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OLD FORGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
OLD FORGE, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: PUBLIC MEETING - GRESS

MARCH 14, 2023

6:00 P.M.

OLD FORGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING

314 SOUTH MAIN STREET

OLD FORGE, PENNSYLVANIA

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- RUSSELL RINALDI, PRESIDENT
- RICK NOTARI
- LOUIS FEBBO
- JAMES HOOVER
- MICHAEL LETTIERI
- ANDREW BUTLER
- WILLIAM RINALDI, ESQUIRE, SOLICITOR
- MARYLYNN BARTOLETTI, BOROUGH MANAGER
- ROBERT LEGG, MAYOR

Mark Wozniak
Official Court Reporter

1 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Good evening,
2 ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to call the
3 public meeting to order with the Pledge of
4 Allegiance.

5 (The Pledge of Allegiance was
6 recited.)

7 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Roll call,
8 please, Bill.

9 ATTY. RINALDI: Ms. Avvisato is
10 absent. Mr. Butler?

11 MR. BUTLER: Here.

12 ATTY. RINALDI: Mr. Febbo?

13 MR. FEBBO: Present.

14 ATTY. RINALDI: Mr. Hoover.

15 MR. HOOVER: Present.

16 ATTY. RINALDI: Mr. Lettieri?

17 MR. LETTIERI: Present.

18 ATTY. RINALDI: Mr. Notari?

19 MR. NOTARI: Present.

20 ATTY. RINALDI: Mr. Rinaldi?

21 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Here. Once
22 again, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the
23 Tuesday, March 14, 2023 public hearing for
24 the Gress property. We're going to hear
25 from Mr. Gress, we'll hear comments from the

1 public, if they have any questions for us or
2 for him. Bill, if you just want to briefly
3 explain how we are going to proceed.

4 ATTY. RINALDI: There was an
5 application to rezone a parcel of land, 201
6 South Keyser Avenue, owned by Select Realty,
7 submitted by RLE and Gress, who has an
8 agreement of sale for the property. A
9 request was made, it went before the
10 planning commission. The planning
11 commission made a recommendation on rezoning
12 it similar to the adjacent property, which
13 would be from C-3 to C-2, and then amend
14 also the C-2 highway commercial district to
15 allow for warehousing, including
16 self-storage facilities, as a conditional
17 use only. With that, I'll turn it over to
18 Mr. Gress.

19 MR. GRESS: Yes. I don't know.
20 I've never done this before. So our
21 business is owned and has operated on Keyser
22 Avenue for a hundred years, three
23 generations in our family, and our demand is
24 growing now to the point where we need
25 another warehouse. We're at a fork in the

1 road with our current customer base where
2 they either grow their footprint with us or
3 they look somewhere else that can handle
4 their needs, and we found no better place
5 than here on Keyser Avenue, where we've done
6 business forever, and it's right by the
7 Pennsylvania Turnpike and somewhere we're
8 familiar and we think it would be a great
9 spot to expand our current operations.

10 We don't intend on there being any
11 issue as far as noise or anything goes. The
12 property will have vegetation surrounding
13 it. There will not be an increase in any
14 water or sewer. Traffic, there may be some
15 trucks on Keyser Avenue just naturally
16 coming in off the turnpike, but they won't
17 be on Sibley Avenue. There won't be an
18 entrance there.

19 As far as anything else goes, if
20 anybody else has questions I'd be happy to
21 answer them. My project manager's flight
22 got cancelled, so she wasn't able to joint
23 me tonight. So I'm the only one here. If
24 anybody has anything they're wondering I'd
25 be more than happy to answer.

1 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Any of the
2 public have any questions for Mr. Gess?

3 ATTY. RINALDI: There are copies of
4 the site on the desk if anybody wants one.
5 There's a large one and a small eight
6 depicting each specific property.

7 MR. BURGE: Kevin Burge. I live at
8 882 Sibley Ave. It's going to be on the
9 highway side?

10 MR. GRESS: The address will be
11 Keyser Avenue. You'll pull in right near
12 the Diamond Club entrance. There won't be
13 an entrance from Sibley Avenue. There will
14 be no trucks on Sibley Avenue. They'll be
15 coming from Keyser Avenue only.

