

REZONING:

Amends the Zoning Code by rezoning the following tracts of land known as 1216 S. Meadow Street, 1224 S. Meadow Street, 1228 S. Meadow Street and 1236 S. Meadow Street from R-ML (Medium Low Density Residential) to B-3 (Highway Business District) 18-1 (Z) requested by Eastburn and Gray, PC, Attorneys at Law for HRES Allentown Susquehanna, LLC.

Julia Von Spreckelsen, Esq., John Hornick, Project Engineer and Chris Salemi from Hunt Realty were present.

Atty. Spreckelsen explained the applicant is the equitable owner of eight continuous parcels that makes up a city block within W. Susquehanna, S. Meadow, Juniata and S. Fourth Streets. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of these four parcels from R-ML to B-3 to demolish all the building, consolidate the lots and build a 5,558 sq. ft. Wawa convenient store with 8 fuel dispensing facilities (16 positions) on this 2.319 acre block.

Atty. Spreckelsen reviewed the proposed development, parking, access points, buffering from the residential properties, the billboard along Susquehanna Street and traffic improvements. Mr. Hornick explained the traffic improvements. Atty. Foucek pointed out S. 4th Street and Susquehanna Street are state highways. Mr. Hornick answered correct. Discussion continued on the vehicle movement and the traffic stacking at the intersection.

Atty. Foucek reiterated this is for a rezoning request and not what the use will be. Atty. Foucek continued by pointing out the retaining wall located behind the commercial parcels and in front of the residential parcels, bisecting this block. Mr. Buchvalt expressed concern that the residents of Meadow Street will be looking directly into the lights and the canopy of the building. Atty. Spreckelsen explained there would be a significant buffer proposed to separate the residential from the highway business. Mr. Button asked if they had any conversations with the neighbors on the east side of Meadow Street. Mr. Salemi said no. Mr. Glazier said they would be the ones most affected by this development. No one from Meadow Street were present.

Atty. Foucek asked about the billboard that will remain. Mr. Salemi explained the billboard company currently owns the property. In order to make this work, the property will be purchased and they will be given an easement for the existing non-conforming billboard.

Mr. Stewart explained the staff's point of view is looking at a full block that is currently split zoned. If it were to remain split zoned, there could be smaller businesses with individual accesses in an already difficult intersection. The belief is if the entire block is rezoned to one business category, then there is the ability to control points of access. The alternative is the applicant could apply for a use variance on the residential properties, which is not the appropriate way to go.

Deleita Roman, 1307 S. Race Street addressed the Commission. Ms. Roman states she lives one block above this project and is worried about the traffic. Any traffic or accident on S. 4th Street detours on Race Street, which is one lane. Atty. Foucek confirmed this cannot be predicted. The issue of additional traffic caused by this project is going to be the subject of PennDot.

Andre Frazier, 845 S. Armour Street, explained there are numerous gas stations along S. 4th Street and Wawa will make the parcel look better than it is, but the increase in traffic needs to be considered.

Mr. Buchvalt pointed out making this one parcel is more controllable and there could be a restriction on a rezoning. Atty. Foucek stated a recommendation can be made based upon a representation that all parcels within this block be consolidated upon the rezoning, but it is up to City Council to decide. Christian Brown concurred it is the simplest way to do it.

Mr. Button made a motion to recommend to City Council the rezoning of 1216 S. Meadow Street, 1224 S. Meadow Street, 1228 S. Meadow Street and 1236 S. Meadow Street from R-ML (Medium Low Density Residential) to B-3 (Highway Business District) with the condition all eight parcels within the block be consolidated. Second by Mr. Glazier. Motion passed unanimously.