

AMBLER BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 24, 2020, MEETING

The Regular November Meeting of the Ambler Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, November 24, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM. Consistent with Council President's and the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency executed Tuesday, April 7, 2020, this action was taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our community and to promote our commitment to maintain social distancing in our community. The meeting was not held at Borough Hall as previously advertised. A public copy of the meeting agenda was posted on the Borough website and the public was invited to forward questions or comments to the Glenn Kucher, Code Enforcement Officer, by 5:00 p.m. this evening or request attendance at the meeting. Glenn Kucher hosted the meeting and Chairman Robert Lagreca presided.

Prior to this regular meeting a special public meeting began at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of public input on Knight Park. The meeting was conducted by Glenn Kucher and Michael Lowrey. Approximately 12 residents made comments although many more were in attendance. Some of the comments expressed were concerning trash, restrooms, community garden, dog friendliness, benches, picnic tables, a pavilion, trees, bocce ball court, additional parking, skate park maintenance, flooding, educational rain garden and ice skating facility. This meeting ended about 6:50 and a ten-minute recess occurred before the beginning of the Regular November Meeting at 7:00.

ROLL CALL: Present: Carissa Hazelton, David Kralle, Elizabeth Iovine, Carol Ann DiPietro, Salvatore Boccuti, Peter Amento, William Mulroy, Al Comly and Robert Lagreca.

Also in attendance: Glenn Kucher, Borough Code Enforcement Officer, Michael Lowrey, Montgomery County Planner, and James Dougherty, Borough Engineer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Sal Boccuti made a motion to approve the minutes of October 27, 2020, with a correction, seconded by Peter Amento. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS: Review the Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan to redevelop the existing gas station with a bank at 90 W. Butler Avenue – AMGOOD, LLC. On behalf of the applicant, Bruce Goodman gave an overview of the project. James Dougherty of Gilmore Engineering reviewed his comment letter, and Michael Lowery reviewed his County comment letter. The Applicant represented that he, his engineer and his landscape engineer would work with the County and the Borough to satisfy the requirements of the comment letters issued by Montgomery County and Gilmore, the Borough Engineer. Some of the aspects of the project discussed in depth were the egress/ingress driveway off Butler Avenue being close to the railroad track, the ATM, no drive-through teller, traffic flow on the site and storm water runoff.

After discussion, David Kralle made a motion, seconded by Pete Amento, to recommend to Council to approve the Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan subject to the following:

1. That the waiver request that this submittal be combined Preliminary/Final Review be accepted;

2. That the Applicant continue to work with the Montgomery County Planning Commission and our Borough Engineer to investigate any possible modification of the ingress/egress along Butler Avenue;
3. That improvement of the multi-modal connectivity by installing a bike rack and bench to be approved by the Code Enforcement Officer and Borough Engineer be considered;
4. That enhancement of the fencing along the eastern property line shared with SEPTA to provide open, estate-type fencing, if feasible, with the approval of the Code Enforcement Officer and Borough Engineer be considered;
5. That a building design with windows along Butler Avenue and materials compatible with the character of our downtown be considered; and finally,
6. That this recommendation is made on the express condition that all the conditions in the County Planning and Borough Engineer Comment Letters be satisfied.

In addition, the Applicant mentioned that it may investigate moving the bank building closer by five feet to Maple Avenue to allow an additional five feet along the eastern property line for eased ingress and egress onto Butler Avenue with the condition that the additional five feet of green space on the westerly side be added to the easterly side. The Planning Commission supports any relief the applicant may need from the Zoning Hearing Board with respect to moving these five feet of green space. The Planning Commission is supportive of the Land Development Plan proposed to construct the bank on the parcel. The proposal to have the parking in the rear of the building will enhance the streetscape on Butler Avenue and be an improvement. The vote taken was unanimous in favor. A letter will be prepared for Council.

OLD BUSINESS:

Review the guidelines and recommend changes to the Borough's existing wireless ordinance and fee schedule to comply with the FCC Order Dated September 26, 2018, as well as develop design requirements for wireless facilities in the rights-of-way to prevent aesthetically obtrusive facilities. Montgomery County review will follow at a later date.

Input is requested to create a conceptual plan incorporating identified community needs and improvements for each park in the Borough to be used as part of a larger Master Park Plan. The residents' comments made at the Public Meeting for Knight Park at 6:00 were briefly acknowledged.

At the October meeting, the members created a schedule for the monthly public meetings to discuss each park. The meetings begin at 6:00 on the night of the regularly-scheduled Planning Commission meeting.

December 22, 2020: Pickering Field

January 26, 2021: Ricciardi Park

February 23, 2021: Borough Park, Edgewood Preserve, Tennis Avenue Open Space and the Tennis/Spring Garden Triangle.

March 23, 2021: Wahl, Jean Thompson, Locust Street and Ambler Square

The Planning Commission expressed its appreciation to Mr. Kucher and the Borough Staff for hosting the meeting on ZOOM.

Several residents were in attendance.

CONTINUED BUSINESS FOR DECEMBER AND FUTURE MEETINGS

6:00 Public Meeting for Pickering Field

Receive and review Montgomery County review letter and thereafter vote to adopt ordinance regulating design standards for the new small wireless facilities.

Further work on a conceptual plan incorporating identified community needs and improvements for each park in the Borough.

Salvatore Boccuti made a motion at 8:45 seconded by Al Comly to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Ann DiPietro
Recording Secretary,
AMBLER BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION