

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2015 - 7:00 PM
PALMER TOWNSHIP LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM - 1 WELLER PLACE, PALMER, PA

The November meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. with the following in attendance: Robert Blanchfield (Chairman), Robert Lammi (Vice Chairman), Ron Grandinetti, and Jeffrey Kicska. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cynthia Carman, Solicitor Ryan Fields and Engineer Ralph Russek. Chairman Blanchfield opened the meeting by leading those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

1. Minutes of September 2015 Meeting

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

2. Minutes of October 2015 Meeting

Deferred until next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Northwood Manor - Sketch Plan

Van Buren Road & Northwood Avenue - L8-5-2 & L8-6-1
MDR & HDR District
Request by CMC Development

DISCUSSION

Charles Tuskes of CMC Development, Lewis Rauch of Lehigh Engineering and Attorney Joseph Piperato, were present with a sketch plan for Northwood Manor.

The plan proposes the creation of a 135-lot subdivision with three storm water management areas. The subdivision is proposed on a 73-acre tract on the east side of Van Buren Road, north and south of Northwood Avenue. On the north side of Northwood Avenue, an existing 14.7-acre tract is proposed to be subdivided into 22 lots with two storm water management areas. On the south side of Northwood Avenue, an existing 58.5-acre tract is proposed to be subdivided into 113 lots with one storm water management area. The northern tract is located within the Medium Density Residential (MDR) zoning district. The southern tract is located within the Low Density Residential (LDR) zoning district, however a petition has been submitted to rezone this tract to MDR.

Rauch reviewed the plan as well as what they were requesting/proposing for the

area. Proposed lot sizes are 15,000 sq. ft. minimum and this will be the same type of construction as the Maple Shades development. Rauch spoke of the stub road at Highland Drive which will connect into this new subdivision. This will be the same for the stub road from Fox Run that will connect to the northern portion of this development. There will be a detention area proposed in the northern section. The corner of Van Buren Road and Northwood Avenue will be reserved for storm water management and they will keep a buffer across the northern boundary.

The Township Engineer's comment letter was reviewed and discussed. Discussion centered on the existing stormwater issues in this area. Tuskes noted they will be meeting with township staff on this issue. Lammi felt having the detention pond and storm water management there will definitely help this area. Northwood Avenue and Van Buren Road are both state roads. Rauch noted they have not met with PennDOT as of yet but they know they have to. Tuskes noted that the entire development would have an HOA but the streets will be public. There is no recreation proposed so the developer will pay fees in lieu of land donation.

There being no further questions or comments from staff or Commission members, Blanchfield asked if there were any questions from the audience.

Vince Menegus, 3304 Sherwood Road, wanted to let the developer and engineers know that there is a small stormwater drain on Northwood Avenue which runs into the middle of this land and there are sinkholes in this area. The developer will have to capture the water and have it go in a pipe. He also asked what the time frame was for development. Tuskes noted this is a significant process so hopefully they would be able to start in 9 months or so.

Gerald Hetzel, 14 Northgate Blvd, informed the developer that his roadway gets flooded every time there is a heavy rain. It has been a problem for years. There is a low spot at the end of the land that lets the water run into roadway.

Dean Cooley, 102 Lower Way Road, explained there is a bad water problem that travels from the rear of the homes along Lower Way into the field. There are no berms/etc., it is very flat.

Blanchfield thanked everyone for their comments. The Commission thanked the applicant for coming before them to explain what is being proposed.

As this was a sketch plan, there was no action needed.

4. Werner Enterprises - Sketch Plan
1460 Tatamy Road - K8-5-2
PO/IP District
Request by Werner Enterprises

DISCUSSION

Attorney Joseph Fitzpatrick and Paul Szewczak of Liberty Engineering were present with a sketch plan for Werner Enterprises.

