

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 5, 2023**

The Springfield Township Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00 P.M., in the Boardroom of the Springfield Township Administration Building, located at 1510 Paper Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA 19038. Present at the meeting were Ms. Murray, Mr. Sands, Mr. Devine, Mr. Quill, Mr. Harbison, Mr. Mascaro and Ms. Helwig. Also in attendance were Anne Nygard, Community Planner from Montgomery County Planning Commission and Mark Penecale, Director of Planning & Zoning.

Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes from the August 15, 2023, Planning Commission meeting were reviewed and approved.

Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Standish informed the Planning Commission by email that the Board of Commissioners had not met since the August 15, 2023, meeting, so there was no new business to report on.

New Business:

PC1: PECO presented their plan for improvements to the property located at 310 Roesch Avenue, Oreland, PA. PECO plans to renovate the site for use as a driver's safety training facility. PECO proposes to install a 1,920 square foot trailer for use as a classroom and an additional 240 square foot trailer for use as restroom facilities. The plan also calls for the lining of 14,500 square feet of existing paved surface for use as a parking lot. The overview of the plan was presented by Joseph Kessler, Esq., attorney for the applicant.

Victor Grande, PE informed the Planning Commission that all the existing plant material along the Roesch Avenue frontage would be removed, and a new front yard buffer would be installed. The proposed new buffer will include a mixture of plants and trees that at the time of their planting will range in size from 2 to 6 feet in height. In addition to the new landscape buffer, PECO will be replacing the six-foot-high chain link fencing along the Roesch Avenue frontage.

Suzanne Ryan provided everyone with an overview of the proposed use. She stated that the training courses would be for PECO employees only and would operate Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. She informed everyone that driver's training would involve both classroom time and skills training on site. The site would not be used on weekends. She stated that she had spoken with several of the residents and no pine trees that ooze sap would be used within the proposed new landscape buffer.

Joseph Hoffman stated that PECO was open to discussing the type of replacement fencing to be used along the Roesch Avenue frontage. He discussed the proposed new entry point on Anderson Avenue and the need to maintain the entry point on Roesch Avenue. He stated that the training course would involve three trainers and up to 13 drivers at any one time.

Ms. Helwig opened with questions from the Planning Commission Members.

Mr. Quill asked what vehicles are involved in the safety training. Mr. Hoffman stated every PECO employee that drives a PECO owned vehicle is required to take the driver's safety training yearly. Vehicles range from passenger cars, dump trucks to the larger bucket service trucks.

Ms. Helwig asked what type of lighting would be installed in connection with this development. Mr. Hoffman stated additional lighting would be installed on the classroom building for security reasons.

Mr. Quill asked if security cameras would be installed. Mr. Hoffman stated that there is no current plan to install security cameras.

Mr. Quill asked if PECO could provide elevational renderings of the proposed landscaping and buildings. Mr. Kessler confirmed that renderings could be prepared for the next meeting.

Ms. Murray asked PECO to confirm that operations on this property would be limited to weekday use only and during normal business hours. Ms. Ryan confirmed that classes are currently proposed for Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with Fridays planned as paperwork/preparation day for the trainers. She also stated that Fridays could be used as "Flex" day in the event that weather or service emergencies disrupted the normal training schedule.

Mr. Devine asked if vehicles would be parked on the site overnight or if emergency vehicles would be stored on the property. Mr. Hoffman stated that the training staff and the drivers all bring the vehicle with them on the day of the training and the vehicles leave the site at the end of the course. He also stated that there is no plan at this time to store anything on the property.

Mr. Quill asked if the training was limited to PECO employees only. Ms. Ryan confirmed that training on this site would be limited to PECO employees only.

Mr. Harbison asked the applicant to provide some history on the site. Mr. Hoffman stated that at one time this was a fully operational PECO service facility. The use was discontinued in the early 2000's and he believed that the building on the property was demolished in either 2004 or 2005. The property has been used as a staging area for improvement projects that PECO has done in the area and PECO still maintains natural gas services on the property. This includes that control building and the distribution system. Ms. Ryan stated that PECO has considered selling the property several times over the years but has maintained ownership.