16 MR. BURGE: I thought it was in back
17 of my house. I got a letter.

18 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: The reason you
19 received a letter was according to our
20 borough ordinance, when the borough is
21 looking to rezone a piece of land the
22 neighboring addresses all get a letter
23 notifying them.

24 MR. GRESS: This will be the
25 entrance right here. There will be nothing

1 on Sibley Avenue. It will be coming down
2 Keyser from the turnpike and entering in the
3 front. All these trees on the side here
4 will remain intact. The warehouse will be
5 placed over here. When you pull in there
6 will be trucks right here.

7 MR. RUSSEL RINALDI: Any other
8 questions?

9 MR. BURGE: I thought this was in
10 the back of my house because the Diamond
11 Club's in the back of my house.

12 MR. GRESS: It is right there. You
13 can see the entrance isn't there. There
14 will be no trucks on Sibley. They will be
15 coming from Keyser.

16 MR. BURGE: Like, there's a road
17 right behind where there's supposed to be a
18 road.

19 MR. GRESS: That little entrance
20 area that comes near the creek? That will
21 be inoperative. There will be no trucks
22 pulling in and out of there.

23 ATTY. RINALDI: I'll let you borrow
24 this. I will tell council and members of
25 the public this part of it is only allowing

1 the zone to be changed. When he moves to
2 the next phase to propose what he wants to
3 put on the site, which he's already shown us
4 what he wants to do, that would come before
5 planning, and then council would have to
6 vote to allow the warehouse to go there and
7 setbacks and shrubbery and make sure that it
8 turns out pretty much like as is being
9 proposed.

10 MR. GRESS: Anybody else?

11 MR. FEBBO: Let me see it.

12 MR. GRESS: That's the sketch plan
13 for the moment.

14 MR. LETTIERI: What are you
15 concerned with, noise?

16 MR. BURGE: I thought I'd be looking
17 out in the back yard and seeing a big
18 warehouse. That's what I was worried about.

19 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: How far will
20 the warehouse be -- I mean, I'm suspecting
21 you will see the warehouse. I don't think
22 it's going to be right in your back yard but
23 you will see it when you come out of your
24 house. How far back will the warehouse run?

25 MR. GRESS: Off the top of my head

1 I'm not sure.

2 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Kevin, you saw
3 where your house and you saw where the
4 warehouse is going?

5 MR. BURGE: Yes.

6 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: So behind your
7 house isn't the warehouse, but going a
8 little bit more west towards Keyser Avenue
9 is the warehouse.

10 MR. BURGE: So I probably would be
11 able to see it.

12 MR. GRESS: It won't be blocking any
13 views or anything in the back but it will be
14 visible.

15 MR. BURGE: There's a lot in the
16 back of my yard.

17 MR. GRESS: No. I know right now
18 they're bringing in some equipment from
19 there, but we won't have any trucks or
20 anything coming in from there. They'll all
21 come right down here.

22 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Your property
23 will be surrounded all by fence?

24 MR. GRESS: Yes, there will be
25 vegetative buffer around the property.

1 ATTY. RINALDI: That's all part of
2 the planning process.

3 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anything else?

4 MR. BURGE: No.

5 MS. GRIMES: Theona Grimes, Amity
6 Avenue, Old Forge. My question is right now
7 I'm at 212 Amity Avenue. Behind me is the
8 property that's -- I forget the name --
9 Stocky, with all the noise and all the odors
10 that go on continuously. How close are you
11 going to be to my home as well?

12 MR. GRESS: I'm not familiar with
13 the address. Would you be able to show me
14 on here where you are? This is the Stocky
15 property over here.

16 MS. GRIMES: So you're going to be
17 behind him?

18 MR. GRESS: Yes, towards the
19 turnpike.

20 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: He's alongside
21 of him.

22 MR. GRESS: This is Keyser Avenue,
23 that's the creek right behind.

24 MS. GRIMES: The creek is right
25 behind my house. It looks like it will be

1 farther away, I hope.

