

TOWN OF GEORGETOWN - PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes October 18, 2017

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners

Gary Tonge
Linda Dennis
Penuel Barrett
Michael Barlow
Gordon Mariner

Staff

Jocelyn Godwin, Planning
Stephani Ballard, Solicitor

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Commission Chairman Tonge called the meeting to order in the Town Hall at 6:00 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AUGUST 16, 2017 MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Barrett moved, seconded by Commissioner Mariner, to approve the August 16, 2017 regular meeting minutes as presented. **APPROVED** (UNANIMOUS)

3. Election of Commission Vice-Chair

Commissioner Barrett moved, seconded by Commissioner Mariner, to nominate Commissioner Dennis as Vice Chair. **APPROVED** (UNANIMOUS)

4. **PUBLIC HEARING:**
CASE #2017-08

Conditional Use Application
Georgetown Storage Facility

An application by Pennoni Associates, Inc. on behalf of Bruce O'heir, Georgetown Storage Facility, for the construction of 40 storage unit buildings and one office building to be completed in three phases. The properties are located at 533 & 535 South Bedford Street, identified as Sussex County Tax Map ID 135-23.00-10.01 & 10.03, zoned Professional Business District (UB3).

The application was presented by Brian Turner, of Pennoni Assocs. Inc., joined in attendance by Eddie Wise, Mark Davidson and Bruce O'heir, owner. The applicant handed out a packet including the site location, phasing and storage building elevations. The applicant met with planning staff in February, applied through PLUS in March and April, submitted in July to the Town and resubmitted in August.

The current zoning is UB3. Surrounding commercial uses are DelDOT, DMV, DHSS, Redicall Communications, a small used car lot, the Carmean office and then there are residential properties to the east.

As required in the Town Code 230 Article XXVIII, there are four criteria to look at in adopting a conditional use, one is presence of adjoining or nearby uses and a need for the use. While it is difficult to meet both there is definitely a need for self-storage on the south side of town. The applicant has Georgetown Self Storage on Route 113 and has a waiting list of potential clients to acquire storage.

The proposal is for forty (40) self storage buildings, each building to be 2400 sf, to be constructed in three phases. The first phase will be 12 buildings, second phase 9 buildings and third phase 19 buildings. Fifty percent of the buildings will be climate controlled and the hours of operation will be 7 am until 7 pm. The site will be constructed over a five year period with an overall cost of 3 ½ to 4 MM dollars. The proposed use is a low intensity use in a high use area. Traffic impact estimated at 7 trips per day.

Waivers are being requested due to the zoning of UB3. The code requires the buildings look like single family homes and the buildings will look like storage units. Also storage buildings are required to be 180 sf, which a storage complex will have building of 2400 sf. An illuminated sign is being requested to place in the front of the property. Gravel or stone is being requested for the internal accessways of the complex. Final waiver is for fencing with barbed wire around three sides of the site and the front will be a wrought iron fencing and an electronic gate.

State agencies – Site plan approval received from the Fire Marshal including a fire hydrant to be installed, SCD has been submitted with one final comment regarding an easement as the outfall will cross into the tax ditch state property about seven feet. DelDOT comments have been received and are being worked on.

Commissioner Barlow asked about the residence. The applicant stated it will become a tenant house for the manager and the office for the facility. The exterior and interior will be remodeled. At the PLUS meeting, the historic office looked favorably on the house being kept and remodeled.

Commissioner Mariner felt that the project should fit in the area with DelDOT and its neighbors.

Commissioner Dennis asked for specifics on the timetable. Burce O'heir stated that phase one will be built (approx. 200 units) and the remainder will depend on economics and need. The house exterior will be done with phase one. Phase two will include interior of the house so that the manager can then move in. Four facilities have been built to date. The facility on Route 113 was built and owned since 1999. All properties are maintained to attract customers. Landscaping was questioned and the engineer stated that a plan will be presented with their next submission (presented plan to the Commission) meeting the buffer yard requirements, fifteen feet wide against the residential properties.

Commissioner Barrett confirmed that the exterior will be renovated with phase one.

Chairman Tonge confirmed that there would be no RV or boat storage, and that the application will return for preliminary approval once the conditional use has been granted.

