

**WRIGHTSTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING OF OCTOBER 27, 2005**

The Wrightstown Township Planning Commission met on Thursday, October 27, 2005 in the Community Room of the Village Library, 729 Penns Park Road, Wrightstown, PA. In attendance and voting were: Frank Davis, Chairman; John Halderman, Vice-Chairman; John Fowler, Dennis Keating, Robert Lloyd, Ann Mark, William Perry (late) and Lary Whalen, Members. Also in attendance were: Township Engineer Mario Canales of Pickering Corts and Summerson, and Township Planner Rick Tralies of Boucher and James.

Call to Order: Mr. Davis called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: *Dr. Mark moved to accept the minutes of September 8, 2005. Mr. Keating seconded and the motion passed 5-0-2, with Messrs Fowler and Lloyd abstaining.*

Mr. Perry arrived at 8:10PM.

Sterling Limousine Conditional Use Application: Ms. Donna Wengiel represented the applicants. Ms. Wengiel explained that Sterling Limousine wishes to place a 10,000 square foot stone pad on a 5.1-acre parcel in the R-I Rural Industrial zoning district. The pad would be used to park the 27 vehicles in the Sterling fleet temporarily. Sterling will be leasing office space in the ARCCA building. The vehicles include sedans, stretch limousines and three mini-coach buses that carry up to 29 passengers. There are storage sheds adjoining the pad for the supplies used to stock the vehicles, including glassware, newspapers, and vacuums.

In response to Mr. Davis' question, Mr. Donahue of Sterling Limousine said that he would be using the dumpster next to the ARCCA building for trash taken from the cars. If the Planning Commission is concerned about this, he would get an additional dumpster. He said that the drivers clean out the cars upon return and drop trash before entering the office at the end of their workday.

Mr. Donahue explained that his business is currently located in Langhorne, and he is using the offices above Joseph's Garden Grille, but the space is no longer sufficient for his growing business. In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Donahue said that glassware is carried to a dishwasher inside the office suite to be cleaned; the cars are washed at a carwash. Only emergency cleaning is to be done on site. He said that only minor, emergency work, such as adding oil or windshield washer fluids would be done on site. Other repairs would be done by a mechanic at a local service station. The hours of operation would be round the clock, seven days a week, with office staff on site from 6:30 a.m. until midnight. Half of the business is corporate, weekday business, and half is weekend social business. There are about 200 trips per week. Some trips to airports can be very early in the morning and some weekend events are very late at night. The drivers do not take the cars home; they will park their own cars behind the ARCCA building.

Ms. Wengiel said that this is expected to be a temporary arrangement of 18 to 24 months. Sterling Limousine is purchasing one of the ARCCA subdivision lots, and intends to build a garage to house the vehicles. She presented a sketch of the proposed temporary parking area, including location of parking stalls and sheds.

Mr. Canales expressed concern that the sketch does not accurately depict the size of the parking stalls needed for the larger vehicles. He asked that the sketch be revised to show location of parking for the stretch limousines and mini-coaches, which are between 25 and 30 feet long. He questioned whether the

10,000 square foot pad is adequate for maneuvering the vehicles. He also noted that lighting had not been reviewed. He noted that the detention basin on the site is more than adequate for this impervious surface.

Mr. Donahue said that there would be lights mounted on the top of the sheds, shining onto the parking pad. He said that the vehicles are professionally driven and would be moved carefully. In response to Mr. Canales comments, he said that the drivers would not drive onto the turf because the vehicles must be kept very clean.

In response to Mr. Davis' questions, Mr. Donahue said that electricity would be run underground to the sheds. He said that only minor maintenance would be done on site. To protect the groundwater, he agreed to use a mat under vehicles when any work is being done.

The Planning Commission reviewed the Boucher and James letter of October 12, 2005. Mr. Lloyd suggested that, since the applicants could go directly to the Board of Supervisors, without returning to the Planning Commission, the Members should make all concerns known to the Supervisors. He said that, even though the applicants have stated that this is to be a temporary situation, once a conditional use has been granted, that use could continue indefinitely.

Mr. Halderman asked that the plan be revised to show the 8.1-acre lot that Sterling is purchasing.