The plan proposes the construction of a 67,005 square foot tractor-trailer training and maintenance facility with 180 car parking spaces, 75 tractor spaces, 169 trailer spaces and a 2.75-acre outdoor training course on a 26.05-acre tract of land located in the Planned Office/Industrial Park (PO/IP) zoning district on the west side of Tatamy Road between McFadden Road and Newlins Mill Road. The site is currently improved with a single-family home and garages, which are proposed to be maintained on a subdivided 2.83-acre lot. Additional barn structures on the property are proposed to be demolished.

Fitzpatrick informed everyone that the construction managers for the project would be Blue Rock Construction. He stated that Werner Enterprises is the largest and one of the most professional transportation companies in the U.S. He stressed that this is not a warehouse nor is it a distribution center, as there will be no deliveries from this location. At this location they will professionally train and educate drivers on all aspects of driving for Werner.

Szewczak noted Werner liked this property especially due to its close proximity to the new interchange. The exterior of the building will look like a 3 story office building. There will be bays in the rear of the building to maintain tractors and trailers but there will not be any fueling stations. There will be approximately 50 trucks on-site every day, 120 employees, 24 hours a day. He was asked why there is so much parking. Szewczak responded that there are multiple classrooms, and multiple trainees who park their personal vehicles on-site and then take a trailer for a job and their vehicles could be there for weeks. Werner drivers in the region could go there for repair and as they do have mandatory rest periods, this would be a place where they can go. It is not a truck terminal. There are simulators and they do actual training.

The Township engineer's letter was reviewed and discussed. Szewczak noted that as far as the stormwater they need to maintain the watersheds. There will be a pond in back due to the water that runs that way. It will sustain a 100-year storm and they all interconnect except for the one in back since the water runs another way. He also noted there are two parcels in the Industrial Park whose water run-off flows onto this property. All ponds will have mechanical pumps with back-up generators. Lammi noted there are a lot of sinkholes in this area and asked if they were using any type of fabric on the bottom of the ponds. Szewczak noted they are working with a geotech specialist and they will see what he recommends. He thought the pond in the back may be lined.

Carman stated that staff had met previously with Atty. Fitzpatrick and she was under the impression that there would be training on how to do the maintenance, but not actually doing it. The training would be permitted by right but to actually do the repairs, according to our ordinance, would require conditional use approval, as this aspect falls under the definition of a trucking terminal. The conditional use request could run concurrently with the plan.

There being no further questions or comments from the Commission or staff, Blanchfield asked if there were any questions from the audience.

Chuck Diefenderfer, 2916 Hay Terrace asked if there is going to be a berm at the property where this project adjoins residences. He was told yes.

Lammi asked if they realized there is a utility tower in the rear of this property. Szewczak said they were aware of it and they have been in touch with the electric company. They will probably be installing barriers around this tower.

As far as truck traffic, all trucks coming in from Tatamy Road would need to be given entry at the gate. There would be a car lane as well which would have to be accessed by a card system. This facility would be a secure area and there would be a guard at the front gate at all times.

Tatamy Road is a State road. As far as improvements, they would like to add a southbound deceleration lane. They will be getting started with PennDOT soon.

The Commission thanked the applicant for coming before them to explain what is being proposed.

As this was a sketch plan, there was no action needed.

5. Conditional Use Application - Industrial Use in HI District
2916 William Penn Highway - M8-8-1A
HI District
Request by Eastern Exterior Wall Systems

DISCUSSION

John Marcon of Eastern Exterior Wall Systems and Attorney John Hacker were present seeking approval for a conditional use request for an industrial use in the HI District. Hacker noted that there are two uses in this building, one a fabrication business and one for the storage of metals. Mr. Marcon's company processes and assembles materials into pre-fab wall panels. He also noted that the total area for this property is 15 acres but they only lease 84,900 square feet of the building. This is a low hazard business.

Marcon reviewed how the wall panels are processed and noted that the usual size for these panels is 30 x 10 feet and they are then shipped and installed at the building site, most of which are local. Business hours are 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with some overtime which also includes weekends. There is no second or third shift and he has approximately 40 employees.

