

Minutes of the Meeting of
Borough of Trappe Planning Commission
Virtual Meeting
June 16, 2020

Call to Order – S. Kurcik called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: S. Kurcik, T. Pammer, J. Washeleski, D. Davis, B. Swartley and Alternate M. Schaffer

Also, present: T. Twardowski, Secretary and Council Liaison B. Yeagley

Public Present:

For the application of 421 W. Main Street

Lani Rossi

Ilia Zahkarav

Moustafa Moustafa

The minutes of the last meeting of the Planning Commission, January 21, 2020 were distributed and reviewed.

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2010 meeting:

Motion: D. Davis

Seconded: M. Schaffer

Approved: 4-0

T. Pammer and B. Swartley abstained as they were not in attendance.

T. Twardowski provided a copy of the Zoning Hearing Application submitted for 118 Clahor Ave. The applicant is requesting a relief of the side yard setback (Section 340-12 D 1&2) when building a garage. The required setback is 25', the proposed garage would only have an 18' setback. The hearing will be scheduled for July. The application has been provided to the Commission for information purposes as outlined in the MPC. B. Swartley asked if neighbors would be notified and T. Twardowski replied that yes, the property would be posted, neighbors within 500' would be mailed notice of the hearing and the legal ad would be placed in the paper.

Conditional Use Application – 421 W. Main Street

The applicants and their engineer were present at the meeting. The applicants have a contingent agreement of sale and have applied for conditional use to build a 3,780 SF foot building for ballroom dance lessons. The existing residential unit, which has 2 dwelling units would also remain.

The applicant's engineer representative, M. Moustafa, addressed the comments in the review letter issued May 27, 2020 by Barry Isett & Associates. Most of the comments will be complied with and he is currently working on the revisions. However, there were a few items he wished for clarification on.

The first comment was whether or not a dance studio was an allowable use. T. Twardowski advised, that yes, she felt that a dance studio teaching ballroom lessons could be a personal service. Previous personal services uses in the village commercial district have included music lessons, which would be along the same use. The concern would be if the building began to be used for large scale events, concerts, weddings, theater, etc. The applicants agreed that this is not their intent at all.

The design engineer had some questions regarding the driveway. The SALDO requires a driveway width of 24 feet. The plan can be revised to 24' for the majority of the drive, the applicant is unable to provide a 24' access at the street and also have a walkway back to the rear of the building as required. T. Twardowski advised that a wavier can be sought for the width; however, it would be prudent to revise the plan to show the greatest width that can be obtained as the entrance is likely a larger concern than the full length of the driveway. The safety concern would be a car trying to exit while another car would be trying to enter. Additionally, the Fire Chief is concerned about the ability to get fire apparatus to the rear of the property, so the entrance and driveway will need to be wide enough for that. Additionally, the Borough may request an emergency access easement at the rear of the property if the easement could connect into another emergency access or easement to provide emergency access from the rear or side.

T. Pammer asked if the walkway providing access to the rear of the property be placed on the opposite side of the property from the driveway; this may allow for a wider driveway entrance. This was discussed briefly with the designer and planning commission. One concern would be to ensure this doesn't create too high of an impervious surface percentage.

B. Yeagley asked if there had been consideration given to moving the studio to the front of the lot and putting the parking in the rear of the building. This would allow you to reduce the length of the sidewalk. The designer said he could take a look at that but he thought it might not improve the vision of the property. B. Swartley asked why the garage was not being removed and then the driveway could go straight back. M. Moustafa explained that he was trying to allow the applicant to keep it, but on the revised plan, the garage will be removed. B. Swartley asked how many units were in the residential building and how many tenants in each. I. Zakharav stated he believed there was 1 tenant in the one unit and two in the other. M. Schaffer asked why the plan showed 19 parking spaces; the number was based on the potential number of students and also the requirement of the zoning code.

B. Swartley asked if future plans could show the surrounding properties and buildings since there are residential properties on all sides. The designer agreed that he could provide this for future plans. Discussion ensued about the height of the building and the distance from other surrounding homes and whether the building would be too large or high and look out of place or impact the view of the neighboring properties.

There was a brief discussion on trees to be removed and the response was that they were not planning to remove trees unnecessarily and would be willing to provide some replacement

trees if needed. B. Swartley also asked about signage. The intent would be to have one on the building in the rear and also one in the front. A small sign almost in the middle of the frontage. It was suggested the applicant should take a look at the zoning criteria for signage and show the proposed sign on the revised plan. Sign placement location will need to ensure that there is not interference with the site distance.

The designer asked about design for the parking lot, lighting, drainage, etc. and asked if that would come later after the conditional use hearing. T. Twardowski advised that yes, the project would need to go through the land development process and address stormwater along with other issues such as lighting, landscaping, etc.

While the Planning Commission was reluctant to make a recommendation for approval of the plan due to it needing quite a bit of revision, the Planning Commission was comfortable with the use presented. The Commission felt the use was a good, appropriate use that would fit in well in the Village Commercial district and was willing to send the use approval recommendation to Council with the caveat that the items and concerns discussed this evening be worked out during the land development process.

T. Twardowski offered to provide a letter for the PC for consideration of having the president sign and submitting to Borough Council that outlines the discussion this evening.

B. Yeagley gave a brief update on the Regional Planning Commission, and advised that there was a vacancy for a Trappe Planning Commission member to be added to the Regional PC. He also advised that he will be moving from the Borough in August and this will be his last PC meeting. He has enjoyed working with everyone and appreciates the time that the members dedicate to the Borough.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara D. Twardowski, Secretary