

STOW PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of the Stow Planning Commission meeting held on Tuesday June 12, 2018, at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Brauer, Mrs. Harrison, Mr. Miller, Mr. Ross, Mr. Sprungle

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Director of Planning Rob Kurtz
Planning Commission Secretary Pamela Daerr

PRESS REPRESENTATIVE: Stow Sentry

Mr. Brauer called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. and asked the audience to stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was taken.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

P.C. 2018-011 – SHEETZ CONVENIENCE STORE/GAS STATION SITE PLAN/CONDITIONAL ZONING CERTIFICATE FOR RENOVATION/EXPANSION; 950 STEELS CORNERS ROAD

Mr. Kurtz: This is a request by Mr. Brian Soyka of Sheetz, Inc. for the Planning Commission's approval of a site plan/conditional zoning certificate to renovate and expand the Sheetz convenience store/gas station located at 950 Steels Corners Road. The property is zoned C-5 Highway Services and convenience stores are conditionally permitted in this district.

The existing Sheetz parcel is approximately three acres in area and is comprised of a 4,500 square foot store, a separate car wash building and gas pumps located north and east of the existing convenience store.

The applicant is proposing to remove the majority of the existing structure including the car wash, the gas pumps and canopies east of the building, and a portion of the canopies north of the building. To accommodate this expansion, the applicant also intends to use additional property to the south that they own.

A new building will be constructed in approximately the same location, and a separate car wash building will be constructed south of the new building. The gas pumps located north of the building will remain in the same location. The new convenience store will be 4,900 square feet in area and the new car wash building will be approximately 1,000 square feet in area. The convenience store will feature a brick exterior with a stone veneer along the base, and the proposed new car wash will include a brick exterior.

The renovated station will include separate drive-thru lanes for the convenience store and the car wash located west and south of the store.

The existing detention basin will be modified to accommodate the site expansion.

Looking at the screen, what's in yellow will remain. It will be a reconfigured building. The canopies to the north will remain. What will be removed will be this canopy, as well as the pumps; then there is a canopy attached to the building and the canopy on the back.

A close up view [pointing to the screen], the new building, car wash building. This area that was formerly gas pumps will be a parking area. The pumps to the north will remain.

In terms of elevations, [pointing to the screen] this is an example of the new store with the stone masonry base and the brick façade. This is the car wash [pointing to the screen] and will be a brick exterior.

In terms of conditions for approval, since there are going into a separate lot, they will have to be consolidated or split so the new development is all on one parcel. The City Arborist's approval of a Landscape Plan and Building and Engineering approval of Construction Plans. This meets all the requirements of Chapter 1163. There are no variances requested as part of this development.

Mr. Sprungle: This is for a conditional approval, there are no variances.

Mr. Kurtz: That is correct.

Mr. Ross: On the site plan, sheet 18.1, the type is too small to read but it appears to be something on the northeast corner of the lot. Is it a tank farm?

Mrs. Harrison: It says tank farm.

Mr. Kurtz: The tank farm will not be moved.

Mr. Ross: It is a nice addition, but I wonder if there is a possibility of moving the drive thru pickup zone from the direct line of traffic for the pickup windows to around the corner, in one of the available parking spaces. It makes that traffic flow to the drive up windows much more convenient. That would be the only concern that I see, otherwise the plan looks quite good.

Mr. Sprungle: It appears there is going to actually be less gas pumps than there were.

Mr. Brian Soyka of Sheetz Inc. and Mr. Michael Cefaratti of GPC Group were present to represent this item and were sworn in by the Planning Commission Secretary.

Mr. Ross: The concern I have and I request that if possible you relocate the pickup zone for the drive thru out of the primary line of traffic for the pickup windows around to one of the parking spots adjacent.

Mr. Soyka: I'll give you the big picture of how the drive thru works. You enter the drive thru area back here [pointing to the screen] which is also the entrance for the car wash. The lane I'm highlight now [pointing to the screen] is for the drive thru and this would be your order point [pointing to the screen]. The order point is the same as the order point we have in the store. It is a tough screen. There are speakers so you can converse with the employees inside but this is Sheetz drive thru. It's not your fastest type of drive thru. It is not a Chick-fil-A or a

McDonalds type of thing; this is Sheetz. You have a touch screen and you get your M-T-O the same way.

