

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
June 20, 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. Blankin, Mr. Mascaro, Mr. Sands, Mr. Schaefer, Mr. Harbison, 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 June 6, 2023, Planning Commission meeting were reviewed and approved.

Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Standish was unable to attend this meeting, however, he forwarded an email to Mr. Penecale to be shared with the Planning Commission Members concerning "A fee in lieu of open space" for non-residential applications. The Commissioner informed the Planning Commission Members that moving forward, any applications presented for review that include a waiver for the "fee in lieu of open space" for non-residential properties, should be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners and the Township Solicitor without any further debate. The email also informed the Planning Commission that the Board of Commissioners approved the Mount Saint Joseph Academy Land Development Application, with the condition that the trail be shown on the Phase 2 plans and be submitted in June of 2024.

New Business:

PC1: Mr. Dennis Murray of Murray Funeral Home, located at 1208 & 1220 Bethlehem Pike, Flourtown, PA, 19031 was present along with C. J. Blum, P.E from Land Core Engineering, was present to discuss the waiver requested from the requirements of a Land Development submission and review.

Ms. Helwig opened the meeting with a brief statement on the Mission of the Planning Commission and informed those in attendance that being a member of the Planning Commission is a volunteer position and that the Planning Commission acts in what they believe is in the best interest of Springfield Township. She stated that all recommendations made by the Planning Commission are advisory and that final action of all applications and requests are made by the Board of Commissioners. She asked if there were any questions from those in attendance, seeing none, she called on Mr. Murray for his presentation.

Mr. Murray explained that the proposed expansion was reviewed and approved by the Springfield Township Zoning Hearing Board. Variances were granted for the encroachments into the front yards of both Bethlehem Pike and Jones Avenue. Additional variances were granted for the requirement number of on-site parking stalls, street trees and required landscape islands within the parking lot.

Mr. Blum explained the new on-site parking layout, ingress and egress to the site, the proposed on-site stormwater management systems and the proposed use of fencing and buffering along the shared property lines with the residential properties on Franklin and Jones Avenues.

Mr. Murray explained that the proposed expansion would include the removal of the porch fronting Bethlehem Pike and a new addition being constructed in this area. He stated that the rear porch would be enclosed and that an attached garage was proposed to be constructed next to the newly enclosed porch. The proposed additions and alterations will allow for an increased viewing area, ADA access to the facility, ADA bathrooms and garage addition would allow the staff to load and unload the hearse undercover instead in the driveway.

Mr. Michael Turner of 20 Jones Avenue had questions concerning the Jones Avenue driveway and parking on Jones Avenue.

Mr. Turner was asked to hold his questions and statement until the presentation was complete.

Ms. Helwig asked the applicant to provide greater detail on the stormwater management system.

Mr. Blum explained that the property currently has no on-site stormwater management, and that soil testing has already been completed. He stated that they propose three on-site detention basins, in addition to curbing around the new parking lot. The curbing will prevent stormwater from flowing onto the adjoining properties and direct the flows to the basins. In addition, he has increased the size of the proposed basins to account for the current soil conditions.

Mr. Schaefer asked about the new parking lot and parking.

Mr. Blum explained that the new parking lot will have 13 on-site parking stalls and that the Funeral Home has a shared parking agreement within Saint Genevieve Church & School across the street.

Ms. Helwig asked if the shared parking agreement was in writing, and if not, would the applicant agree to obtaining a formal shared parking agreement.

Mr. Murray confirmed that will obtain a formal agreement.

Mr. Schaefer asked how crossing Bethlehem Pike is addressed during services at the funeral home.

Mr. Murray stated that they have employees that serve as crossing guards "Parking Attendants" to assist visitors crossing the street.

Mr. Schaefer asked what the occupancy increase would be with the proposed addition.

Mr. Murray stated that the current viewing area is limited to 40 to 50 people and the proposed addition would increase that number to 85 to 100 people.

Ms. Helwig asked about the lighting of the proposed parking light.

Mr. Murray stated that no new lighting would be installed and that the current light fixtures mounted on the buildings will supply the required lighting.

