

PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2009 7:00 PM

**PRESENT:**

RICK CUTIA, CHAIRMAN  
KAREN STEPANOVICH, SECRETARY  
GEORGE SMITH  
PETE ZAPHYR  
JOHN MUNSCH  
DEBBIE TYMOCZKO  
LARRY MORRIS  
TIM MARUCA, VICE CHAIRMAN

**ABSENT:**

JEFF ANZOVINO

**ALSO PRESENT:** LOU DEROSE, SOLICITOR AND BARBARA J. CIAMPINI,  
PLANNING DIRECTOR

- 1.) REORGANIZATION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
- 2.) SITE PLAN- LAND DEVELOPMENT-730 E. PITTSBURGH ST.-SHOP N  
SAVE

Rick Cutia: We haven't had a meeting since October of 2008 and everyone should have had a chance to review the minutes and if there are no changes we need a motion to accept the minutes.

Karen Stepanovich: I make a motion to accept the minutes.

George Smith: I second the motion.

All were in favor.

ITEM #1 REORGANIZATION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Rick Cutia: We have to reorganize the Planning Commission. We will take nominations for Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary.

Barbara Ciampini: Someone can just nominate the current slate of officers. Rick Cutia, Chairman, Tim Maruca, Vice Chairman and Karen Stepanovich, Secretary.

Larry Morris: I make that motion

George Smith: I second the motion.

All were in favor.

ITEM #2-SITE PLAN LAND DEVELOPMENT-730 E. PITTSBURGH ST.-SHOP N SAVE.

Ray Charley: I am the owner, the CEO of “*Shop N Save*”. I’ve engaged a Civil Engineering Firm to review the parking and the elevation of the parking lot that we have at the store. Any of you who shop there know that the store is very challenging when it’s busy with customers getting into the lot and out of the lot. The purpose of the work we are proposing today is to enhance the ease of shopping at that store so we can have better volume and greater success and happier customers. With that I’ll turn it over to Don.

Don Housley: I am President of Triangle Engineering & Planning Service, Inc. (pointing to plan) Just very quickly. This is E. Pittsburgh St. this is the current Shop N Save building and Ollie’s is located back here with a few other stores. This portion of the site is fairly level and if you visited the site recently you’ll know that most of the customers back in this area. The reason for that is this part of the parking even though its actually and physically located closer to the door it’s very steep in grade. It’s about 7% so to come out of there with a full cart of groceries and if your elderly or with children and your trying to hold back a cart of groceries or hold open doors its’ fairly difficult in this area. We have three (3) entrances to the site; a signalized entrance here off of E. Pittsburgh St; un-signalized here, and a third un-signalized intersection here. (he is pointing to the plans he presented the entire presentation). This intersection is a particular problem. The way the flow of the current traffic is in this direction here, back here and across here, this lane for instance has no ability to leave and stack to get out at this light or intersection once the traffic is relieved so it causes a back up. So between the grades that exist here and the odd flow that is in this area we’ve decided to relocate and restripe a portion of this with some minor grading to the site. What we are proposing here is to take and elevate this portion of the parking area about 6 to 8 feet creating instead of a 7% grade it will be a 3% grade considered very light. In this area here simply by restriping the lot and turning the parking from angled parking and three drive lanes to two drive lanes and 90 degree parking we actually pick up parking spaces here. In addition to that we can allow about 8 foot of additional buffer which we can plant, which I’ll show you in another second. We are simply doing this by restriping the existing asphalt, nothing needed there as far as grading. We allow access to the site via a driveway here and connect to existing parking and overall there is no net loss of parking spaces by achieving additional parking here a little bit that we lost in this area was picked up. Finally the last thing that occurs is this, as I stated is a signalized section and our truck traffic currently services the project enters through this signalized area and generally, if the cars allow it, if they’re not parked there. The trucks cut through the parking lot like this and or do the best they can to weave through and come back into this area pull into here and back into this loading spot. One of the things that we are proposing is to allow the traffic to come in off of the side road here and come down. We will construct a ramp and they will come through the back down over this slight grade pull into here and come out. They will not enter the parking lot at all. As far as the site

itself we're proposing to add some landscaping to it and a couple of landscaped islands and if you go to the next sheet you'll see there are several of trees proposed. Right along E. Pittsburgh St. we're proposing trees, flowering trees, along with some lower burning bushes and Golden Splash. We're proposing those in between the upper level trees and we have some islands in here that we will have some trees within the site too. That is pretty much what we are trying to do. There are other details as far as erosion control and things like that. We have addressed all of the comments for the Westmoreland Conservation District, Stormwater Management approval and I believe we addressed all the comments from the Planning Department.

