

WILKINS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC HEARING, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

A Public Hearing was called on Monday, September 10, 2007, the meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Vice-President Sylvia Martinelli. A quorum was present as follows:

Mrs. Martinelli
Mr. Padula

Mr. Wilson
Ms. Fialla

President Frank Greco was absent.

Commissioner Martinelli stated that the purpose of the public hearing this evening was to seek public comment on the proposed change of zoning for Lot/Block Numbers 542-B-70 and 542-F-50, more commonly known as the Showcase Cinema site, located at 3455 William Penn Highway. The proposed change would affect approximately six (6) acres of property located behind the existing Cinema building, which is currently zoned R-3 Residential and has served as a parking lot.

Mrs. Bradley requested that Mr. Zemet, property owner provide an overview of the proposal for the Board and the audience.

Mr. Zemet showed exhibits of the property, which portrayed the area proposed to be rezoned.

Public Comments:

Mr. Ron Brannigan of 103 Gilmore Drive questioned what the intent of the developer was for the property. Mr. Zemet stated that they intend to build a Marriott Residency Inn. Mr. Brannigan questioned how the hotel will be placed on the lot. Mr. Zemet stated that the hotel will face Gilmore Drive, with the back of the hotel facing Frazier Drive. He is aware that the Township requires a buffer zone between residential and commercial developments and he will be complying with those regulations.

Mr. Ken Keller of 125 Gilmore Drive stated that his backyard is in line with the rear of the Showcase property, which is currently shown as undeveloped. He questioned whether or not development would ever occur on that piece and if not, if Mr. Zemet was interested in selling that piece. Mr. Zemet stated that he is not sure what, if any development will occur on that piece of property but he is not interested in selling it.

Mrs. Melanie Brannigan questioned whether Mr. Zemet purchased the property. Mr. Zemet replied that yes, he has. Mrs. Brannigan stated that part of her property and seven or eight other homes that abut the Showcase property had a lease arrangement with Showcase. As a part of that arrangement, the property owners received free passes to the Cinema. She wants to be certain that when Mr. Zemet purchased the property, he did not purchase these leased pieces as well. Mr. Zemet stated that a survey of the property has been done. Soon, he will have the stakes placed in the ground so that everyone is aware of the lines of the property. If there are any questions after that is done, he encouraged Mrs. Brannigan to get in touch with him.

Dr. Michael Szoko of 4 Grayhurst Drive stated that his understanding is that when Showcase was built, the back of the property was zoned residential to appease the residents. He questioned what the Gilmore Drive property owners stand to lose by the change in zoning from R-3 to C-1. Mr. Zemet replied that he does not believe they will lose, but that they will gain. If the property remains zoned R-3, the best use, from his perspective, would be multi-family public housing. He does not believe that this type of use would add to the neighborhood. The proposed use that he has is one that fits with the neighborhood. In his opinion, the neighborhood will lose an eyesore and a tax void through the development of the property.

Mr. Ralph Keller of 152 Gilmore Drive raised questions regarding the map which Mr. Zemet displayed. He questioned whether there was an intent to subdivide the property and whether or not by doing so, he would create a landlocked situation. Mr. Zemet explained that he hopes to subdivide the parcel, but recognizes that he cannot create a landlocked situation by the Township code. He is currently working on the site plan for submission to the Wilkins Township Planning Commission. A part of that site plan will include a subdivision of the parcel that the Marriott sits on from the remainder of the property. There will be an access to the rear property from Route 22, however.

Mr. Erik F. Lawson, Jr. of 176 Penhurst Drive questioned whether Mr. Zemet was the owner of the property. Mr. Zemet replied that yes, he is.

(7-176) Hearing no more public comments, the Public Hearing was adjourned by unanimous roll call vote at 7:15 PM, whereupon a fifteen minute recess was taken prior to beginning the regularly scheduled Commissioners Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Bradley
Secretary