

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2019 - 7:00 PM

PALMER TOWNSHIP LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM - 1 WELLER PLACE, PALMER, PA

The April 2019 meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, April 9, 2019 at 7:00 pm with the following in attendance: Chairman Robert Blanchfield, Karin Vangeli, Michael Brett, Jeff Kicska and Robert Walker. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cynthia Carman Kramer, Ralph Russek of the Pidcock Company, Solicitors Charles Bruno and Steve Brown. Absent: Robert Lammi and Richard Wilkins.

1. Minutes of March 2019 Public Meeting

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Walker, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker
Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins

NEW BUSINESS

2. 3100 Charlotte Avenue, LLC - Conditional Use Application - Modification of Prior Conditional Use Approval
3100 Charlotte Avenue - L8-25-2
HDR District
Request by 3100 Charlotte Avenue, LLC

DISCUSSION

Present on behalf of the applicant were Kevin Fruck of Cornerstone Consulting Engineers, Attorney James Preston and Lou Pektor.

The current applicant, 3100 Charlotte Avenue, LLC, has submitted a conditional use application requesting to modify a previous condition of approval concerning the issuance of certificates of occupancy, as set forth in the May 12, 2016 conditional use decision letter. The accompanying sketch plan proposes dividing the project into two phases. Phase One is proposed to involve the construction of buildings 1 to 6 (144 units), the club house, the Hartley Avenue frontage improvements, above ground basins 1 & 2, underground basins 1, 2, 7, 8 & 9, rain gardens 1 & 2 and rough grading. Phase Two is proposed to include buildings 7 to 13 (168 units), the remainder of the site improvements and the offsite improvements at the Hartley and Greenwood Avenue intersection.

Preston said there were two things that they wanted to talk about, one was the phasing and the second was the conditional use request. Under the current approval, the developer cannot get any Certificates of Occupancy until the improvements at Greenwood and Hartley are complete. They can't get financing for the project under this scenario, and they want to work with the Township to come up with a solution. They would like to request that the project be phased such that Phase 1 would be the entire site and Phase 2 would be the off-site improvements. Bruno asked if this was something new from what was submitted.

Preston said yes. Bruno clarified that there was no application for this phasing plan, that they were asking for something different than what they applied for. Preston said yes, this is the only way they could make it work.

Bruno reviewed the history of the previous approvals for the benefit of the newer Planning Commission. Blanchfield asked if what they were proposing was to do all the construction in the first phase. Fruck said yes. Blanchfield asked how many buildings could be occupied. Fruck said in the submitted plan they would occupy 6 buildings, which is 144 units. In the plan they were proposing now, it would be 8 buildings, which is 192 units. Under the HDR district they could do 218 units by right. Pektor said the build time would be approximately two to two and half years, and the PennDOT approvals could take 18 to 24 months. Bruno asked if they have applied to PennDOT. Pektor said no. Bruno asked if security would be posted for the off-site work. Fruck said no. Kicska said if they could do 192 units before the intersection is done, what guarantee would the Township have that they wouldn't just stop there. Pektor said they are willing to post one million dollars security for the off-site improvements. Young asked in frustration why they didn't phase the plan before, when they were asked if they wanted to phase it they said no. It has been 3 years since the original approval, they could have been working with PennDOT all this time and now they are putting the Township in this terrible position. Pektor said every large job they have done has been phased and they planned to come back to talk about phasing. They are not in a position for the whole job to be held up waiting for PennDOT approval. Pektor said he did spend \$54,000 on traffic plans for PennDOT. Young asked how much rent they would receive when the buildings are all open. Pektor said \$4.5 million a year. Kramer asked if there has been talk with PennDOT on whether the intersection can handle traffic from 192 units without improvements. Fruck said no.

Bruno said the plan being discussed before the Planning Commission tonight was different than the plan that was submitted and it is difficult to identify and secure for improvements that are not on any plan. It would be in the best interest of the developer to give an extension of time and to come back before the Planning Commission after submitting the plan that was discussed verbally tonight. Walker asked if the Planning Commission would table the plan presented tonight or the plan as applied for. Bruno said they can only table what has actually been submitted. Preston then said they wanted to discard what was talked about so far and start over with the plan as submitted.

Fruck gave a summary of the application as it was submitted. Bruno asked when the HOP work would get done. Fruck said Phase 2. Bruno said the improvements are not shown on the plan. Fruck said there is a note on the plan, but no design. Bruno said no design because it has not been started yet, is that correct. Fruck said that is correct. Russek asked if they would have the HOP in hand when they started Phase 2. Fruck said the off-site improvements would be tied to Phase 2. Kramer asked if the Township would need to modify its local road permit for the intersection. Russek said he would check into that. Bruno asked if there was a means to secure for the off-site improvements. Pektor said they need to get an estimate from PennDOT. Vangeli said the traffic is a significant concern. Blanchfield said the Fire Department comments

recommend a fire hydrant and widening of the walkway between the buildings to allow for fire truck access. Walker said he is still not comfortable with the amount of traffic, and asked if there has been a study done on the impact to the intersection, which is already a problem. Vangeli said the traffic that runs through the new developments to Bethman Road is also a concern and they should look at those intersections. After hearing feedback from the Planning Commission, Bruno said the applicant could either provide an extension of time and submit the traffic information being requested for the Commission to review, or they could take their chances on moving forward with a potential negative vote. Preston said they would provide the extension time until the end of July.

The Commission voted to table the plan as submitted, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant provide information about the traffic impact of the phased plan, as proposed.
2. The applicant provide information on how the phasing plan would include financing for the offsite improvements.
3. The applicant provide a signed extension letter.

Motion: Tabled, Moved by Robert Walker, Seconded by Karin Vangeli. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker
Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins

PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Kramer said they had received a conditional use application for the G J Mills project but it was not placed on the agenda because there was considerable information missing from the submission. The Township received a signed extension letter that day until July 31, 2019.

The Zoning workshop was scheduled for Wednesday April 17, but TPD was available to hold the meeting on Tuesday April 16 because they would be here to address the Rec Board. A draft has been distributed to the committee members and comments have been received from 3 members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Motion: Adjourn, Moved by Robert Walker, Seconded by Karin Vangeli. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Kicska, Vangeli, Walker
Commission Members Absent: Lammi, Wilkins