Mr. Harbison asked if the Township was ever interested in purchasing the property. Ms. Ryan stated that it was explored, but due to the number of underground utilities, discussions did not move forward.

Ms. Helwig asked how the location of the proposed improvements was selected. Mr. Grande stated that the placement of the proposed building was selected due to the locations of the existing utility connections. Mr. Grande informed everyone that the location of the proposed parking lot was selected as a buffer between the proposed buildings and the residential properties on Roesch Avenue.

Mr. Mascaro asked if a Phase 1 Environmental Study has been completed on this site. Mr. Hoffman stated that a "Compliance Certificate" was issued by DEP at the time the building was demolished. The question was asked again, and Mr. Hoffman stated that a Phase 1 or Phase 2 environmental study has not been conducted on this property.

Mr. Quill asked where the training takes place now. Mr. Hoffman stated that the training takes place at both the Warminster and Plymouth Meeting locations. However, each time the training is scheduled, the training course must be laid out in the parking lots of these two facilities. At the end of the day, all the cones need to be removed.

Ms. Helwig asked how this location was selected. Ms. Ryan stated that this is one facility that PECO owns that is not occupied by an office, service, storage, or mechanical facility. This site allows PECO to set up the training course and operate as needed. There is no need to remove the driver's safety course after each use.

Mr. Mascaro asked if the site would be ADA accessible. Mr. Hoffman stated that both trailers would be.

Ms. Perry-Johnson, 219 Roesch Avenue stated that she does not like the proposed use of the site as a driver's safety training facility. She claims that use will be unsafe for the surrounding neighbors because of noise and pollution. She does not want this directly across the street from her home. She stated that the street is too narrow to handle the increase in large vehicles. She stated that this use would reduce her quality of life.

Mr. James Mooney, 321 Roesch Avenue questioned the natural gas facility on this site and asked how this proposed use would impact that system. Mr. Hoffman stated that the existing piping that is above grade would be protected by bollards. Mr. Mooney also had questions concerning lighting, security, stormwater management, the existing trees on the property and the sanitary sewer connection for the proposed new building. Mr. Hoffman stated that they will address those concerns at the next meeting, however the connection to the sanitary sewer is incorrect on the plan.

Mr. Michael Regan, 309 Roesch Avenue asked if the gate and entrance on Roesch Avenue could be removed. Ms. Ryan stated that PECO would investigate it, but they prefer a minimum of two

points of ingress and egress. Mr. Regan asked if PECO would consider a different type of fencing. Ms. Ryan stated that it could be discussed, but PECO has security standards that must be met.

Mr. Ridout, 319 Roesch Avenue asked if the sanitary sewer line is located within the public right-of-way. Mr. Hoffman stated that the sanitary sewer line is located within the public right-of-way, and just behind the existing sidewalk. The proposed connection will be made by removing one existing sidewalk block and that block will be replaced. Mr. Ridout asked if PECO would consider other locations on the site for the trailers and what happened to the existing utility connection on the site. Mr. Hoffman stated that PECO will investigate the relocation of the trailers and that old utility connects were deemed unusable due to their age and condition by the project engineer.

Ms. Linda Furlong, 315 Roesch Avenue stated that PECO is an inconsiderate neighbor. She claimed that PECO never maintained the existing buffer and only cuts the grass every three to four weeks. She claims that the property is a fire hazard.

Mr. Trung Trihin, 327 Roesch Avenue asked if PECO has any plans for any type of development within the easement that runs along his side yard. Ms. Ryan stated that there is no development proposed for that area at this time.

Mr. Kessler thanked everyone for their questions and comments. He assured everyone that PECO would have answers to their questions at the next meeting, although a meeting date has not been scheduled at this time.

Ms. Helwig closed the questions on this presentation, thanked everyone for participation and reminded everyone that the Planning Commission would not be rendering a recommendation of this presentation at this time.

Mr. Penecale informed the Planning Commission that the scheduled meeting would be held on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, and at this time the review of the landscaping standards and street tree requirement would be on the agenda for review.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted
Mark A. Penecale
Director of Planning & Zoning