Lou DeRose: At last week's HARB meeting understand that the HARB approved the notion of the plan at their meeting last week and I had the opportunity to talk to Mr. Charley about some of the obvious questions that came up and I'd like to put those on the record if I can. The first thing and the board may be interested in this is why did you not decide to eliminate the center ingress and egress into the area which would of given you more parking and perhaps eliminate traffic coming out as it does and perhaps even against the designation of no left turn?

Ray Charley: Well let me address that, when I first approached the project what I had asked for is closing one of these two and opening a new entrance to the parking lot and have it signalized. The first approach was to see if we could consolidate two of these entrances into one and have it signalized. We found that there was not adequate space between existing lights to do so and Penn Dot was not favorable with that idea. The eastern exit and entrance into the lot is currently adjacent to an egress and ingress into the parcel just east to the store which has the State Auto Licensing facility. Those two together because they are separate parcels just didn't work to reconfigure. What we have done is the two that exist that are not signalized to allow them to continue as they currently are.

Lou DeRose: The other issue had to do with whether or not the parties in the shopping center, the tenants rather, obviously the engineering firm I take it works for you?

Ray Charley: Correct.

Lou DeRose: And not the Davis?

Ray Charley: Correct.

Lou DeRose: The Davis rent the other spaces, not particular Ollie's because that is on the western end of the strip but the little tenants "*Vocelli*" and "*Szechuan Garden*" those tenants; have they been made part of the process because it's pretty obvious the razing of the lot in front by 8 feet will affectively block the site access to the road?

Ray Charley: The question is, have they spoken to them?

Lou DeRose: Yes. Did they speak to them do they have any comments?

Ray Charley: I submitted all the plans to the Davis family for review. I just don't submit plans of this nature to the owner of the real estate without a discussion of getting there. So for about two years we've been discussing this project. These plans were most recently reviewed by the Davis prior to the application of the various permits that we are required to obtain in order to proceed here. I don't have a relationship with these third party tenants they do have relationships with the Davis. I did not ask the question, it's been in the newspaper as you all know for the last week pretty well publicized what was going to happen. I haven't had anybody come to me yet and haven't had any communication from the Davis's family or the Davis center about any of these tenants coming forward. The other thing that I would want to bring to attention of the board is that adjacent to the western side of "Shop N Save" brings traffic down past these various tenants in the back. The visibility from this point on Pittsburgh St. would be somewhat limited, that's true. But the traffic coming down here would facilitate the tenants in the back gaining access to hopefully more traffic as we hope to develop traffic at the store.

Larry Morris: I had a question about the bus shelter that's on Pittsburgh St. Have you included that in your plan? Will it stay the way it is? I happen to know that is a very popular stop for the Transit Authority and we had actually looked at replacing it or refurbishing it in the near future to make it a little more attractive as well as putting in a bus shelter across the street for people who travel both ways. I don't see it on the plans and I think it's in the right-of-way but I wondered if you addressed that at all, I don't see it on the landscaping plan or anything.

Ray Charley: We did not anticipate any change to the bus stop shelter. In fact one of the things that does not show here is that you might all be aware that the marquee that was in front of the store was in bad shape and we chose to eliminate that in the process of putting these plans together and that occurred about a year ago. We made that decision. As far as the bus shelter we have no intention of not retaining that. It's an asset for the store as well as the City.

Lou DeRose: It's not on the plan is it, Larry?

Larry Morris: No.

Lou DeRose: Would that be something that you would want to include?

Ray Charley: Certainly.

Karen Stepanovich: The slope that is going to be at the end of your parking lot what is going to be the fall of that.

Don Housley: Are you referring to this bank over here?

Karen Stepanovich: Yes.

