

Slippery Rock Township Zoning Hearing Board
Minutes for: 2/18/2021 – Public Hearing # 2021-2 Special Exception for Mini-Storage

Tom Gaul called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. Four members of the public were present at the site and five members of the public attended via Zoom. Solicitor, Alan Shaddinger, and Zoning Officer, Mark Lazzari plus the Stenographer, Laura Bauer attended via Zoom.

Roll Call as follows for the persons attending on-site in person: Thomas Gaul, Chairman – Present, Jim Anderson, Vice Chairman – Present, Craig Caldwell, Secretary– Present, alternate, Larry Arblaster, Jr – Present

Approve and ratify the decision signed by the Board on February 5, 2021.

Alan Shaddinger added that this is for purpose of clarification and formal action to be taken, in light of the appeal that has been filed from the decision made by the board with respect to the application of Heilman, public hearing held January 12, 2021.

Craig Caldwell made a motion to approve and ratify the decision signed by the ZHB on February 5, 2021 for the Heilman special exception public hearing held January 12, 2021. Tom Gaul seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from the ZHB Public Hearing 1/12/2021.

Craig Caldwell made a motion to approve the minutes, as submitted, for the Heilman Special Exception public hearing dated January 12, 2021. Tom Gaul seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Tom Gaul asked people to step forward so we all get a better view on the camera and please identify yourself upon speaking to help all attending. Tom Gaul then turned the meeting over to solicitor, Alan Shaddinger.

Opening Statement by Solicitor

Alan thanked the board to allow him to participate via zoom and continued as follows:

The purpose of the hearing is to hear testimony on a request for a Special Exception from owner Slippery Rock Real Estate Development LP for Mini Storage Facilities in an C-1 Highway Commercial zoning district which is allowed in that district under Special Exception at Map/Parcel # 280-4F09-17G-0000 (10.6 Acres) located along Grove City Road (SR173) and Woodbridge Drive (TR 902) Slippery Rock, PA

Mr. Stout, attending in person, announced that himself and Katherine D'Agostino, attending via zoom, are the proposed buyers under contract with the current owner's to purchase the property and are petitioning the special exception for mini-storage.

Alan continued that the upcoming issues will be for description of what is being planned and then turn it over for questions from the board and the public. Alan asked that if anyone attending via zoom or in person know of any objections to present to the board and please let the board know now. Daniel Shearer, who was present, and not represented by legal counsel wishes to be noted as a party to the record of the matter.

Alan asked if all persons that wish to give testimony in the matter which involve. Mr. Stout, Katherine D'Agositno and Daniel Shearer, please raise your hands and be sworn in. So done.

Alan Shaddinger with respect to the zoning officer asked him to please confirm the following:

Zoning Officer, Mark Lazzari conveyed that Karen Connell would be responsible for this activity and to the best of his knowledge it was completed as indicated below:

- A. Date of application 1/25/2021 B. Date property was posted. 2/4/2021
- C. Date adjoining property owner/s were notified. 1/29/2021.
- D: Dates public notice published 2/4/2021 & 2/11/2021.

Alan added that copies of the application, legal notices published in the Butler Eagle as noted above and the property posting information be noted for the record.

Additional statements by officer- Mark Lazzari conveyed the zoning of the properties neighboring this parcel is as follows; **South** – district zone in R-1 Low Density Residential District and **North** – district zoned in C-1 Highway Commercial District plus **Rear of the property** – PRD Planned Residential District

He also confirmed that Woodbridge Drive is a Township Road which runs through the parcel being reviewed and it

services the Planned Residential Development which lies behind the property.

Alan turned over the meeting to the applicants –Introductions from Jim Stout, real estate agent with Howard Hanna and Katherine D 'Agostino located in Nebraska and attending via zoom is Jim's partner and already in the self-storage business in several capacities. Jim summarized what they do working together looking for properties to develop storage facilities and when located this property from studies conducted by Katherine believe it is a needed service in this area and feel they can responsibly accomplish it. Jim turned the meeting over to Katherine and she added that she is a self-storage feasibility consultant, she has a company named Self-Storage Ninja's and what she does is find her clients land and make sure that that land is viable and will support self-storage through marketing. Katherine noted key points as follows:

- The evaluation completed shows that self-storage would be a responsible and a necessary development in this area.
- The market is undersupplied within a five mile radius of the proposed location shown on a map passed out to the board earlier by Jim.
- They feel that they could have a 90% occupancy.
- Demand and location plus low traffic benefits for this self-storage.
- Business neighbors were contacted and found to be in support of their proposed use.

Jim continued with the type of facility proposed

- Class A facility, doors on the facility not facing the highway,
- Fencing along the Woodbridge drive that would be decorative in a wrought iron nature.
- Automated gates that would need a key or code to enter plus attractive landscaping and required screening.
- Security cameras and motion activated lights and use of solar panels for power as much as possible if feasible
- Hire One Employee to manage the facility on a regular basis,
- Applying for a grant from the PA Recreational Trails Program for a potential walking trail that would connect Heights trial to the Highway.

