

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Tuesday, August 18, 2015**

The Springfield Township Planning Commission (PC) held its semi-monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 18, 2015 at the Springfield Township Middle School Cafeteria. Chair Bob Gutowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with the following members present: James Mascaro, Bob Gutowski, George Schaefer, Stacey Blankin, Steve Schagrin, Amanda Helwig, Angela Murray and David Sands. Joe Devine was absent.

Staff liaison Robert Dunlop represented the Township and Community Planner, Donna Fabry represented the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC). James Dailey was present as Board of Commissioners liaison. Minutes of July 7, 2015 meeting were read – Angela Murray moved to approve. David Sands seconded this motion and the motion was approved unanimously, with 3 abstentions from the members who were absent for the meeting.

**Cheltenham Transportation, LLC**  
**50 Oreland Mill Rd., Oreland, PA**

**Julie von Spreckelsen, Esq.**  
**Nick Rose, P.E.**

Ms. von Spreckelsen provided an overview of the current operation on Cheltenham Transportation at the property. Until recently this property also housed another business – Ron Leary Paving, Inc. Since this business has been relocated off the property .8 acre can now be added to the area used for the bus terminal – providing a total area of 5.4 acres. Applicant seeks to have 181 buses on the property if the amended plan is approved. Currently they are limited to 100 buses. The PC next turned to an examination of the review letter issued by Mark Eisold on 8/13/15.

Ms. von Spreckelsen stated that comment #1 incorrectly noted the required number of off-street parking spaces at 100. She believes that by calculation of total building area on the property under zoning sec. 114-134 only 64 spaces are required. The PC noted that this point requires some additional legal analysis to confirm the 64 space figure. Bob Gutowski asked if the applicant could supply some information on actual parking needs for the property. Ms. von Spreckelsen stated that the usual demand would be 90-100 spaces for 181 buses since many employees either car-pool, or use public transportation. Angela Murray asked if some figures for actual public transportation use and car-pooling could be supplied. Ms. von Spreckelsen stated that she would have to get more information from Cheltenham Transportation. George Schaefer asked if Oreland Mill Rd. is currently used for overflow parking from the site. IT was confirmed from Rob Dunlop that Oreland Mill Rd. is used for parking for this facility. Bob Gutowski asked if some information could be provided on total employees on the property including drivers, bus aides, mechanics and administrative staff who work on the property. Ms. von Spreckelsen stated that she hoped Cheltenham Transportation could provide some additional information. David Sands also encouraged the applicant to provide a parking reserve area that can be activated in the future if parking demand is greater than spaces provided. Ms. von Spreckelsen stated that she would see if applicant would agree to this.

## **Springfield Township PC Minutes 8/18/15**

### **Page 2**

Comment #4 states that a traffic study is required for the amendment to the land development plan. Ms. von Spreckelsen stated that the applicant is seeking a waiver from this requirement. Bob Gutowski asked if the applicant had agreed to do a traffic study as a condition to the former land development approval if more than 100 buses were kept on the property. She stated that this is correct. When asked if the applicant had any reason to ask for a waiver Ms. von Spreckelsen stated that applicant would gladly participate in any regional traffic study, but they are asking for a waiver for this property. The PC had a general discussion regarding the requirement for traffic study imposed by sec. 95-7.I of Township Code. After this discussion all members signified that they thought a traffic study was required.

Comment #5 on stormwater management states that no data has been submitted on stormwater flows. Mr. Rose indicated that he is working on the issue and is confident he can create a system which conforms to Township code. Comments #8 & #9 both speak to the lack on detail included in the plan. Clearly defined bus parking spaces are not provided, nor a bus circulation plan. Until these details are included Bob Gutowski stated that the plan is not complete in the level of detail needed for the PC to offer useful advice on facility operations. Applicant also asked if the Township Engineer could provide clarification for item #14 regarding lighting.

Mr. Gutowski next asked the PC to review the MCPC review letter dated 7/10/15. Donna Fabry highlighted the County planning commission's view that a traffic study is needed for the use. She also noted that the use is bordered on three sides by residentially zoned and used property. She stated that any expansion of the use should only be allowed if impacts from noise, traffic, fumes and dust are not allowed to cause a nuisance on neighboring properties. Sec. 114-122 of the zoning code prohibits hazardous uses – due to previous complaints about the operation of the bus terminal it is possible that an expansion may develop into a hazardous use.

