

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2016 - 7:00 PM
PALMER TOWNSHIP LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM - 1 WELLER PLACE, PALMER, PA

The April meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. with the following in attendance: Robert Blanchfield (Chairman), Robert Lammi (Vice Chairman), Tom Grube, and Jeffrey Kicska. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cynthia Carman, Engineer Ralph Russek and Attorney Ryan Fields. Chairman Blanchfield opened the meeting by leading those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

1. Minutes of March 2016 Meeting

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Thomas Grube. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi
Commission Members Absent: Wilkins

NEW BUSINESS

2. Rau Lane Residential - Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plan
Rau Lane & Mountain View Avenue - M8-11-13F
LDR District
Request by Jaindl Land Company

DISCUSSION

Present on behalf of the applicant were Jason Engelhardt from Langan Engineering, and David and Luke Jaindl. Chairman Blanchfield said the item on tonight's agenda is a 10-acre tract of land where they are proposing a subdivision of 15 lots for single-family homes.

Engelhardt said, the 10 acre tract of land is surrounded by housing developments on all sides. It is zoned LDR as are the developments around it. We met with the township with our conceptual plan. Engelhardt said the roads have infrastructure in place. The homes will look similar to the houses that are around them. Any impervious cover is only associated with the new homes and their driveways. Engelhardt said the storm water basin is larger than originally expected and that is due to a 10 acre off site area to the east, that drains onto this property. They needed to accommodate that 10 acres of drainage and infiltrate it on this site and then into the drainage system. Engelhardt reviewed the 10 acres to the east of the property on the plan and stated they will meet all the water quality requirements.

Engelhardt said, overall, it is a very straight forward subdivision. They may need to extend the existing sewer run based on the Township Engineer's comments, but utilities are all there. The stormwater management system is the only infrastructure they will be adding. Engelhardt reviewed the stormwater pipe and surface swale on the plan. Engelhardt said the stormwater basin size is due to

the infiltration basin area. They have to reduce the loading ratio in the basin, so they needed to make it larger to infiltrate. Lammi said, there is an existing sinkhole on the site now. Engelhardt said yes, they are working on that right now.

Blanchfield asked if they reviewed the Pidcock review letter and if they are willing to comply with everything in the letter. Engelhardt said yes. Blanchfield asked about the drainage and slopes of the front yards. Engelhardt said the intent is they will drain to the roads in front of the houses. The roof areas will be piped to the rear of the property to the detention basin. Blanchfield noted the township didn't want to take responsibility for the basin and asked who will maintain it. David Jaindl said they would propose the township take ownership of the basin and we would make a contribution in lieu of maintaining it. Lammi said the Board of Supervisors would have to make that decision, but if the township takes it over, there is no access to get into the basin. Engelhardt said there is an easement on the one end of the property and we will need to provide another access on the other end of the property. There is enough land to provide that easement on the end parcel. Engelhardt said he also believes the fence issue would need to be discussed with the Board of Supervisors as well. Lammi said yes, based on the location of the basin in the back of the homes, from a safety perspective, there would be a concern for the kids in the neighborhood. Lammi said he would want to see it fenced and he believes the other two basins in the area are fenced.

Kicska asked if the sidewalks would adjoin the existing sidewalks in the neighborhood. Engelhardt said yes. Blanchfield said the engineer letter notes to take into consideration eliminating runoff from flowing onto adjoining properties. Engelhardt reviewed the plan and said the system is designed to manage a large amount of water. They could soften the bend in the pipe to make sure it doesn't end up in anyone's backyard. Blanchfield asked about a volunteer traffic contribution. Jaindl said he thought that would be discussed at the next level. Carman explained that typical voluntary traffic contributions are \$1,000 per dwelling unit. Blanchfield questioned the setback for the driveway on Lot 13. Engelhardt said they could flip the driveway. Blanchfield asked if there were any issues with the Geotechnical report. Russek, said the Geotechnical Engineer supports the three waiver requests. Blanchfield questioned the note in the township engineer letter about acceptability of emergency access. Carman said, there is no problem with access, but the fire commissioner will want a discussion about hydrant locations. Blanchfield questioned existing fence encroachments. Jaindl said they will deal with the fences of existing property owners directly with the owners. Blanchfield asked for details on the waiver requests. Engelhardt said all three waivers are related to stormwater management. In the spillway they are asking for a synthetic liner, which is a different type of surface material. Engelhardt said the other two are related to the base and bottom of the basin. Russek said they are okay with the three waiver requests and so is the geotechnical engineer.