That's your order point, then you drive forward. We'll have a cross bar there with a stop sign. Then you continue forward. The first window would be here [pointing to the screen], and that is your payment window. Your second window is your pickup window here [pointing to the screen].

For those orders that take an extended period of time, we mark out this area in here [pointing to the screen] for those customers to drive forward and be able to wait until one of our employees will walk out and deliver their order to them.

That is typical of all of the drive thru area we have; and typically we give a bypass lane adjacent to it. Typically, that bypass lane starts right about at the first window [pointing to the screen] but with this layout, this is a new store for us and we're having another entrance to the building on the west side. So we have parking through here [pointing to the screen] and in a convenience effort to allow these customers to exit to Hudson Drive, instead of having them drive back around the front of the building, they can do that, but they can also exit this side and be in the bypass lane the whole way through.

In answer to your question, this is our typical design and we've found that works well for our drive thru.

Mr. Ross: Well I would suggest it doesn't work as well as it could. So everything you've said is wonderful except that if there's more distance between the pay window and the pickup spot, that would work better; or the pickup location is the around in the adjacent parking space on the other side of the island. Where it is, is not a very good location.

Mrs. Harrison: How many drive-thru customers do you get a day, on average?

Mr. Soyka: Right now people aren't used to Sheetz as being a drive thru, so we have coffee customers mostly. The percentage of sales are pretty low.

Mr. Brauer: Was this a new Sheetz concept, or is this something you have had?

Mr. Soyka: This store footprint is a new Sheetz concept. It is a new prototype that we've just developed. We're starting construction of one down in southern West Virginia.

The drive thru we have been doing for a number of years. We typically only have one pickup window and not the second window. With this concept we're adding the second payment window and we believe it will operate more efficiently.

To date, that has worked fine with us. We don't have many customers that come through and have to end up waiting for their order.

Mr. Ross: So you're unwilling to move that? Is that what I understand you are telling me?

Mr. Soyka: It's not so much of an unwillingness. Quite honestly, we don't see a need for it. I don't see a need for it. I'm not exactly sure what would be better.

Mr. Ross: I just made a suggestion to you.

Mr. Soyka: I understand but I didn't quite understand exactly what it was you were recommending. Was it to move this [pointing to the screen]

Mr. Ross: Here is the pickup zone [pointing to the screen].

Mr. Soyka: No, our pickup window is right here [pointing to the screen].

Mr. Ross: No I said, you're waiting zone for your pickup.

Mr. Soyka: Yes, the waiting zone would be here.

Mr. Ross: Alright, listen to me. Move it from there [pointing to the screen] to there [pointing to the screen]. That way this line of traffic can always keep moving, and whoever is waiting, for however long, and I've been in that situation and it's a pain to wait for somebody to get clear. If you move it around the corner the whole site plan works better. I am requesting that would be something I would like to see you do.

Mr. Soyka: I understand what you are asking, but for the drive thru customer to be waiting in line and to exit and leave the site, it's quicker for them to do that. It is not going to back up because of a car waiting here [pointing to the screen]. That's the whole reason for the bypass lane here [pointing to the screen]. Where they pick up here [pointing to the screen], if a customer is waiting here [pointing to the screen] they can bypass into this lane and exit.

Mr. Sprungle: I am curious you are actually reducing the number of guest pumps.

Mr. Soyka: That is correct.

Mr. Sprungle: Obviously you must have studied that you don't use as many.

Mr. Soyka: What we have done in the past is put as many pumps out there as possible. Over the years we have followed this. This is part of a program we call White Block Remodel Program. Obviously, this store is not a white block but of this style typically, it was a white-fluted block. This one is part of that program and age of building.