Don Housley: That will not be in excess of a two to one graded slope and we will cover it with a Penn Dot mixture of grass mixture that does not require any maintenance rather than a crown fetch that attracts rodents and things. This will grow to a certain height and can be left alone.

Karen Stepanovich: I don't see that anywhere on the plans?

Don Housley: It's on the erosion control plans.

Karen Stepanovich: Your landscape plan, you're going to have these shrubs as trees? The ivory silk lilac and the Robin Hill Service Berry they're actually shrubs, not trees

Don Housley: They are a form of a shrub, but they are tall. And our issue is that we have overhead power lines in here.

Karen Stepanovich: Yes, I know that but are you going to maintain them as trees?

Don Housley: Yes, they will be allowed to grow in heights but they won't interfere with the power lines.

Karen Stepanovich: The problems with those are they come from the roots and so you end up with shrubs if you don't maintain cutting of the suckers and that sort of thing. They are a pain if you try to maintain them as a tree. You will end up with bushes instead of trees. I know about the overhead lines. The shrubs they really don't do anything for me at all, the burning bush is actually considered an invasive species. There trying to get away from them because the birds like the berries and of course where birds go so do the seeds. I know the parks are trying to get away from them from using them anywhere because they are considered invasive. Couldn't we persuade you or ask you to do a perennial mix, some grasses, day lilies, some colorful things instead of just shrubs? There isn't any maintenance with perennials especially some of these new varieties, rather than just shrubs. I think it would make your place look more attractive. I'm not crazy about the trees either. I think there are other varieties of trees that would not reach that height but not be a shrub.

Don Housley: I'm not opposed to that. We were trying to get something that was colorful, bloomed, the bright reds in the fall.

Karen Stepanovich: I did look both of them up today because I wasn't familiar with this silk tree lilac. It is a shrub basically and they're going to grow from the root and I wouldn't want to maintain them in that large of an area. I don't know about you but I

wouldn't want to do it. If you don't cut those suckers off they just turn into regular shrubs. You will just have this big enclosed look to it.

Don Housley: We don't want to create a wall across there of course. That also blocks our visibility.

Barbara Ciampini: Karen, couldn't they use a similar tree that we use for the street scape? Something like the flowering pears?

Karen Stepanovich: You can use Bradford Pears. There is also a plum tree. There are hundreds of trees that you could use in there without any maintenance. I do like burning bushes I do have some in my yard, I won't dig them up. I like them but I would not plant new ones because they are invasive. I just think if we can get away from planting them in the City we'd be better off not to use them. I really like perennials much better, you're going to get more bang for your buck with perennials than you will with these trees. Maybe if you can have your landscape architects look at some of these things or come up with something else?

Don Housley: I can definitely give the recommendations. I'm familiar with all the species that you've talked about. They're non fruit bearing flowering trees.

Karen Stepanovich: Well, the Service Berry is a fruit berry, it gets a little purple berry on it and it's very attractive to birds and I am sure it will be a mess on your sidewalks and cars in that area.

Don Housley: That's fine, those are good recommendations.

Karen Stepanovich: And if we can see that before April 7<sup>th</sup> before Council meets.

Don Housley: We can take care of that. You are looking for something decorative and will give a nice affect to the shopping center.

Karen Stepanovich: I just think that what you have on the plans you're going to have a nightmare with.

Rick Cutia: Don, this plan that I am looking at LP1 is apparently the same plan that you have?

Don Housley: Yes.

Rick Cutia: This plan lacks a lot of detail for me to be able to recommend approval on. The embankment area obviously is going to require a considerable amount of fill to be placed. You're saying it's going to slope it to 2-1 for that 6 feet of height along the existing signalized intersection. There is no detail how this is curbed anywhere along these as it's drawn. There are a number of islands in another area and none of

them show any curbing detail. What is to keep any of the traffic in stalls 93 through 100 to drive straight over the slope? Again the same ones that are pointed towards Pittsburgh St. and towards the remaining end of the parking lot? This plan needs much more detail as far as what that is, that perimeter in this entire area shown to be some sort of curb and island.

Don Housley: The SG1 shows the curbing the bituminous wedge curb detail.

