

AMBLER BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 28, 2012, MEETING

The regular February meeting of the Ambler Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, February 28, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in Borough Council Chambers located at 122 East Butler Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania. Chairman Steven Ware presided.

Roll Call: Present: Dan McCormick, Salvatore A. Boccuti, Joshua Kanaplue, Peter Amento, Steven Ware, Robert LaGreca, William Mulroy, Margaret Andrews and Carol Ann DiPietro. James Ennis, Montgomery County Planner, and Ronald E. Myers, Sr., Code Enforcement Officer, James Dougherty, Borough Engineer were also in attendance.

Robert LaGreca moved the Minutes of January 24, 2012, be approved with no corrections or additions. Peter Amento seconded the motion.

OLD BUSINESS:

Council recommends the Planning Commission review and recommend minor updates to the Ambler Borough Comprehensive Plan.

James Ennis, Montgomery County Planner, is preparing his update in the area of transportation and land use. Because of the Bottom Dollar grocery store application and the discussion concerning the Billboard Ordinance, his presentation is being moved ahead to the March meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bottom Dollar grocery store chain submitted an Application and proposed plan to construct a store on the Knopf Motors property on Butler Avenue. Bottom Dollar is a division of Food Lion and refers to themselves as a "soft discounter". It does not have a bakery or butcher shop on premises and brings those items in prepackaged. As a rule, the deliveries will be made before 5:00 p.m.. Christen G. Pionzio, Esquire, of Hamburg, Rubin, Mullin, Maxwell and Lupin, P.C., made a presentation on behalf of the Applicant accompanied by William R. Owen of Robert E. Blue Consulting Engineers, P.C. James Dougherty of Gilmore & Associates presented his review letter, and James Ennis of Montgomery County Planning Commission presented his review letter.

One member raised the issue of the lighting that could be seen from Race Street which the Applicant agreed to make sure the lighting would be shielded from Race Street residents and drivers. It also agreed to comply with all lighting issues raised by the Borough Engineer in his review letter.

Another issue raised by a member is the corralling of the grocery carts.

The County Planner raised his concern of the liability the Borough may incur with regard to its standing within the National Flood Insurance Program. He also made

suggestions in his review letter with regard to the traffic in and about the site and truck maneuverability.

A question from the public was raised regarding the removal of the trees along Race Street.

Another issued raised by the public was a request to consider the use of evergreen bushes as the screening along Butler Avenue.

The Applicant requested waivers from the Ambler Borough SALDO as follows:

1. Waiver from the requirement that existing features within 400 feet of the subject properties be included in the plans and in lieu thereof to provide an aerial photograph;
2. Waiver from the requirement that separate preliminary and final applications be submitted for approval;
3. Waiver from the requirement that a traffic impact study be performed and submitted; and
4. Waiver from the requirement that no more than ten (10) contiguous parking stalls be proposed without a landscape island.

The Commission agreed to recommend to Council that these waivers be granted. A letter will be prepared and submitted to Council. The vote was 8 to 1 for the traffic planning study waiver. Josh Kanaplue feels very strongly that this study should be performed. He added that this site will function very differently than the car dealership and the new traffic pattern should be studied. He thinks the plan is potentially dangerous and may cause more traffic congestion because of the proposed unrestricted turns in and out of the site going both directions on Butler.

The applicant will present its revised Plan at the March, 2012, meeting.

In other NEW BUSINESS, the Planning Commission was requested by Council to review and recommend amending the Ambler Borough Zoning Ordinance to permit billboards. Council had voted to invalidate the portion of the Zoning Ordinance addressing billboards. This draft ordinance prepared by the Solicitor is intended to impose various regulations upon the size, appearance and placement of billboards within the Borough.

The Commission agreed to recommend to Council the draft ordinance with the correction of several typos as well as the suggestion that the word "fade" be stricken from clause 6).g. and the ordinance recite similar billboard criteria as the Ambler Savings Bank gateway sign. A letter will be prepared and submitted to Council.

CONTINUED BUSINESS FOR MARCH, 2012, MEETING:

County Planner will present his continuing update of the Ambler Borough Comprehensive Plan. In March he will prepare his update in the area of transportation and land use.

Further review of the Billboard Draft Ordinance

Bottom Dollar revised Plan

Additional attendees at the meeting were Mary Aversa, Borough Manager, Sal Pasceri, Council member, Tony Isabella, Council President, and Chief Foley.

Robert LaGreca moved the meeting be adjourned at approximately 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Ann DiPietro
Secretary
AMBLER BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION