an aerial site plan of the Seven Tower Bridge property and explained that the monument sign affords access and identification to the property off Washington Street. Mr. Weiss provided renderings of the proposed sign. He confirmed that additional information would be provided to demonstrate that the minimum required sight distances are met and that the sign would not endanger traffic or pedestrians.

**d.) 209 East Twelfth Avenue Zoning Hearing Board Application**

Mr. Johnson stated that the property owner installed a fence in the front yard of the property without the required permit from the Borough. He explained that the applicant is seeking a variance to allow the previously installed fence in the front yard of the property to remain. Mr. Johnson stated that the fence is in line with the fence located on the abutting property located at 225 East 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Steven Borkowski, the applicant, was present. Mr. Borkowski provided reasoning for the installation of the fence. He confirmed that front and/or side yard fences are consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

**e.) 236 West Sixth Avenue Zoning Hearing Board Application**

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of property, which consists of single-family dwelling with a shed and carport located in the rear of the property. He stated that the applicant is proposing to demolish the existing shed and carport roof structure, expand the existing carport foundation and construct a new 704 sq. ft. garage. Mr. Johnson explained that the proposed garage requires zoning relief from the maximum permitted accessory structure size and maximum permitted building coverage on the property.

Jarred Frey, the applicant, described the present use of the property including structures on the property. He discussed the proposal to remove the shed and convert the existing carport into an enclosed garage. Mr. Frey explained that the proposal is consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood. He shared aerial photographs of surrounding homes with similarly sized detached garages.

**a.) Discussion on SP-4 District Signage Standards Amendment**

Mr. Peters discussed a proposed amendment to the Sign Standards section of the Zoning Ordinance. He explained that the proposed text amendment amends the ordinance by adding certain provisions that permit for buildings of 180 feet or greater in height, and where 95% of the building is allocated to a single principal user, certain allowable building signage.

**MANAGER MATTERS**

**a.) Consider reappointing Rudolph Clarke, LLC as the Solicitor to the Zoning Hearing Board at the submitted rate schedule**

Ms. Cecco recommended that Council reappoint Rudolph Clarke, LLC as the Solicitor to the Zoning Hearing Board for 2021 and consider soliciting bids for Zoning Hearing Board solicitor services for 2022.

**Ms. Leonard made a motion to reappoint Rudolph Clarke, LLC as the Solicitor to the Zoning Hearing Board at the submitted rate schedule, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.**

**b.) Consider approving Resolution 2021-01 approving an extension of the local disaster emergency**

**Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-01 approving an extension of the local disaster emergency until March 3, 2021, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.**

**DEPARTMENT MATTERS**

There were no department matters.

**LEGAL MATTERS**

**a.) Consider authorizing advertisement of Sewer Authority RFB**

Scott Shearer of PFM Financial Advisors provided an overview of the RFB for the potential sale of the Conshohocken Authority sewer system. Ms. Cecco discussed the steps taken to-date in the sewer sale exploration process.

**b.) Discussion on an Ordinance requiring the Borough of Conshohocken Authority to convey the Sewer Authority System to the Borough of Conshohocken**

Thomas Wyatt, Borough Special Counsel, reviewed the proposed ordinance, which would transfer the Authority's Sewer System to the Borough of Conshohocken in connection with a potential sale of the Sewer System.

**c.) Discussion on a Resolution setting the wastewater system rates for customers outside the boundary of the Borough customers**

Mr. Wyatt provided an overview of the proposed resolution, which affirms that the Borough would continue to charge the West Conshohocken and Plymouth customers the same rates as Borough customers should a conveyance of the sewer system to the Borough occur.

**COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS**

Mayor Aronson announced that Shack in the Back, a smoothie business, opened behind the Deli on 4<sup>th</sup>. He shared that he is partnering with local restaurants to host virtual quizzo events. He encouraged everyone to attend virtual quizzo night with Guppy's Good Times on January 30, 2021.

Ms. Barton thanked Borough Administration for their due diligence as it relates to the potential sale of the Sewer Authority.

Ms. Flanagan recognized Borough Administration for their hard work.

Ms. Sokolowski announced that broken and non-working strands of holiday lights can be dropped off at the B-Field parking lot until January 10, 2021.

Ms. Leonard encouraged everyone to stay safe.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brittany Rogers, Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager, stated that no written public comment was received.

Scott Langstein, 200 West Elm Street, had a question related to the proposed 400 West Elm Street development. He asked about the existence of the paper street on the 400 West Elm Street site that could connect to the new SEPTA Station development. He requested that Borough Administration explore that during the land development process.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Stephanie Cecco,  
Borough Secretary