Mr. Penecale asked if additional lighting was found to be needed, if the applicant would agree to low level ped style light fixtures to reduce any overflow of light onto the adjoining residential properties.

Mr. Murray agreed.

Ms. Helwig asked what type of fencing was proposed to be installed.

Mr. Murray stated that it would be six-foot-high white solid PVC fencing.

Ms. Helwig asked what, if any trees are proposed to be removed and if there is a landscape plan for the proposed buffers along the shared residential property lines.

Mr. Blum committed to prepare a landscape plan and submit it to the Township Engineer as part of the building permit review process.

Ms. Nygard asked if there is any over-lap of services between the funeral home and Saint Genevieve Church that would cause an issue with the shared parking agreement.

Mr. Murray stated that the services at his facility are generally held between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and noon. Most of the year the school is in use and there is ample parking to support the teacher's parking and the over-flow parking from the funeral home since the school is for grades K through 8.

Mr. Penecale asked if the applicant would consider revising the curbing at the Jones Avenue entrance to further restrict vehicles from existing right onto the street.

Mr. Blum agreed that an alternate design could be explored.

Ms. Campbell, owner of 24 Jones Avenue stated that she is concerned about parking on Jones Avenue that is affiliated with funeral home. She is also concerned about vehicles exiting the site

and turning right onto Jones Avenue. She informed the Planning Commission vehicles associated with the funeral home regularly park on Jones Avenue making it very difficult to enter the street from Bethlehem Pike.

Mr. Blum stated that signage will be installed limiting this driveway to an entrance only, as well as directional arrows painted on the drive-lanes.

Mr. Murray stated that with the addition of the garage, the vehicles will no longer have to be loaded or unloaded on the street.

Mr. Turner, owner of 20 Jones Avenue stated that he was concerned about the landscape vehicles parked on Jones Avenue most mornings. In addition, he is concerned about the safety of the residents and children on the street. He closed by stating that trash days are very concerning, since the street is very narrow.

Ms. Helwig asked if this portion of Jones Avenue is posted "No Parking".

Mr. Blum stated that yes, "No Parking Here to the Corner" sign is posted from the intersection at Bethlehem Pike to a point about halfway up the Murray property on Jones Avenue.

Ms. Debbie Ingling, owner of 5 Jones Avenue informed the Planning Commission that she is concerned about traffic and the safety of her child and the children that live on this street. She stated that there are a lot of walkers and dog walkers on Jones Avenue and that there are no sidewalks.

Ms. Joanne Penn, owner of 35 Jones Avenue stated that there is a large hedge row at the end of Jones Avenue to make it very difficult exiting Jones Avenue onto Bethlehem Pike.

Mr. Penecale is aware of the property and will inspect the hedge row to see if maintenance is required.

Ms. Helwig asked if there were any additional comments from the Planning Commission members, staff, or the public. Seeing none, she asked if there was a motion on the requested waiver.

A motion was made and seconded to recommend approval of the waiver with the following conditions:

1. The applicant be required to submit an on-site stormwater management plan for review and approval by the Township Engineer.
2. The applicant is required to submit a landscape plan that plots the locations of all trees proposed to be removed and all plant materials proposed to be installed. This plan should be reviewed to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Township Code.

3. A six-foot-high solid PVC fence be installed along the property lines shared with the residential properties on Franklin and Jones Avenues.
4. The applicant is required to obtain a shared parking agreement with Saint Genevieve Church & School. This agreement is required to be submitted to the Township for review.
5. The applicant will explore alternative designs for the driveway entrance on Jones Avenue to prevent a right-hand-turn exiting this driveway, even though it will be a one-way entrance. Any alternate design must be approved by the Township Engineer.
6. The applicant is required to install signage at the driveway entrance on Jones Avenue that states "Entrance Only".
7. The Planning Commission would like pedestal lighting installed in the expanded parking area for safety but also to limit light intrusion on the neighboring properties.
8. The Planning Commission requests that the Traffic Safety Officer review the possibility of extending the "No Parking Here to the Corner" zone on Jones Avenue to the entrance on Jones Avenue, as requested by several of the residents.

This recommendation to approve the waiver request was unanimous with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 in opposition.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted
Mark A. Penecale
Director of Planning & Zoning