Chairman Tonge opened up the public hearing. No one spoke in favor of the application.

Carol Senerchia, of Sandhill Road, asked about an onsite manager if the house exterior only will be done in the phase one construction. Mr. O'heir stated that with phase one, he will use the current manager and office of the facility on Route 113. The office manager lives onsite and office hours are 8:30 am until 5 pm, Mon – Fri, and open until 2 pm on Saturdays.

Mrs. Godwin confirmed that no correspondence was received either for or against. Chairman Tonge closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Barlow moved, seconded by Commissioner Mariner, to recommend Town Council approve the application for conditional use and the waivers as requested. APPROVED (UNANIMOUS)

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Barlow – Yes, there is a need for this kind of facility, the facility fits in the area, the residence needs to be restored and the 113 site is a well run establishment.

Commissioner Mariner – Yes, as stated previously.

Commissioner Dennis – Yes, would like to encourage the applicant to move on the renovation of the residence as soon as possible to allow a manager on site.

Commissioner Barrett – Yes, for the reasons stated and it will beautify the house and location.

Chairman Tonge – Yes, the 113 location is well run, no problem with the request for signage as there are other illuminated signs in the area, barbed wire fence is okay as long as the vegetative barrier is in place to conceal the wire from any residential structures and no issue with the stones as they will provide better drainage.

5. CASE #2017-11

An application by Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc., on behalf of Sussex Sports Center Foundation, Inc., for the preliminary site plan review and approval for the construction of a sports complex. The properties are located on Sandhill Road, identified as Sussex County Tax Map ID 135-15.00-15.00; 15.05; 26.00 & 26.06, zoned UR3/RPC (Urban Residential/Residential Planned Community).

Zac Crouch, of Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc., presented the application. Also in attendance are Joseph Schell and Bobby Horsey. Chairman Tonge announced that though the meeting is not a public hearing, he will allow public comment after the presentation. A letter was submitted and provided to the applicant prior to the meeting. Chairman Tonge asked that the applicant address the concerns in the letter as well.

The project is on 147.33 acs. The project will consist of 8 soccer fields, 6-8 pickleball courts, a 3-5k cross country trail, a walking trail located off of Murray's Lane with a small parking area for the community, and a tot lot (undetermined location yet). Joe Schell is the chair of the foundation and Bobby Horsey serves as vice chair and will be doing the construction.

Two major concerns with the project are stormwater management and DelDOT. To assist with the intersection concerns, two properties will be donated to DelDOT. Due to the little to no drainage in the area, SCD and DNREC are working to clean out the ditch on the north side all the way to Rudd Road. The pipe crossing Rudd Road will be replaced as well.

The commission questioned if there will be any impact to properties along Murray Lane. The applicant stated that the situation should be improved with the cleaning out of the ditch.

Submission was made to DelDOT for the entrance and turn lanes will be provided on Sandhill Road. The site will not be lit except for security lights on the buildings. There will be no night games and no loud speakers. Concession stands will be put in 3-5 years down the road. There will be two pavilions.

The project will have public access and has met with the Seashore Striders and the surrounding schools for use, including state meets. There will be a groundskeeper and a storage shed for all equipment used. There will be a 10' wide multiuse path along the property for future connection. The Town will be providing trash pickup and police checks on the property.

Primary parking area is to be paved, the overflow will be grass, due to limited use. The fields will be Bermuda grass. It will be planted next summer. Landscaping waivers requested from the Design Standards regarding the screening and buffer. The project is a park with green space and not really commercial. Some landscaping has been added. The existing hedgerow is to remain. A waiver is requested on the number of trees required within the parking area of 355 spaces. Cost is a primary factor. The stormwater management ponds provide some buffer. The plan shows some trees and bushes along the road. Pedestrian walkways within the parking area are required one every eight spaces and that is a commercial requirement that should not be an issue with this project. The applicant is working to reduce run-off.

The applicant provided handouts of the elevations of the storage shed and pavilion. The applicant is asking for waivers from the ground level details and roofline expression for this type of use and the structures would not be that visible from the roadway.

The future concession stand and restrooms will be addressed at a later date, probably 3 – 5 years down the road. Port-a-potty's will be available.