With no further questions from the Board, it was opened up for questions from the public.

Barbara Davitt, 1421 Toursdale Drive, said she was concerned about the fence encroachment because she is one of those property owners. Jaindl said they will be out to look at the properties to see how far it encroaches. Engelhardt said large hedges also extend over the property line. Davitt said she had runoff from the agricultural property that left debris in her lawn. She wants to make sure she won't have runoff onto her lawn.

William Kessler, 1432 Stones Crossing Road, showed on the plan where an active sinkhole is currently on the property. Kessler said no water comes out on the property now. The township has a catch basin that is draining into the sinkhole. He wanted to know how they will fix the sinkhole. Jaindl said they will have to fix it properly. Carman explained the township does have a sinkhole expert that will make sure it is fixed properly. Kessler asked who will maintain the detention pond. Jaindl said they are proposing to dedicate it to the township. Kessler asked if it will be fenced. Jaindl said yes. Kessler said he is concerned about the sinkhole.

Eric Binder, 1401 Toursdale Drive, said he is concerned with the grading on the property where it already has a low point. Is there going to be a lot of grading that will cause direct runoff, especially during the construction phase. Engelhardt said everything will be picked up in the stormwater management system or the existing drainage. Binder asked about the length of construction. Jaindl said if they receive all approvals they would start this year, but build out will depend on the sale and construction of the homes, probably an 18 month to 2 year period. Engelhardt said the erosion control plan is well thought out and the earth work is a short term process. The grading and basin will be done fairly quickly, then the homes will be built. Binder asked if they will be closing roads during construction. Engelhardt said they will be running pipe outside the right-of-way and it should have little impact on the roads. Binder said he is currently removing the fence on his property that was left from the previous owner, but there also are large arborvitae along the back of his property. Jaindl requested Mr. Binder's contact information to be able to discuss further.

Sam Bodder, 1440 Stones Crossing Road, said the sinkhole is at the foot of his property. Bodder claimed that 45 years ago an Easton football player went in that sinkhole and walked all the way down to the Lehigh River. Bodder said many years ago the farmer filled it in, and it sank again. Bodder felt they shouldn't try to improve what mother nature has done.

Derrick Eutsey, 1450 Stones Crossing, said he was concerned about the sinkhole and the grading. He has trees that have grown in this area on the back of his property. At his old home, when they built new houses, it created water issues on his property. Could they ensure him this is going to remain grass behind his property. Engelhardt said yes. They are proposing right-of-way access on the new end lot, not on his property.

Andy Cook, 1438 Stones Crossing, said his property is depressed in the back yard and is kind of swampy now. Engelhardt said the Township

Engineer reviewed their grading plans and any drainage from their backyards will now drain into the new basin.

Derrick Eutsey asked if sealing the sinkhole is part of the plan. Engelhardt said the sinkhole has to be fully investigated with the Township Engineer and the Township Geotechnical Engineer. Eutsey said if they fill it in, it will find a way to become a sinkhole in another area. Lammi said, this area and the whole Lehigh Valley is prone to sinkholes, we have a lot of experience in taking care of sinkholes. Lammi said, it is a science. They have to find the throat of the sinkhole and that is where they fill it with concrete. If they don't find the throat, the water would go somewhere else. It is a big investigative procedure. Eutsey asked if it will all be done prior to the development. The sinkhole is there and is taking care of the water now. Engelhardt said they will have to address it with the Geotechnical Engineer and the Township Engineer. It will have to be fixed properly. Blanchfield explained the engineering companies that specialize in sinkhole remediation and how it works.

Mike Phillips, 3971 Rau Lane, asked why there is one additional home on his side of the development and what type of homes are going to be built. Jaindl said they will be consistent with what is already in the neighborhood. The lot sizes are governed by the township zoning requirements. Jaindl said he will sell the lot to the property owner who will build their home. Jaindl said he would imagine the home size would be around 2400 square feet. Phillips asked the Commission how they could vote on this tonight without knowing the size of the homes. He is concerned with the way the water is going to travel. Engelhardt said it is designed for the pipe to take the water out of the neighborhood underground and a swale will be on top of it.

Eric Binder asked if there is a remediation plan if there is an issue with the water after the fact. Jaindl said they are responsible to do it right and it is inspected by the Township Engineer. They will also have an 18 month maintenance period that they are responsible for. If they create a situation, they will address it. Jaindl said the township controls what they have to do and makes sure it is constructed and working properly.