Bob Gutowski directed the attention of the PC to a letter from Mark Eisold dated 8/18/15 regarding the on-lot septic system in operation at 50 Oreland Mill Rd. It recommended that as part of any expansion of the number of employees on the property that the applicant be required to connect to the sanitary sewer system – which has been brought closer by the Springfield Manor development.

After this PC discussion Bob Gutowski asked for public comment:

Joan Parsons, 37 Hawkswell Cir., Oreland, Ms. Parsons stated her concern for public health and safety impacts from the current use and believes any expansion would make the area adjacent unlivable. She has regularly seen cars parked along Oreland Mill Rd. down to Hawkswell cir. She doesn't believe she has ever seen anybody walk to the site and doesn't believe any of the current employees uses public transportation. She is greatly concerned with high levels of noise and wants the Township to put into place a tougher noise ordinance. Ms. Parsons also brought to the attention of the PC an article dealing with a bus facility operated by Mr. Faust in East Falls.

## **Springfield Township PC Minutes 8/18/15**

### **Page 3**

Alan Dale Rhoads, 1350 Pennsylvania Ave., Oreland, declared that he feels the bus depot should not be located on a non-primary road such as Pennsylvania Ave. He believes that the best solution would be for the bus depot to be re-located to an appropriate facility, on an appropriate primary road in Cheltenham.

Rocco Santoro, 606 Meadow La., Oreland, stated that his calculations for both proposed bus facilities would bring the total number of daily trips, both bus and car to 2,240. This figure will completely ruin the quality of life in Oreland through traffic, noise, fumes, etc. He encouraged the Township to buy both properties and turn them into parks.

Desiree Simone, 12 Lynn Ave., Oreland, related the negative impacts she has already felt from the current operation of the bus terminal – noise, fumes and lights. She feels that her neighborhood and community are at risk from any expansion of the facility. She asked the PC to recommend denial of the application.

Damian Ciasullo, 201 Lyster Rd., Oreland, asked if the applicant was allowed to store other kinds of buses on site. Since no restriction to size has been included to date he asked that the size of the buses be limited and asked for environmental studies to be performed to measure the impact to neighbors.

Diane Smith, 213 Penn Oak Rd., Flourtown, stated that she did not think that cars parking in bus spaces after the buses left would be practicable. It would require too many extra steps and would probably be abandoned quickly.

Joann Smith, 776 Brtooke Rd., Glenside said that only one bus route goes down Pennsylvania Ave. the SEPTA rt. 95. She didn't know if buses ran early enough in the morning for drivers to use it to get to work on time. Also the Oreland train station is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile away. She doesn't see many workers being able to use public transportation.

Ted Montrella, 306 Integrity Ave., Oreland, stated that he thought that the Commissioners were letting Springfield Township down by allowing this use in the first place.

Tom Smith, 413 Ascot Rd., Oreland asked if there were any positive revenue impacts from this use for the Township. Jim Dailey responded that no financial impact statement had been provided, but he believed that any impacts would be negligible.

Don Wolbert, 223 Orlemann Ave., Oreland, declared that the building on the Tank Car property was an eyesore and should be torn down to clean-up the neighborhood.

## **Springfield Township PC Minutes 8/18/15**

### **Page 4**

Tom Sadowski, 29 Heritage Dr., Oreland, directed the attention to act 124 regarding diesel engine idling. He asked the PC to take a look at this law to see if the bus depot currently conformed to the minimum distance for an idling vehicle for a residential air-intake point.

Alfred Piranian, 606 Overbrook Rd., Oreland, related that it has been proven that heavy exhaust can cause cancer. He asked the PC to consider impacts on people who live near the bus facility.

Howard Supplee, 105 Orlemann Ave., Oreland, stated that he has been in an on-going dispute with Mr. Faust over lighting complaints for a long time. He believes that he currently operates the facility with more buses than is allowed. He should not be allowed any additional buses on the property.

Brendan Niemira, 318 Burton Rd. Oreland, believes that Cheltenham Transportation has not kept to their former agreements. Their assertions about public transportation use are not credible, they will certainly need more spaces than they have for parking and will extend the negative impacts from noise, pollution and traffic to deteriorate the quality of life in Oreland. He strongly encouraged the PC to deny the application.

Joan Supplee, 105 Orlemann Ave., Oreland, stated that the lighting complaint for her father's property has not been resolved. Mr. Faust has not operated in good faith with the community. She also believes that extra buses on the property will not allow sufficient access for fire trucks which will put surrounding properties at risk.