The Commission discussed buffering and screening. Because this is to be a temporary use, and the site is set far from the nearest residential neighbors, Mr. Tralies suggested the use of a temporary stockade fence to screen neighbors from headlights.

In response to Mr. Keating's questions, Mr. Donahue said that the lights would be affixed to the top of the pre-fabricated sheds, no higher than ten feet. There is also an existing street light on the property. He said that the lights would be motion sensors, and would not be left on all night.

Referring to concerns that had been brought to his attention by another limousine company in the township, Mr. Fowler said that he would like to place a limit to the number of vehicles on the site. He would also like to require that no chemicals be stored in the sheds, and no washing or maintenance of vehicles take place on site. He was concerned about contamination of ground water. He asked that disabled vehicles not be stored on the property.

In response to Mr. Davis' questions, Mr. Donahue said that the Philadelphia Parking Authority inspects the vehicles. He said that he would comply with any limitations on repair and maintenance on site. Damaged vehicles are towed immediately to a body shop for repair, and are not brought back to the lot. He said that the drivers are employees of Sterling, and so must return the cars to the lot. Drivers carrying fourteen passengers or more must have commercial licenses. He said that his office space is no longer adequate, and he is eager to move as soon as possible, however the offices cannot be moved until the vehicles can also be moved to the new location.

In response to Mr. Canales' questions, Mr. Donahue said that the pad would be constructed on grade, with a six-inch excavation.

Ms. Wengiel said that the use is permitted in the R-I district, and meets all of the ordinance requirements. She again noted that the pad is temporary. Because of the importance of maintaining clean vehicles, Mr. Donahue is eager to build a garage for storage of the vehicles when not in use.

Resident John Rasiej of Cedar Lane asked that the drivers park their own cars behind the ARCCA building, so as not to disturb the residential neighbors when returning late at night or arriving early in the morning.

Mr. Lloyd moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the Conditional Use of Sterling Limousine with the following conditions:

- *That the plan be revised to show vehicles to scale, with lighting and utilities shown;*
- *That the plan show the full 8.1 acre lot;*
- *That the plan show screening as per Section 803.E.3.2 of the Ordinance;*
- *That storage of chemical fluids, washing chemicals, etc, be limited;*
- *That drivers park their own vehicles with headlights away from neighbors;*
- *That no maintenance of vehicles be performed on site;*
- *That employees be limited to 8 office workers, two maintenance employees, and drivers, not to exceed twenty employees at any given time;*
- *That hours of operation be round the clock seven days per week;*
- *That lights with motion detectors be mounted no higher than the roof of the sheds;*
- *That disabled vehicles not be stored on site;*
- *That an absorbent mat be used beneath vehicles during emergency maintenance and repair.*

Mr. Fowler seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Lighting Ordinance: The Commission reviewed the latest revisions of the proposed lighting ordinance. Mr. Halderman said that he thought that “low wattage and intensity” should be re-inserted into the sections dealing with holiday lighting. The Commission agreed.

In discussion of the lighting of flagpoles, Mr. Canales said that display of flags traditionally requires that they be either taken down or lighted at night. The industry standard for flag lighting is 10,000 lumens. There was some discussion about whether this is too bright for a residential area. The Commission agreed to remove the exceptions for flagpoles.

The Commission agreed that there should be a schedule of fines for infractions, with specific amounts included in the ordinance.

Mr. Canales reviewed the existing street lighting within the Township, noting that there is already a sodium vapor light in the Township. Streetlights are owned by PECO. Ms. Bradley is attempting to map out the locations of all of the streetlights. Any non-conforming lights would be grandfathered into the ordinance.

The Commission discussed enforcement of the ordinance. Mr. Fowler said that he was appreciative of the ordinance, as it would be enforced as part of land development for new housing. Mr. Canales said that for existing housing, the ordinance could be enforced, using light meters, if neighbors complained.

Mr. Halderman moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the proposed light ordinance with the conditions that:

- *The phrase “low wattage and intensity” be reinserted into the section on holiday lighting;*
- *Exceptions for flagpoles be removed;*
- *A fine schedule be inserted;*

- *All lighting be extinguished at 11:00PM.*
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Mr. Fowler seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Fowler moved to adjourn at 9:30 PM. Dr. Mark seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Mary Donaldson
Recording Secretary