Rose Cichocki, 3961 Rau Lane, said she doesn't want to be jammed in. She would like to see not as many houses, she thinks it would look nicer. Jaindl said the lots are sized in accordance with the township ordinance. Cichocki asked if there would be a playground. Jaindl said no, there is no room.

William Kessler asked who the old owner was before Jaindl bought it. Jaindl said it was the Diocese of Allentown. Kessler asked if there were any deed restrictions with the property. Jaindl said there are no deed restrictions, they have to abide by the municipal ordinances and rules.

Derrick Eutsey said the past couple years the black gnats have been very bad and what is the plan to address the water in the detention basin as far as insect control. Engelhardt said it is a shallow infiltration facility, water won't lay in the basin for long periods of time. Jaindl said they have to design it according to the

law and the township makes sure they do it right. Jaindl said it is all based on state and federal regulations. Eutsey said the state funding stopped for spraying for black flies, this body of water will make it worse. Jaindl said they will look into the black gnat situation, but it appears that is a regional problem.

Lammi said he has been involved with planning since the 70's with the Township Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors and also with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, and he knows these detention basins work. The engineers work out any issues to make them work.

Andy Cook said, you may be comfortable with the system, but can the township handle the maintenance. Lammi said most definitely. Eutsey said it didn't happen in Parkview Estates, the water laid in our yards.

Sam Bodder said in the early 70's they put a drain in Stones Crossing that went into the catch basin. It used to be an open ditch that went into a sinkhole. Then they put in concrete and ran a cement pipe half way down his property where it drained. He bought some pipe and extended that drainage farther back on his property. He hopes they won't allow open ditches. Who will be responsible for tying in the old properties? Jaindl said they will have to take a look at the piping on Mr. Bodder's property.

Eutsey said he has the same situation. His driveway goes down an incline and a pipe catches the water and takes it into the back yard. Lammi said the engineers will look at how to get that water into this basin. Engelhardt said anything that is getting on to this property will get into the new basin.

Lammi said, obviously, there are still some engineering issues that have to be resolved. From a planning perspective, all issues have been resolved according to the township zoning ordinance. Lammi said a lot of these things will be dealt with at the Board of Supervisors level. He believes they can recommend it for approval to the Board of Supervisors at this time.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the Rau Lane Residential - Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plan to the Board of Supervisors with the following conditions: 1. The comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated April 8, 2016 are satisfactorily addressed; 2. The Township Departmental comments dated April 8, 2016 are satisfactorily addressed; 3. The comments of the Geotechnical Engineer's letter dated April 11, 2016 are satisfactorily addressed; 4. The Developer's Engineer and the Township's Engineer resolve issues discussed tonight regarding water on adjoining properties on the East and West side of the property; 5. The following waivers are approved by the Board of Supervisors: §165-63.K(2)(c) – requiring emergency spillways be constructed of reinforced concrete, mortared in place riprap or concrete rubble; use of synthetic matting is proposed; §165-63.K(3) – limiting the maximum interior slope of the detention basin to 4 to 1; a 3 to 1 slope is proposed; and §165-63.K(5) – requiring a minimum 2 percent basin bottom slope; a flat (zero slope) bottom basin is proposed for infiltration purposes; 6. The recreation contribution is approved by the Board of Supervisors as a fee in lieu of

contribution in the amount of \$22,500; 7. A voluntary traffic contribution is addressed to the satisfaction of the Board of Supervisors.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Thomas Grube. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi
Commission Members Absent: Wilkins

PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Carman said the Township had received 11 responses to the Comprehensive Plan RFP and there are some very good proposals. They have narrowed them down to four candidates that we will be interviewing at the end of April. Carman said they also created a Facebook page, so please "like" the page.

Carman said they did receive plans for the Werner project for tonight's meeting but they still have stormwater issues they need to address. It should be back on next month's agenda.

Carman said the township was awarded a grant for \$57,000 to upgrade six trail crossings on the bike path. Blanchfield asked who designs the crossings. Carman said, we did a preliminary design when we submitted the grant, but PennDOT has a coordinator that finalizes the designs.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

Carman said she wanted to introduce Kathy Sciascia who was in the audience. Carman said she is considering volunteering to become a member of the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Motion: Adjourn, Moved by Thomas Grube, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grube, Kicska, Lammi

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda DeGerolamo