Questions from the board and public, which included Tom Gaul, Craig Caldwell and Matt Myers/Mgr. The Heights:

- Section of the parcel will be used at this time.
- Surrounding business they contacted.
- Number of proposed units per sq. footage.
- How will solar energy be applied.
- Location of the building and access points.

Mark L. added that this property is located within the access management overlay district with its purpose is to reduce the deliberation of access to points onto major roads like Route 173. The Township would suggest the access to be Woodbridge Drive.

Alan asked if Woodbridge divides the parcel and Mark estimated that 2 acres on the smaller and 8 acres on the larger portion. Which side of the Woodbridge, plan on developing. Applicant wants to be flexible at this time depending on studies. How big of an area proposed to be used for 24,000 sq. feet - would need 2-3 acres and plan to be built in phases with a gravel lot. Alan vision of self-storage elongated storage units is there a different manner to be used. Bldgs. along the Highway the doors would only be visible from the interior side – applicants confirmed.

Alan pointed out that within section 308.17 of the SR TWP zoning ordinance there are certain standards that shall be met to acquire permitted approval. The applicants were familiar with those standards and noted they would comply with these standards and requirements. This also included that there would be no outside storage at any time and the set-backs are 20 ft. from the property lines as verified by Mark. Mark also verified the 20 ft. set-back would be for the building and the 10 ft. buffer which would be the vegetation buffer. Applicant indicated that it may be a greater set back if the trail is allowed. Access drive would only between the complexes and they would be gravel drives only. There will also be a pull over area at the gate to allow traffic to pull out of the entrance of the storage units and out of the traffic flow of Woodbridge Drive. Hours of operations listed in the ordinance - they can meet.

Mark – proposed numbers of buildings, 12,000 sq. ft. Possibly 2 – 3 buildings. As plans are developed would you look for additional development and nothing has been decided to date for future development.

Alan, asked if units will be heated and at this time non climate controlled units possibly in the future.

Alan opened the meeting to the public which Dan Shearer request to address the board with the following concerns:

- Very special piece of property in the township designated as commercial along with its location and there is other parcels in the Township that would better suit storage.
- Need business that would add employment.
- Promote that property to development restaurants etc. Not for storage.
- Across the road, someone wanted to build storage and the SR Borough denied because it was not appropriate.
- Consider only permitted uses - retail and business that would bring in additional jobs in the Township.
- Referencing zoning – 308.14 limited commercial Highway commercial we do not have much of, it is a beautiful area for retail.

Questions from the board – None

Anne Westbrook, real estate agent, added the following:

This property has been on the market for over 2 years. The traffic count is always an issue with restaurants and hotels they want it to be 25,000 and 35,000 daily which we do not have.

The property across the road mentioned by Dan Shearer has been on the market for approx. 5 years and it is a six acres piece. The property location along Woodbridge Drive is high elevation with will not make the storage as visible. The property in question has only had two people interested within two years.

Jim Stout commented – that they understand that this is a very beautiful piece of property and they want to maintain as much of the natural beauty of the property as they can and co-exist and fully understand that it is 10 acres and they want to find ways to fully develop the property. Katherine added that self-storage is a total data driven business and have researched how much supply per person using local statistics and would not open a business if the only way to succeed would put another business out of business. They believe there is enough demand to support proposed business plus other in the area and the intention for success.

Alan asked the board how they wish to proceed. Tom Gaul asked to go into an executive session at approx. 7:12 pm Alan asked if there were any objection – none. Returned from Executive session at 7:26 pm.

Tom Gaul made a motion to grant approval on the Special Exception for a Mini-Storage Facility for Slippery Rock Real Estate LP based on Solicitor, Alan Shaddinger outlining and submitting an official copy of the final decisions and conditions for acceptance. Jim Anderson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Alan announced that some restrictions applied meeting the standards set forth in the zoning ordinance relative to set-backs and in particular section 308.17 in the zoning ordinance. Uncertain if applicants can obtain access from the PennDOT Highway and the board will not preclude them from seeking this. If going to use Woodbridge Drive as access to the facility require an area to come off the road right-of-way to allow access through the gate and turn around that there would be no obstruction to traffic along Woodbridge Drive. The development should not exceed the maximum 24,000 sq. ft. size being proposed at this time without coming back to the board if wish to expand the use to a greater area being developed. Most important that the buffer under the ordinance be provided and maintained. Require compliance for the land development and storm water management requirements as set forth in the SR TWP ordinance and following any additional other government regulations that might apply.

Alan asked if the applicants had any questions – None

Alan announced that we have the direction of the ZHB and he will document the final decision and serve it to the board in a timely manner for their approval. Once that is signed and shared with everyone. An additional meeting will not be scheduled unless there is an objection from someone in attendance of the public hearing. We can at the next meeting of the board approve the final decision formally.

Jim Anderson made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. Craig Caldwell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Yvonne Hogg 3/2/2021
Minutes submitted by Yvonne Hogg Date

Tom Gaul
Chairman – Tom Gaul
Jim Anderson
Vice Chairman – Jim Anderson
Craig Caldwell
Member – Craig Caldwell