Rick Cutia: In my opinion a 6 inch wedge curb is not going to keep anybody from driving over that slope in stalls 93 to 100 or any of those areas.

Don Housley: We can easily add a row of wheel stops along that section.

Karen Stepanovich: Is it steep enough that we can ask for fencing?

Don Housley: It's only 6 feet, it's a 2-1 slope not a vertical drop. It could be walked.

Rick Cutia: I am talking about the parking. People pull into the parking and they can easily go over a 6 inch wedge curb and straight on over that embankment. There is no vertical curb that would prohibit anybody driving forward. Maybe a guardrail or something across there would almost be needed to keep the traffic from doing that.

Don Housley: Well, there is nothing there now to prevent these cars from going into that now.

Rick Cutia: Well, they're not going over a 6 foot embankment.

Don Housley: Well, I am 6 foot 3 and this isn't really a high slope. I'm 6 foot 3 so figure 7 feet is only this high. This isn't a terribly long deep slope.

Karen Stepanovich: That is still pretty far to go down over, like onto traffic you can be driving onto somebody's car, on the roof of a car from there.

Don Housley: You would hit the side but I don't see the difference between that and these spaces. You'd come down the side of the slope, you're not going to launch into the air.

Karen Stepanovich: Well look at the lady yesterday at Delallo's she launched through the front.

Don Housley: We could if you so desire along these spaces that front the slope and we can easily put wheel stops in. We can put the concrete prefab wheel stops in if that is what you want.

Rick Cutia: Defiantly something to stop traffic, a 6 inch wedge curb is not going to stop anybody. They could drive over it and have their front wheels drive right over it. In addition, even if it's only 6 feet I think that needs to be protected with some physically barrier or a guardrail or something.

Don Housley: The owner said he's not opposed to a guardrail along that 6 foot high embankment. We will just show it on there.

Rick Cutia: Anywhere that there is a change in elevation even stalls 102 to 111. That's at a 10% grade also. That needs protection over on that side.

Don Housley: So you're saying across this area and then down through here?

Rick Cutia: Yes. It doesn't look like we're doing anything to be raised much higher; anywhere it's raised higher than the existing. Were saying the contour is 11/60 here as existing and you're going up 4 or 6 feet, again it seems to be all around 3 sides of it.

Don Housley: So anything that is over 2 feet high the difference in elevation?

Rick Cutia: I think you need to propose some sort of physical barrier from traffic crossing over that wedge curb.

Barbara Ciampini: Does it have to be a guardrail? Can it be another form of landscaping? Heading east bound you're going to see a guardrail. It's not going to be attractive at all. The HARB did not approve any form of guardrail for this location.

Don Housley: Well, all across here we are going to have trees and bushes through this area, (he is pointing to the plans).

Barbara Ciampini: Can you extend that along that embankment that's parallel to the entrance of the light?

Don Housley: Across here?

Barbara Ciampini: Yes.

Karen Stepanovich: I don't think that is going to cut it there. I think you need some sort of barrier especially right there.

Barbara Ciampini: There has to be something other than a guardrail. He's trying to make an improvement to the Gateway. Adding guardrail does nothing to enhance that.

Rick Cutia: I think the developer needs to check into that also. See what you can come up with, some physical barrier to keep traffic from driving over that embankment, the whole way around that perimeter.

Don Housley: We can come up with something. We would lose parking spaces with a barrier.

Karen Stepanovich: Some type of a wooden barrier?

Don Housley: A wood barrier your saying?

Karen Stepanovich: It would have to be a sturdy. Like a 4X4 or something like that.

Rick Cutia: Contractors have a variety of things you can pick from. Something better than steel.

Don Housley: I've been sitting here trying to think of something and we would not want galvanized steel that would just be horrible compared to what we are trying to achieve.

Barbara Ciampini: Exactly.

Don Housley: We can do post and rails in this area here.

Karen Stepanovich: We're not talking about a little home style fence.

Don Housley: No, I know that. You want a 6X6 post every 6 feet and rail run between them. I understand.

Karen Stepanovich: In the front too?

Rick Cutia: Like I said anywhere there are elevation changes between the street and the parking areas greater than 2 feet.