What we've been doing is going back and looking at those stores, seeing how many gallons we sell and how many we actually need. Most of these stores in this Remodel Program we have removed a number of pumps. Usually we are removing a full wing/canopy.

We've also been removing the crosswalks that go back to the building from the pump islands. That's in an effort to clean this up a little bit [pointing to the screen], to have less of that large red awning and being able to see more of the building.

The push is for food. We're looking for a restaurant-style quality building. Our architects have worked hard to come up with a concept that really gives you that restaurant-look feel of the building. We don't want a canopy coming across and getting in the way of viewing that.

I've been to the store now too and it looks more like a restaurant than it does a gas station.

Mr. Soyka: Yes.

Mr. Brauer: Are you going to remain open, or are you shutting down during construction?

Mr. Soyka: We will shut down. The program is typically a 10-week shutdown. This is a little bit different since we're coming in and we're not doing a remodel to the store building. This will be brand new from the ground up. The existing store will be completely gone, footings and everything. Same with the existing car wash.

Our savings here is in the canopy. We already have the canopy out there. The gas islands won't stay because the new dispensers will be put in with all new gas islands and new underground product lines from the tank field over. Everything underneath the canopy will be replaced. In kind, in the same place, but it will have new dispensers, new concrete, and new piping running all the way back to the tank field.

The tanks in the tank field will not be replaced. Those are in good condition but all the piping is going to be updated current standards. It will get the new tank top, new concrete on top of everything, new sumps, new piping, and new conduits back to the building.

Mr. Ross: Do we have a green-space requirement for this?

Mr. Kurtz: Yes, it continues to meet the 25%. The whole northwest corner is still green and a little bit to the west.

Mr. Ross: So they are not using the adjacent site as green space.

Mr. Kurtz: No, that was not included in the calculation, but it could be.

Mr. Sprungle: But it meets the requirement without it.

Mr. Kurtz: Yes.

Mr. Brauer moved and Mr. Sprungle seconded the motion to approve P.C. 2018-011. **Planning Commission recommended approval subject to: the Sheetz parcels (#56-13408 & 56-00035) being consolidated prior to the issuance of a building permit; Engineering and Building Department approval of construction plans; and the City Arborist approval of a landscape plan prior to the issuance of a building permit.**

Yea: Brauer, Harrison, Miller, Ross, Sprungle.

Nay: None. The motion passed 5-0.

P.C. 2018-012 – TEXT AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 1163 REGARDING TWO FAMILY DWELLINGS IN R-2 AND R-3 DISTRICTS

Mr. Kurtz: This is a request by Council to amend Chapter 1163 in order to eliminate two-family dwellings as a conditionally permitted use in this chapter. Currently two-family dwellings are permitted as a conditional use subject to the conditions in C.O.S. Section 1163.04 (a).

With this amendment two-family dwellings in R-2 and R-3 Districts would only be permitted as part of a multi-family development (Chapters 1169 and 1171), cluster development (Chapter 1165), or a planned residential development (Chapter 1153).

Right now to build a two-family dwelling in an R-2 and R-3 District there are a couple of ways to do that. Through Chapter 1163 it has to meet the locational criteria of having two or more two-family dwellings within 300 feet. It has to be on certain streets and it has minimum lot requirements.

Having said that you can still do it on a relatively small lot of 18,000 to 24,000 square feet. These regulations have been in place for several years. Very few lots actually meet that requirement. Ironically, we had one at our last meeting that actually met all the conditions with no variances required. It was one of the few I've seen in my time here. Ultimately Council did not support that and denied the proposed dwelling on Hibbard Drive.

What the amendment would do would eliminate the possibility for building a two-family in a R-2 and R-3 District on those scattered sites.

It can still be done through Chapter 1169 which are the Multi-Family Regulations. In short, you need 2 acres; you have to meet the separation requirements; there are only certain streets it can happen on as well as a Cluster Development, a PRD. Two families can be part of all of those developments. We still allow two-family dwellings but just not on those scattered sites. That is the thrust of their proposal.

The regulations themselves are somewhat unusual in terms of how specific they are. I was always kind of curious about how they were done. I don't know that many of the states have those type of regulations. Typically, in a single-family district, there are single-family dwellings. Unless it is something unique or a PRD or a Cluster Development. There are significant number of two-family dwellings in Stow. Many of them are in very good shape and some of them are not.

In terms of an impact of this proposal, honestly, there are very few lots that would be affected by this specific proposal because so few meet the criteria.

Mr. Sprungle: I'm having a hard time understanding. It is possible you could show us an example of one that would have been approved and now would not be approved?

Mr. Kurtz: The one we just approved on April 24, 2018 for Jim Vizmeg at 1473 Hibbard Drive, met the criteria and now it would not. The criteria between what is allowed now and what could potentially be allowed, the lot size would be the most significant difference.

In an R-3 District you can have an 18,000 square-foot lot. In an R-2 District you can have a 24,000 square-foot lot. This change would suggest that it needs to be at least 2 acres.

With the existing regulations, there are very few lots that can meet the criteria now. Except at our April 24 meeting the applicant actually met the regulations. From a practical point of view, there are not many lots that honestly would be affected by this proposed change.

I'm not opposed to this. I think the next step would be to look at all of our non-single-family districts, our PRDs and Clusters. We have multiple chapters and we should think about combining those into one chapter with consistent criteria which would allow single-family, two-family and multi-family.

Mrs. Harrison: You're eliminating two-family or multi-family. Right now the two-family is a little bit smaller.

Mr. Kurtz: Yes. They are single-family districts but they have to have at least a two, two-family units within 300 feet. It's very unusual.

Mr. Sprungle: It seems pretty drastic.

Mr. Kurtz: It is drastic in terms of where you can put a two-family now in terms of the minimum lot size. That's probably the biggest single change going from 24,000 square feet, a half an acre, to 2 acres.

The significant change would be the scattered site two-family developments on a single lot would no longer be permitted. You really can't meet that on most lots in Stow.

Mr. Sprungle: If you had a lot that was 23,000 square feet, it might be pretty easy to get a variance, now if you go to 2 acres you're still way off and very hard to justify.

Mr. Kurtz: If the minimum lot size is 2 acres, you are not doing to find those in a development. Maybe on Darrow Road there may be some larger lots like that, but not too many. If it moves to the multi-family then if someone did find a 2-acre site, they could actually put 2, two-family dwellings and have 4 units there. That's not a bad thing, but the maximum density has been increased.

In a Multi-family the maximum density is 6 units per acre. You can easily put 2, two-family dwellings on a two-acre property.

Mr. Sprungle: So this is eliminating random two-family homes in a single-family neighborhood.

Mr. Kurtz: I think that is a fair way to say that.

Mrs. Harrison: I was at the Council meeting when they discussed this and I think that was the intention. Part of it was people move into a residential area that they think are single-family homes and then all of a sudden somebody can pop up a duplex next to you. This would eliminate that possibility.

There were a lot of people that spoke out against the one that was approved and did meet the requirements. They wanted to live in a single-family neighborhood and that's what they expected.

Mr. Miller: Wouldn't that already be covered by the rule that there had to already be 2, two-family units already on that street.

Mr. Kurtz: Maybe the writers of this section were anticipating that.

Mr. Miller: The people that are living on that street in a single-family house already have a two-family unit on the street. So if somebody want to build a two-family unit on that street, it's not really changing.

Mrs. Harrison: I think they were saying it would become more and more versus one duplex on your street and now there's four.

Mr. Ross moved and Mrs. Harrison seconded to table this item. **Planning Commission discussed the amendment and moved to table in order to allow staff to research the issue of potential impacts on the existing two-family dwellings.**

Yea: Brauer, Harrison, Miller, Ross, Sprungle.

Nay: None. The item was tabled 5-0.

NEXT MEETING: Scheduled for June 26, 2018

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Ross moved and Mrs. Harrison seconded the motion to adjourn. It was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Chris Brauer
Planning Commission Chairman

Pamela H. Daerr, CPS
Planning Commission Secretary