2 ATTY. RINALDI: Do you want this
3 one? This might be more helpful.

4 MS. GRIMES: Where are you going to
5 be? I'm here.

6 MR. GRESS: We are going to be --

7 MS. GRIMES: I would be the third
8 house up from the corner.

9 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: You're here
10 and the warehouse would be here.

11 MR. GRESS: Furthest point away from
12 it.

13 MS. GRIMES: And there's going to be
14 vegetation around it?

15 MR. GRESS: Absolutely.

16 MS. GRIMES: And not increasing
17 noise?

18 MR. GRESS: No. We're not a 24-hour
19 facility, so we won't keep you up all night.
20 Obviously trucks will be delivering, but
21 they'll be out of there before you go to
22 bed. They're 52 foot reefers.

23 MS. GRIMES: So tractor-trailers.

24 MR. GRESS: Yes, but they won't be
25 it doesn't operate 24 hours a day. Just

1 during the daytime.

2 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: There probably
3 wouldn't be any more truck traffic or noise
4 than the trucking company that's currently
5 there now. Do you have any problem with
6 that?

7 MS. GRIMES: I don't have any
8 problems with the truck company. I have
9 problems with Stocky. Lots.

10 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: We do, too.
11 We agree with you. I was just trying to
12 give you sort of a similar business with,
13 like, tractor-trailers and noise, sound.
14 I'm going to take a guess. Mr. Gess'
15 business is very similar to that as far as
16 truck traffic goes and noise sounds. So
17 those trailers, if they're not making any
18 disturbance to you currently or they haven't
19 since you've been living there I can't see
20 his business with his trucks and trailers
21 doing it. It's the same type of vehicle.

22 MR. GRESS: There wouldn't be any
23 increase in any noise or any disturbance
24 from what they have right now.

25 MS. GRIMES: You're coming in near

1 the Diamond Club, you're going back a
2 distance and then turning to go get to your
3 property?

4 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: No, it's
5 almost right off Keyser. Any other
6 questions?

7 MR. BURGE: You're zoning it
8 commercial. Right? Your part. That don't
9 make the houses commercial, does it?

10 MR. HOOVER: No.

11 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: This zoning is
12 just for that piece of property in itself.

13 ATTY. RINALDI: Right now everything
14 from his property line over to Oak Street is
15 C-3. So this was a C-2. It stops on their
16 property line. Only their property.

17 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Going to Oak
18 Street it's commercial. Going towards your
19 property it's not. Any other questions?

20 MR. BURGE: No.

21 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anybody else
22 have any other questions from the audience?

23 MR. STULL: What was the address?

24 201 --

25 ATTY. RINALDI: They have 201 Keyser

1 Avenue. That's what they have on -- the
2 county has for the tax, 201 Keyser or Keyser
3 Avenue and Rear Sibley Avenue.

4 MR. STULL: That's it.

5 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anyone else
6 have anything before we adjourn the public
7 hearing? Mr. Gress, do you have anything
8 else?

9 MR. GRESS: No.

10 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Any members of
11 council have any questions for Mr. Gress?
12 Mr. Gress, anything?

13 MR. GRESS: No. Just thank you for
14 the opportunity and I appreciate.

15 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: All right.

16 MR. NOTARI: We will approve this at
17 the next meeting?

18 ATTY. RINALDI: It will need to be
19 advertised, so 30 days.

20 MR. GRESS: That was my question.

21 ATTY. RINALDI: It will be at the
22 April meeting. Third Tuesday in April.

23 MR. GRESS: As far as any variance
24 application goes, does that come after that?

25 ATTY. RINALDI: Then you would put

1 in your request for the conditional use with
2 council, I would do your plans at that
3 point. Sketch plan. You don't need formal
4 drawings. If this ordinance passes exactly
5 as is they have to grant you the conditional
6 use to put a warehouse with the specifics.
7 Then that allows you to then design it, go
8 to planning, they'll tell you what kind of
9 shrubbery you need and things like that and
10 follow the plan.