Don Housley: Okay.

Barbara Ciampini: I'm concerned with the look of wood posts and or guardrail. Is there a way Don that you can actually show the front elevation of the parking lot on Pittsburgh Street on some sort of sketch? I'd like to see something that shows the vision of those back businesses and how much vision they would actually lose from the street?

Don Housley: The filling that is occurring is basically in this small area here, there really is nothing going on here. (he is pointing to plans) .

Barbara Ciampini: It's just a concern. It's been brought up twice now and I think we need to have something on record, like I said it can be an architect sketch. It does not have to be some scaled out drawing, showing that elevation change and how that effects those businesses, along with the barrier you would propose-something other than guardrail or large wood posts.

Don Housley: Okay.

Barbara Ciampini: If we can accomplish all of that by April the 7<sup>th</sup> I'm okay with that, if I have questions I'll ask the members to come and look at it. If you can answer those questions by the 7<sup>th</sup> of April that would be great, it won't change your time frame because you still have to go on the April 13<sup>th</sup> Council Agenda to be approved by City Council. The Planning Commission is just a recommending body.

Don Housley: So the April 7<sup>th</sup> is this commission again?

Barbara Ciampini: No, the 7<sup>th</sup> is a workshop I have with Mayor and Council. So as long as you have that in place so I have something preliminary in to talk to them about then on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April you will actually be on their agenda; which is still your same time schedule.

Don Housley: Okay.

Barbara Ciampini: As long as we can get something by next week. If you want to run things past me before then before you come in with plans again I'll gladly work with you.

Don Housley: Okay.

Barbara Ciampini: Is that okay with everybody here?

Rick Cutia: Yes.

Barbara Ciampini: Same thing goes with the landscaping.

Don Housley: The landscaping will be simple just changing the names.

Barbara Ciampini: If your sketch can show that landscaping and how it would actually look on those back properties. It's great for your property but we're just making sure we're not doing something detrimental to someone else's visibility.

Rick Cutia: Are there any other questions from a member?

Pete Zaphyr: I have a question. This is the spacing of the two aisles that the cars would go through to the store.

Don Housley: Right here sir?

Pete Zaphyr: Yes. You show it that the width of those aisles is 24 feet.

Don Housley: Correct.

Pete Zaphyr: I checked this with a device and it turned out that 1 inch is equal to 30 feet, is that correct?

Don Housley: Yes

Pete Zaphyr: I laid down my ruler on that and I got 22 ½ feet. I don't know if that is just an inaccuracy here or if your actually going to use 22 ½ feet?

Don Housley: No it's 24 feet. That is your code I believe.

Barbara Ciampini: Yes.

Pete Zaphyr: I was concerned because I thought they would have the accuracy here within a foot or two.

Don Housley: It should be drawn right I'm not sure if it's your scale. I don't have my engineer scale with me.

Pete Zaphyr: I just used an ordinary scale and inch is an inch. You might just want to double check that.

Don Housley: We will.

Barbara Ciampini: That was a valid point. It should be what it is.

Rick Cutia: Anyone else? If we propose a motion to except these plans the motion will require conditions where landscaping revisions to the species are included a barrier fence would be included where the new embankment is greater than 2 feet in height and an architectural drawing of the site elevations are provided to show the changes to the existing properties in the rear lots.

Tim Maruca: Do you want to add the wheel stops?

Rick Cutia: I think that will protect your fence also if you put wheel stops at the end of those particular parking areas. Barrier fencing where your embankment is greater than 2 feet with wheel stops and those numbers are 78 through 108.

Barbara Ciampini: Place the bus shelter on the plan also.

Rick Cutia: Let me go over this again. A proposed motion should include landscape revisions to the plant species, barrier fencing where the embankment is greater than 2 feet high, approximately stalls 78 through 108 with concrete wheel stops. An architect drawing of the site elevations and a drawing of the bus shelter on the plan. Does anybody want to make that motion?

Karen Stepanovich: I make a motion to accept the revisions to this site plan.

Rick Cutia: Can I have a second?

George Smith: I second the motion.

All were in favor.

Tim Maruca: I make a motion to adjourn.

George Smith: I second the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM

