

**The Borough of Phoenixville
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
July 10, 2008**

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

The Phoenixville Borough Planning Commission (PC) was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to Flag of The United States of America by Chairman Debra Johnston at Borough Hall.

2.Roll Call: Present were: Marcia Eldred, James Evans, Jennifer Faggioli, George Martynick, and David Saneck. Also present were Ray Ott-Planning, Kim Venzie-Solicitor, Jack Seber-Borough Engineer, and Bev Wassel-Borough Staff. Teena Peters absent/excused.

3. Announcements/Correspondence:None

4. Approval of Minutes: motion to accept minutes by Jennifer Faggioli, second by James Evans. Minutes approved 4-0-1, George Martynick abstained.

5. Public Participation(limited to 30 minutes; with a 3 minute time limited per speaker for agenda items only)

1.Richard Breuer,225 Washington Ave.,Phx.Mr. Breuer questioned the validity of the Phoenixville Public Library Foundation to be the applicant for tonight's presentation since the Library is owned by the Phoenixville Area School District(PASD). He said that the proper applicant must be the School District, not the foundation, to be valid. Therefore the application is fatally flawed. He emphasized that he is not against the merits of the Library, but according to the MPC the applicant must have a correct legal interest. His second comment was that according to the MPC the PC must evaluate plans against objective criteria of the Borough Ordinances. He says that the idea has to be rejected since Borough Ordinances do not provide for buildings on a public street.

2.Karen Johns,Phx. Karen Johns stated that in regards to the expansion of the Library onto Second Ave., that you cannot develop something you don't own.She was also concerned about storm drains and underground utilities on Second Ave., and who would pay for their relocation.She wanted to know if alternative sites were considered such as Friendship Field or Franklin Commons. She felt that the design of the Library created a "Berlin Wall" on Second Ave. She was also concerned with Emergency Vehicle Access.

3. Al Dvorak, 157 First Ave.,Phx. Mr. Dvorak was a former Councilman and Mayor of Phoenixville. He does not want Second Ave. closed ever, due to safety concerns of the neighborhood. He feels Emergency Vehicles will not be able to get through and lose one to two minutes.

4. Genevieve Wilk, 181 Second Ave.,Phx. She feels that she was confronted with eminent domain at the last Library meeting. She is concerned about closing Second Ave. and traffic congestion as well as access for Emergency Vehicles. She states that she will be losing 5 feet along Park Alley.

5. Carlos Ciruelos, 142 First Ave, Phx He is a member of Borough Council. He urges PC to support the community and make decisions on reason and facts, and not drama and negativity.

6. Wally Hiedelmark, 167 Second Ave, Phx. He is against the concept of breaking up Second Ave.; he does not want traffic blocked. He wants a new building instead of refurbishing an old one.

7. Michelle Shamus, 119 Washington Ave., Phx. She supports the Library expansion and takes her children there every day.

8. Ama Zay, 175 Second Ave., Phx. She wants a traffic study done on Second Ave. She supports the mission of the Library but not the closing of Second Ave. She believes that the closing of Second Ave. will create more parking in front of her house.

9. Leo Custer, 127 Washington Ave. Phx. He is a 71-year-old resident of Phoenixville. He stated concerns about pipes, water sewage, and parking. He believes that diagonal parking will place the cars too far into the street. He believes that closing Second Ave. will place more traffic on Washington Ave.

Public Participation closed at 7:30 p.m. by the Chair.

James Evans asked for a ruling from the Solicitor whether the application is legally sound for PC to hear. Kim Venzie replied that an applicant can provide a letter from the actual owner of the real estate authorizing the application in full.

6. Zoning Hearing or Conditional Use Applications: None.

7. Old Business: None

8. New Business

a) **PCE 08-07: Phoenixville Public Library, Tax Parcel: 15-13-420, Property Address: 183 Second Ave., Proposed development: Proposed Phoenixville Public Library Expansion.** Architect Thomas Carnevale presented a power-point presentation of "The Phoenixville Public Library Development Concept", sketch plan. Also present were Allan Novak attorney for the Library, and Linda Layer consulting engineer for Rettew Engineering. A brief history of the Library was presented along with the Library's mission to provide access to information and services that address the educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community that the Library serves. Mr. Carnevale explained that the Master plan began in March, 2006. The Library is located in NCR-2 as a Conditional Use. Reeves Park is a PFZ in which a Library is by Right. Mr. Carnevale explained how the attendance increased from 5000 to 22,000 people; and that circulation has increased from 104,000 to 278,000--an increase of 268%. He explained that Second Ave. would be a 2-way street to "B" Street; then westward Second Ave. would become one-way to Park Alley, which would be turned one-way north. The main entrance to the Library would be on Main Street with bump-outs on Main Street to mitigate traffic for pedestrian crossing. In regards to diagonal parking on Main St., Mr. Carnevale explained that the backs of cars are proposed to be in line with where parallel parking is now. They will not jut-out into Main St. Mr. Carnevale explained that the Library addition will consist of 3 levels: 1) a basement Children's

Library, 2) an elevator to the Main Level which will be at grade with Reeves Park, and 3) Upper Level for administrative use and multi-purpose conference rooms. The original Carnegie Reading Area and Adult area will be turned back to a Reading Room. There will be one centralized circulation desk.

George Martynick had a question on the vacating of Second Ave. for Library use. He wants to know whether half of the street will go to the Library and the other half to the park. Mr. Carnevale commented that the Park property line is not to the centerline of the street.

Marcia Eldred wanted to know if the 2 houses to the north could be torn down and therefore expand the Library north. It was explained to her that this was too expensive.

James Evans wanted to know if the School District had eminent domain. A representative from the School District did not want to pursue that route. Relocation of the Library was discussed. But the question arose as to whether the School Board would bind itself to a perpetual contract if the Library were located in another location. The School Board currently supplies a large part of the Library operating budget under the original agreement with Andrew Carnegie.

In regards to underground utilities, Mr. Carnevale states that the water line under Second Ave. would need to be relocated.

James Evans also discussed expansion to the north. Mr. Carnevale responded that the asking price was too high and that the grade was not working to their favor.

Mr. Evans questioned the possibility of building over Second Ave. Mr. Carnevale replied that in order to build over Second Ave. would require a 14 foot clearance. He feels that it would make the building too high and unattractive. Mr. Evans feels that the Library needs more substantial parking with over 200,000 visits per year.

David Saneck commented that the Borough is laid out in a grid pattern for efficient traffic flow and that the closing of Second Ave. has safety concerns for Emergency Vehicles and regular vehicular traffic.

Ray Ott commented that the Library concept is valid and that the uses of the Park and the Library complement one another in that they are both a Public Use. The footprint of the Library would go from 11,000 sf to 33,000 sf. Ray Ott did have a concern about how the closing of Second Ave. interfered with the functioning of the grid pattern street circulation. He suggested that a traffic study be done regarding Emergency Vehicle travel and traffic patterns.

Mr. Carnevale will contact borough Engineer Jack Seber to set up parameters of the traffic study. Mr. Seber suggested that the Library's traffic expert submit a proposal to him for discussion.

b) PCE 08-08: French Creek Manor Senior Housing (3rd Building), Tax Parcel: 15-8-30.2, Property Address: Center & Paradise Streets, Zoning Amendment: To change percentage of 2-bedroom units from 25% to 15%.

Robert Totaro and Ryan Costello presented a revised Zoning Amendment for the 3rd building of the French Creek Manor Senior Housing. They want to increase the number of one-bedroom apartments due to changed market conditions. George Martynick made a motion to accept the proposed ordinance change; second by Jennifer Faggioli. Approval was 4-0-1 with David Saneck abstaining.

9. Review of Proposed Ordinances

a) Barry Cassidy wants to narrow the uses in D-COMM to have more retail and eliminate offices. He wants to remove offices from the first floor to eliminate non-transition zones between retail uses. David Saneck questioned whether reducing Uses in D-COMM limited diversity downtown. Ray Ott suggested that the new limited zoning be confined to the Bridge Street Overlay District, not the entire D-COMM. Mr. Cassidy is ok with this as long as it covers the unit block of Main St. and the unit block of Gay St. Mr. Evans commented that creating a continuous retail environment on Bridge St. has been a long-term goal and asked Mr. Cassidy to clean up his proposed ordinance change and come back to the next meeting.

Non-Agenda Item: Discussion regarding the Priorities of the Phoenixville Area Regional Plan. James Evans commented on Section 2.4 and 2.5 regarding Transfer Development Rights (TDR) as low priority. G. Martynick commented on Section 3.1 regarding creeks and Linking Landscapes. J. Evans commented that Sec. 5.1 emphasized commercial development of the former steel property. David Saneck commented on Section 5.1 that the Borough needs to maintain commercially zoned areas. Regarding Sec. 7.15, it was suggested that the Phoenixville-Paoli train be given priority over the Schuylkill Valley Metro. G. Martynick commented on Sec. 7.27 regarding impact fees.

10. Public Participation: Joe Puleo, member of the Bd. Of Trustees of the Phx. Library for 2 years, says that he is in favor of the Library expansion. Christen VanLandren, idea. He believes another location is needed to better accommodate future expansion.

11. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned by George Martynick at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. David Saneck, Secretary, Phoenixville Planning Commission