11 MR. GRESS: I need this approved and
12 the variance approved to purchase the land.
13 Our investors don't want to buy it until --

14 ATTY. RINALDI: This wouldn't be a
15 variance.

16 MR. GRESS: A height variance. I
17 applied for that already. Chris should have
18 all of that.

19 ATTY. RINALDI: I'll try to find out
20 where everything is.

21 MR. BURGE: How big is the building?
22 How many square foot?

23 MR. GRESS: About 200,000.

24 MR. STULL: How high are you going?

25 MR. GRESS: We're applying for 55

1 feet. It's somewhere in the low 40's right
2 now.

3 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: I think it's
4 42.

5 ATTY. RINALDI: That's going to be
6 in front of zoning.

7 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anything else?

8 MR. STULL: The 55 feet in height,
9 is that all one story?

10 MR. GRESS: Yes.

11 MR. STULL: So you're going to
12 have --

13 MR. GRESS: We want to build up
14 rather than out.

15 MR. STULL: So you plan on having
16 storage racking 55 feet up --

17 MR. GRESS: There's going to have to
18 be some room for the roof and insulation and
19 all that.

20 MR. STULL: So racks at least 40
21 feet. Is that a full sprinklered building?

22 MR. GRESS: No, we won't have
23 sprinklers in it. It will be on the dock
24 and all that but not actual freezers.

25 MR. STULL: That's all freezer

1 space?

2 MR. GRESS: Yes, all frozen. We're
3 willing to work with the borough, whatever
4 you guys think is safest. We're more than
5 happy to get with all of you --

6 MR. STULL: What kind of refrigerant
7 are you using, ammonia?

8 MR. GRESS: We're looking at freon
9 right now or CO2. Between those two.

10 MR. FEBBO: Bill, do you have
11 concerns about the fire safety?

12 MR. STULL: No. Once I see the
13 prints and everything like that, specs, then
14 we'll sit down with Mr. Gress and go over
15 everything.

16 MR. GRESS: We'd be more than happy
17 to set up a call with our project manager --

18 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: He's in charge
19 of all inspections for the borough from the
20 fire department.

21 MR. GRESS: We value your input.
22 Whatever you feel is the safest for the
23 borough. You have my word on that.

24 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Bill,
25 anything else?

1 MR. STULL: No.

2 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anyone else?

3 MR. BURGE: How many bays are going
4 to be in that building?

5 MR. GRESS: Truck bays, we have
6 plans for right now, I think, 18, but that's
7 subject to change. There's a drop trailer
8 program.

9 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Mr. Gress and
10 anybody in the borough, he has to build it
11 according to our ordinances and our codes.
12 If he wants to change anything, then he has
13 to come to us, come to planning, come to
14 zoning and apply for a variance. So he
15 can't just go out there and build what he
16 wants. There is a standard that he has to
17 follow and it's already in our code book.
18 If he wanted more bays and the book didn't
19 say he can have more bays, then he has to
20 come to planning, zoning, he'd have to ask
21 for permission for all that. So there's a
22 whole process and a lot of steps he as to
23 take before he even gets anything into the
24 ground.

25 ATTY. RINALDI: The plans come to

1 planning.

2 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Planning
3 meetings are open to the public, zoning
4 meetings are open to the public, council
5 meetings, work session are all open to the
6 public. They're always posted, always
7 advertised.

8 MR. GRESS: I'm not here to pull the
9 rug over anyone's head. My family's
10 operated on Keyser Avenue for close to a
11 hundred years. I want to continue our
12 business as it is in a place we're familiar.
13 We think this is a great spot to expand.

14 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: Anyone from
15 council? With that said, the chair would
16 ask for a motion to adjourn the public
17 hearing.

18 MR. NOTARI: I'll make that motion.

19 MR. RUSSELL RINALDI: By Councilman
20 Notari. All in favor?

21 (Unanimous. Hearing adjourned.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that I attended the foregoing proceeding, took stenographic notes of the same, that the foregoing, consisting of 18 pages, is a true and correct copy, done to the best of my ability, of same and the whole thereof.

Mark Wozniak
Official Court Reporter