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## Forks zoners reject variance request for car wash

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A car-washing business isn't in [Forks Township](#)'s future, at least not the one proposed Monday night to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Spiro Kounoubis of Easton lost his bid to establish a car wash/quick oil lube business in Town Center Boulevard when the zoners voted unanimously to reject his request for a variance.

Supervisor Chairman David Howell and resident James Wideman objected to the request, saying that it was not permitted in the Town Center District. Both encouraged the zoners to deny the request.

Louis Ferrone, an engineer, said the property would be a stand-alone structure of about 3,000 square feet on land owned by Norman Falk of Bloomsbury, N.J., just west of the last store on the strip mall in the Town Center.

He said the car wash business was missed when the township set up the district and that is why he was seeking the variance.

Wideman said that for a car wash to be in the Town Center District, the ordinance would have to be changed, and a variance would not be acceptable. Such a business, he said, would change the nature of the Town Center.

Howell criticized the Planning Commission for sending a letter to the zoners recommending approval.

Solicitor Michael Shay said the Planning Commission can make recommendations to the supervisors when they consider a request, but not to the zoners.

"Zoning is based on need," Howell said. "Zoning is based on a neighborhood, on the allocating of businesses that are compatible to one another, not based on what you think is a great idea or need."

He said car washes were permitted in the township, but only in the Employment Center District. Such a business, he said, would seek a conditional use in the Employment Center District, which would set

conditions on the proper location of the building on a lot and other items to fit with the neighborhood.

"We would welcome that business in that district," Howell said. "This kind of business was not missed in the planning. We did not want it there."

He told the zoners that if they granted the variance, they would be "setting a very bad precedent" that would open the door for auto repair shops in the Town Center District.

After Shay explained that the zoners cannot amend the zoning ordinance and that applicants have to show unnecessary hardship to get a variance, the zoners, who consulted among themselves, voted unanimously to deny the request.

Kounoubis, who works in heating and air conditioning at Warren Hospital, said he thought the location would be ideal. He said customers, especially women, could shop in the Town Center stores while getting oil changed or their cars washed.

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