Mary Ann Ciasullo, 207 Garth Rd., Oreland, apprised the PC of the fact that Glenside, Wyndmoor and Oreland had all been named among the 5 best places to live in Pennsylvania. She felt it was the responsibility of the PC to protect this standard of living, and she encouraged the PC to deny this application.

Bob Gutowski asked if any of the 120 residents present had any additional comments, with no responses he asked the applicant if they wished to make any response to the public comments. Ms. von Spreckelsen declined to make any additional comments. Mr. Gutowski summarized what he had heard from the PC and public as the 10 primary areas of concern:

1. Plans did not depict individual bus parking spaces. Without this being shown on the plans the PC could not make any comments on the adequacy of bus storage, or bus circulation on the property. The issue of circulation can lead to extended periods of buses backing up early in the morning. According to resident comments the noises generated by back-up alarms, often as early as 5:00 A.M., cause a significant nuisance to adjacent property owners.

## Springfield Township PC Minutes 8/18/15

### Page 5

2. Lack of provision for employee car parking will cause a need that will add parking and congestion on neighboring streets. Applicant proposes storing 181 buses on the property. Only 44 parking spaces for employees are provided. With the need for 181 parking spaces for bus drivers, with the need for parking for bus aides and office/maintenance employees added, it seems the need for employee parking spaces will exceed 200 spaces – with only 44 spaces provided. The applicant stated that some employees would car-pool, or use public transportation; although the applicant could not provide figures for the number of employees that currently use these modes to get to work.
3. Applicant has asked for a waiver from the requirement to provide a traffic study, although the applicant previously agreed to generate a traffic study if the number of buses housed on the property exceeded 100. Because of the numerous complaints received from residents about the traffic impacts of the current bus operations, the PC strongly recommend that a traffic study be required as part of any proposed land development modification for this property.
4. Lighting from current operations has caused problems on some adjacent properties - which have not been resolved over many months. The current plan does not conform to Township code per Engineer's review letter comment #14.
5. The PC recommends that more information be provided regarding the on-lot sanitary disposal system on the property. Considering that 200 or more employees could be on the property, the PC endorses the Engineer's recommendation that the property should connect to the Township sanitary sewer system.
6. The PC has received complaints that the applicant currently exceeds a total of 100 buses housed on the property currently. Since the applicant has apparently not conformed to the limits of the former land development approval, it seems inappropriate to increase the number of buses housed on the property.
7. PC recommends that the Township investigate to see if the plan conforms to PA act 124 of 2008 regarding the idling of diesel engines. Especially the provisions regarding the minimum distance that diesel vehicles must be kept from the air-intake points for dwellings.
8. PC recommends that size limitations be placed on vehicles for this property if any approval is given in the future.
9. The PC has received extensive public comments regarding this application. Most comments have been complaints about the current operations of Cheltenham Transportation, LLC regarding issues of noise, lights, dust and emissions. The PC believes that all of these issues may rise to the level of nuisance whereby the use constitutes a public hazard. Sec. 114-122 of the Township zoning code prohibits any use in the industrial zoning district which constitutes a public hazard. The PC recommends that the Township evaluate the operation of this use to see if it may legally be declared a public hazard.

**Springfield Township PC Minutes 8/18/15**

**Page 6**

10. The applicant indicated that he had the technology and process to significantly reduce noises generated by vehicle back-up alarms. The PC recommends that due to the numerous noise complaints the applicant be required to implement this modification with the current operation.

After Mr. Gutowski finished his summary, Angela Murray moved that the PC recommend that the BOC not approve the application of Cheltenham Transportation, LLC to amend their land development plan for all of the reason included in Mr. Gutowski's summary. This motion was seconded by Jim Mascaro and approved unanimously.

**BOC Update** - Com. Dailey told the PC that the sketch plan for the Lloyd tract at 1777 E. Willow Grove Ave., Laverock had recently been reviewed by the Township Engineer. He did know if any new applications for this property would be forthcoming. He also advised the PC that the BOC have been actively looking into the possibility of the Township purchasing the Tank Car Property.

Hearing no request to hear new business, Bob Gutowski asked for a motion to adjourn. This motion was made by Stacey Blankin, seconded by Steve Schagrin and approved unanimously at 8:55 PM.

R. Dunlop