

The Zoning Hearing Board of the Borough of Columbia met on Wednesday, October 31, 2018, in the Paul W. Myers Council Chambers. Chairman Don Haines called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call was taken with the following members being present: Don Haines, Joe Nikolaus, Steve White, David Brumbaugh, and Terry Anne Doutrich. Jonathan Lutz was absent from this meeting. Also present were Josele Cleary, Solicitor; Jeff Helm, Zoning Officer; Lisa Miller, Court Stenographer; and Deb LaClair, Administrative Assistant.

There was the pledge to the flag.

Steve White motioned to approve the minutes from the April 25, 2018, meeting and Joe Nikolaus seconded. All favored this motion.

Jeff Helm, Zoning Officer, announced tonight's hearings were advertised and the properties were posted.

Josele Cleary explained the procedures for the hearings. There were no questions regarding the procedures. There were no parties to the hearing for 267 South Eighth Street.

267 South Eighth Street – Thomas Wickenheiser - Mike Grab, Attorney, informed the Board that Thomas Wickenheiser was requesting an in-home occupation for a part-time seasonal income tax business.

Mr. Wickenheiser was sworn in and testified that his business would be in operation from January 25th until April 18th, servicing customers Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The hours would be 12:00 noon until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday and 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on Saturday. Mr. Wickenheiser stated the customers would be dropping off and picking up their tax returns. There would be approximately 2 customers per hour. Mr. Wickenheiser informed the Board he has been operating this business for 5 years and only became aware he was non-compliant with the need to appear before the Zoning Hearing Board. Mike Grab reviewed with Mr. Wickenheiser the criteria for an in-home business. Mr. Wickenheiser testified there would be no employees, the business was strictly indoors, customers would drop off information in an established drop box, the square footage of the business area met the Zoning Ordinance, there would be no advertising signs, there was no off-street parking for the business, there were no deliveries, there was no overnight parking of trucks, there would be no noise, dust or fumes, and there would be no tutoring, manufacturing or retail sales.

Mr. Wickenheiser stated his residence was located on the one-way portion of Eighth Street with low traffic and no issues with parking. He added that during tax season, he and his wife do not park in front of their residence.

Terry Doutrich asked if there was off street parking and if there were any parking issues. Mr. Wickenheiser stated there was no off-street parking and no issues with parking on the street.

Steve White asked about the one-way portion of Eighth Street. Mr. Wickenheiser explained that portion of Eighth Street was off of Route 462. Steve asked if customers could double park. Mr. Wickenheiser stated he tries to discourage his customers from double parking.

Joe Nikolaus asked if more cars travel that area since it was newly paved. Mr. Wickenheiser stated no. Joe asked if there was 1 parking space in front of the residence. Mr. Wickenheiser stated yes but during tax season he parks in front of the neighbor's house because they have off street parking.

Mary Wickenheiser, Columbia Borough Planning Commission, added the Commission recommended approval of this home occupation.

Jeff Helm, Zoning Officer, stated the Borough had no questions of the applicant.

There were no questions from the audience.

Josele Cleary read off the conditions, which were agreed upon by the applicant.

Steve White motioned to close the record on the hearing and David Brumbaugh seconded. All favored this motion.

Joe Nikolaus motioned to approve the Zoning request for a home occupation at the property located at 267 South Eighth Street with conditions read by the Borough Solicitor and the standard conditions and Steve White seconded. All favored this motion.

There were no parties to the hearing for 401 Locust Street.

401 Locust Street – Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) – Phil Goropoulos, President, was sworn in and explained to the Board the current dental program located on the first floor of 401 Locust Street and the other programs located in Columbia Borough. He talked about trying to fill a gap with this child care project. Phil explained the second and third floor of the building at 401 Locust Street would be a child care facility for 112 children with the tuition based on family income. This child care facility would create 25 jobs in the Borough.

John Hershey, RGS Associates, was sworn in and stated this project was presented to the Columbia Borough Planning Commission and the Public Safety Committee of Borough Council. John presented Applicant's Exhibit A#1 showing the existing layout of the building and proposed new construction. He talked about the parking which includes already established off-site parking for staff and pointed out on the drawing an on-street drop off area and showed 10 on-site parking spaces. Phil expanded the parking discussion by adding the staff parking was on the Borough owned metered parking lot off Second Street and other potential parking areas at Columbia United Methodist Church and Holy Trinity Catholic Church. Joe Nikolaus asked if all employees park off-site. Phil stated yes, all employees park on the lot off Second Street. John addressed the required parking per child and talked about the child drop off spaces. Joe asked if those spaces were metered. John stated no but the drop off area would have signs for ½ hour drop off. Joe expressed concerns if ½ hour would be enough time. Joe asked if the current parking lot at the building would be changed. John explained the area would be paved and lined so that vehicles would not back out onto Locust Street. David Brumbaugh asked who would monitor the parking spaces on the street. Phil stated the on-street parking would be monitored by the Borough. David asked if this project was reviewed by HARB. Phil stated HARB would review the project in November. Joe again expressed concerns about the time limit for dropping off children. Phil explained there would be 2 elevators used to transport parents and children to the proper floor, which would help with a quick drop-off. David added there may be parents who walk to the facility.

Terry Doutrich asked about the age of the children. Phil stated 6 weeks to kindergarten age. Terry stated that could be numerous children arriving at the same time. Phil explained the times would be staggered with parents work start time and school start time. Don Haines asked about start time. Phil stated the start time would be based on the parents work schedule. Phil testified the hours of operation would be Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Terry asked if there were 29 employees. Phil stated there would be 25 employees and there would be 25 off-site parking spaces. Steve expressed concerns about how the 25 parking spaces would be maintained while the business was in operation. Josele Cleary explained a condition would be written in the decision for the applicant to provide the Zoning Officer with evidence of off-site parking before issuing the Certificate of Occupancy.

Mary Wickenheiser informed the Board this project came before the Planning Commission and they recommended approval at their October meeting.

Frank Doutrich, 1001 Ironville Pike, asked about the number of employees and the concern with parking spaces. Phil stated there may be a total of 32 or 33 employees, counting the already operating dental program, but the additional employee count for the day care has not been finalized. Josele explained there would be a condition for the parking. Frank asked if the organization pays property taxes on the building. Phil stated yes.

David Brumbaugh motioned to take administrative notice of the record and decisions 11-287, 09-239, 01-275, 93-317, 91-329 and 91-230 for 401 Locust Street and Don Haines seconded. All favored this motion. Josele asked if the current installed wireless communications antennas were still on the building. Phil stated they were still on the building and would remain.

Josele read off the conditions, which were agreed upon by the applicant.

Don Haines motioned to close the record on the hearing and David Brumbaugh seconded. All favored this motion.

Terry Doutrich motioned to adjourn to an executive session, with the meeting to be reconvened, and David Brumbaugh seconded. All favored this motion. The executive session commenced at 8:30 p.m.

Don Haines reconvened the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Joe Nikolaus motioned to approve the Zoning request for a day care facility from CHI located at 401 Locust Street with the conditions presented by the Borough Solicitor and the standard conditions and David Brumbaugh seconded. A roll call vote was taken with the following Board members voting yes: Nikolaus, Haines and Brumbaugh. White and Doutrich voted no. Motion carried.

Don Haines motioned to adjourn and David Brumbaugh seconded. All favored this motion.

There being no further business, this meeting of the Columbia Borough Zoning Hearing Board was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeffrey M. Helm
Zoning Officer