Mr. Schell spoke about the planned partnership between the public sector of the State, County, and the Town. The facility will be a daylight facility. Henlopen Soccer Club will be using the facility (with up to 1300 children). Hispanic soccer clubs are interested as well. The First State Pickle Ball Club has 420 members and wants to use the fields. Sussex County has been asked to finance 1.5 MM towards the project. Private funds from the business community are being asked to contribute in exchange for names on the fields. There will be a full-time maintenance person and a part-time operations manager for the facility.

Commissioner Barlow expressed concern about security as the property will be gated but not fenced. Mr. Schell stated that security is most needed across the front of the property along Sandhill Road. The stormwater ponds will act as a buffer along with the gate.

Commissioner Mariner expressed confidence in the project as Mr. Schell has been instrumental with Sussex Academy's success.

Concerns were expressed by Commissioner Dennis with the zoning of the property and the permitted uses. Preference was stated for housing on the property in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, providing income to the town, and to provide the Town the ability to use, and pay for, the pump station built in anticipation of new homes in that area. The proposed project is a beautiful project, just in the wrong location.

Commissioner Barrett asked if Savannah Ditch will be cleaned out as well. The applicant stated that the culvert underneath Rudd Road will be cleaned out but the whole Savannah Ditch is too large to undertake. There will be a significant improvement. Commissioner Barrett confirmed that the traffic will be addressed with the Route 9/Sandhill intersection. The applicant confirmed that DelDOT is working on that. DelDOT has had surveyors on location for the last two weeks to prepare an application for a federal TIGER grant for 7.5 MM.

Chairman Tonge confirmed locations of security lighting. The applicant stated that downlights will be on each corner of the pavilion and the storage shed. There will be no street lights. If it becomes an issue, it will be addressed. Some vegetative barrier was asked for along Sandhill Road for the adjoining properties.

Chairman Tonge asked if anyone in the audience had a comment.

Harry Talley, of East Laurel Ext'd, expressed support for the project. A concern is the pedestrian traffic coming through their property. A buffer to discourage them would be

nice. Mr. Schell stated that if it becomes a problem, they would be willing to put up some fencing or greenery to discourage.

Dan Tabler, neighbor to Mr. Talley, expressed delight with the project.

Rich Comley, East Market Street, biggest concern was the intersection and glad it is being addressed. Glad it is not homes going in.

Commissioner Mariner moved, seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to APPROVE the preliminary site plan application and requests for waivers contingent upon all of the Town Engineer's comments being satisfied, all of the State Agency approvals are received, and Board of Adjustment approvals are received.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Barlow – Yes, some concerns, overall approve.

Commissioner Mariner – Yes, traffic studies and water concerns are being addressed, project looks promising.

Commissioner Dennis – No, for the reasons previously stated.

Commissioner Barrett – Yes, traffic is being squared away, emergency services are a concern, good project.

Chairman Tonge – Yes, no issues with the waivers requested, no need for additional sidewalks, the buildings will fit in with the intended use, landscaping reduction is no issue, with the caveat to look at along Sandhill Road and add some to that location.

APPROVED (Yes – 4, No - 1)

6. Comprehensive Plan Update

Debbie Pfeil and Lauren Good, of KCI Technologies, presented the commission with a hand-out and provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan process. The Comp Plan update is on hold based on recommendation from the Town Attorney at the Land Use Meeting on 10/9/17. KCI is preparing a scope to revise the Zoning Ordinance. Once revision is complete, will allow for comparison of existing land use (ELU)/ future land use (FLU)/Zoning and continuation of Comp Plan update process. Monthly reports will be provided from this point forward. The hand-out will be available on the Town website, as with all other documents, under the 'Plan Georgetown' section.

7. Planning Department Report

Chairman Tonge asked that the agenda next month include discussion regarding concerns with some of the hotels and group homes. Also, the commission members were asked to notify planning staff, as soon as possible, if unable to attend a meeting.

The planning department provided an update on upcoming projects.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Dennis moved, seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. **APPROVED** (UNANIMOUS)

APPROVED:



Gary Tonge, Chairperson

ATTEST:



Jocelyn Godwin, Planning