Tractor trailer traffic was reviewed. They have one or two trucks a week that come in to deliver the raw materials needed to fabricate these panels. They have small box vans a few times a week with smaller deliveries and then they

deliver once a day to the clients. Asked if they have any wide-load deliveries, Marcon responded yes but rarely.

Lammi then discussed the code issues and fire incident at the facility. There was lengthy discussion about the sprinkler system not being in working order, fire extinguishers not being usable, and the need for fire-rated doors as well as any electrical work that needed to be done to bring the building up to code. Marcon stated their original lease terminates at the end of the year. With most these issues being corrected, and the remaining being worked on, they had decided to re-sign their lease. The owner is committed to re-activate the present sprinkler system. Blanchfield asked about the various loops to the system and about converting it to a dry system since some parts of the building are not heated. Marcon noted he was not aware of this but the full system is being re-activated. They are still providing a fire watch, 24 hours a day until they get their permanent CO

Marcon noted the fire was in an out building not in the large building. Lammi noted he was informed that the sprinkler system had been shut off at the street so there was no water in the lines. What if they needed to use hydrants, is there any problem with them? Marcon said no the problem was actually that the hydrants were not marked. They are all working now and the fire department connection was also not marked and could not be used. He also noted that the north side of the building has adequate pressure and there are two non-active hydrants that need to be replaced. He wasn't sure what the owner was doing with this. He noted they had a walk through with all parties involved. Attorney Hacker stated he felt the sprinkler system is not needed for this type of use.

Fields noted this is before the Commission for the conditional use request, this is what you vote on and you can suggest conditions which the Board of Supervisors may choose to follow up with.

Blanchfield asked about buffering towards the bike path. Carman noted that the materials that are stored outside are not this applicant's. Marcon noted there are three outbuildings which are all being demolished. Carman noted in regards to the buffer yards the requirement is a minimum 20 foot wide buffer yard between any newly developed or expanded area of commercial use.

Lammi stated he understands they are working towards being in compliance but is very upset that the fire department went into a building that was not sprinklered. He also noted that it is a good idea changing the sprinkler system to a dry system. Marcon noted this is a condition for the recent re-signing of the lease. Lammi stated he sees progress is being made and he feels more comfortable.

Blanchfield asked if there were any further questions or comments by the members or staff. Seeing none he called for a motion.

The Commission recommended approval of the conditional use request by the Board of Supervisors, subject to the following conditions: that they continue to

work on all the items that were discussed and to secure a certificate of occupancy by the end of 2015.

Motion: Approve w/ Conditions, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grandinetti, Kicska, Lammi
Commission Members Absent: Grube, Wilkins

6. Palmer Point - Preliminary/Final Land Development and Lot Consolidation Plan
3100 Charlotte Avenue - L8-25-2, L8SE3-10-17, L8SE3-10-18, L8SE3-10-19, L8SE4-10-1, L8SE4-10-2, L8SE4-11-1, L8SE4-11-2
LI / Proposed HDR District
Request by Greystone Capital, Inc.

DISCUSSION

Lou Pektor of Greystone Capital and Kevin Fruck of Comerstone Engineering were present with a preliminary/final land development and lot consolidation plan for Palmer Point Apartments. Fruck gave a brief history of the project.

The plan proposes the consolidation of eight existing lots and the development of a 13-building apartment complex containing 312 dwelling units on a 27± acre tract. The site is located in the Light Industrial (LI) zoning district. An application has been submitted to rezone a portion of the property to High Density Residential (HDR). A concurrent conditional use application has been submitted to use the density bonus provisions of the Traditional Village option.

The Township Engineer's letter was reviewed and discussed. Russek noted that their letter had only been issued that day due to time constraints. They are recommending approval when the comments have been addressed and they support the waiver and deferral requests. All comments are clarifications and housekeeping items; there is nothing significant that needs to be resolved. He did note the comment about the sanitary discharge; they need to check to see if it is the best place for this proposal.

Russek also noted that for stormwater management they are using basins, underground detention basins, swales, etc. It is a complicated plan and they just need to check the notes, etc. He noted they are satisfied and in compliance with all recommendations.

Pektor informed the Commission that he had met with Tom Stitt, owner of the condos that are adjacent to this property to clear up some concerns they had regarding buffering.

They are requesting a deferral for the sidewalk west towards the church property from their driveway. He noted that they met with Township staff regarding an 8-foot wide concrete path which could be used as a bike path and could connect with the bike path that is being developed in the Maple Shades area.

Pektor stated they are planning for the demolition of the building and will supply the township with the environmental report.

There being no further questions or comments from the Commission members or staff, Blanchfield asked if there were any comments from the audience.

Charles Diefenderfer, 2916 Hay Terrace, asked about the consolidation of lots, if this included the lot with the billboard on it. Pektor noted that the seven combined lots will stay separate from the main development lot and noted that the billboard will stay on this lot, which is in the LI District. He also explained that he was able to acquire those lots subject to the billboard remaining.

The Commission recommended approval of the Preliminary/Final Land Development plan by the Board of Supervisors, subject to the following conditions:

1. Comments of the Township Engineer's dated November 10, 2015 letter are satisfactorily addressed.
2. Township Departmental comments dated November 6, 2015 are satisfactorily addressed.
3. Any comments of the Township's geotechnical engineer are satisfactorily addressed.
4. Any comments of the Township's lighting consultant are satisfactorily addressed.
5. Any comments of the Township's environmental consultant are satisfactorily addressed.
6. Waivers and deferrals, as requested, are approved by the Board of Supervisors.
7. The conditional use request is approved by the Board of Supervisors.
8. The proposed zoning map amendment is approved by the Board of Supervisors.
9. The recreation contribution/fee is addressed to the satisfaction of the Board of Supervisors.
10. The need for any traffic improvement or voluntary traffic contribution is addressed to the satisfaction of the Board of Supervisors.

Motion: Approve w/ Conditions, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grandinetti, Kicska, Lammi
Commission Members Absent: Grube, Wilkins

7. Conditional Use Application - Density Bonus under Traditional Village Option
3100 Charlotte Avenue - L8-25-2
Proposed HDR District
Request by Palmer Pointe, LP

DISCUSSION

Lou Pektor was present to explain the Conditional Use request to use the density bonus as allowed under the Traditional Village Option of the Zoning

Ordinance. He informed the Commission that they are proposing to do a significant amount of off-site improvements at the intersection of Greenwood and Hartley Avenues. They are proposing to install traffic lights and turning lanes as well as correcting existing stormwater issues at an estimated cost of about \$1 million. The density bonus would allow them 62 additional units, taking them from 250 to 312.

The Commission recommended approval of the Conditional Use application by the Board of Supervisors.

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

8. Zoning Map Amendment - LI to HDR
3100 Charlotte Avenue - L8-25-2
LI District to HDR District
Request by Greystone Capital, Inc.

DISCUSSION

Lou Pektor was present to discuss the request to rezone the property at 3100 Charlotte Avenue from LI to HDR. Carman noted that the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission was supportive of this request.

The property was formerly used for light manufacturing and the former industrial building remains on the property. The subject property is being proposed for development by Greystone Capital for a 312-unit luxury apartment community, for which a preliminary/final land development plan is currently under review.

The Commission recommended approval of the Zoning Map Amendment by the Board of Supervisors, subject to the following conditions:

1. The conditional use request submitted for this project to allow a 25% density bonus is approved by the Board of Supervisors.
2. The preliminary/final plan proceeds to the Board of Supervisors for approval concurrently with the request for rezoning.

Motion: Approve w/ Conditions, Moved by Ronald Grandinetti, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Grandinetti, Kicska, Lammi
Commission Members Absent: Grube, Wilkins

PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Carman thanked the Commission for a good meeting and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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