

PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2021 - 7:00 PM
PALMER TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL MEETING ROOM, 3 WELLER PLACE (LOWER
LEVEL), PALMER PA 18045

The October 2021 meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 at 7:00 PM with the following in attendance: Chairman Robert Blanchfield, Vice Chairman Richard Wilkins, Jeff Kicska, Robert Lammi, Robert Walker, Michael Brett, and Chuck Diefenderfer. Also in attendance were Solicitor Charles Bruno, Ron Gawlik of The Pidcock Company, and Planning Director Cynthia Carman Kramer.

1. Minutes of September Public Meeting

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Robert Walker. Passed. 6-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Diefenderfer, Kicska, Lammi, Walker
Commission Members voting Abstain: Wilkins

OLD BUSINESS

2. Rosemont East - Preliminary/Final Land Development and Lot Line Consolidation Plan

3106 - 3142 William Penn Highway - M8NE2 -11-3, M8NE2-11-2 & M8NE2-11-1
HDR & GC District / WPH Overlay
Request by Stephen & Teresa Selvaggio

DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were Dan Witczak and Chris Geary of Acela Architects + Engineers, attorney Steven Goudsouzian, and Stephen Selvaggio.

The plans propose the consolidation of two existing tracts totaling approximately 1.8 acres and the construction of a 7,000 square foot mixed use building consisting of 3,500 square feet of residential space on the second floor and 2,660 square feet of retail space on the first floor, with a "residual area" of 840 square feet.

The property is located on the south side of William Penn Highway and is split between the General Commercial (GC) and High Density Residential (HDR) districts. The entire tract is within the William Penn Highway overlay district. The existing two buildings on the subject site are used for a combination of commercial and residential uses. The proposed uses of the new building as depicted are permitted by right under the WPH overlay. The Comprehensive Plan recommends updating provisions within the William Penn overlay that would encourage lot consolidation and larger-scale development within the corridor, which recommendations are currently being considered as part of the zoning ordinance rewrite. The proposed plans are consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Witzcak explained they have designed the property as best they can to fit inside the site. Stormwater issues and other issues have been resolved with the Zoning Hearing Board and PennDOT. Witzcak explained that the existing site was non-compliant. The new parking lot far exceeds the requirement. They identified better parking configurations, loading zones, new striping, improved the exit driveway and traffic circulation pattern from the site, new sidewalks and road widening.

Vehicles will no longer be able to access out to Kingwood Street. Blanchfield stated that the Fire Commissioner was okay with the elimination of an emergency connection to Warwick Street as long as the access between the canopy of the existing building and the exterior wall of the new building is at least 20 feet wide.

Witzcak explained that there is existing fencing and landscaping to provide a buffer at the rear and they will augment this and extend it to the end of the property and along the east side of the property.

Geary explained that PennDOT wanted to continue the same width street to allow for the center left turn lane plus a travel lane and 8 foot shoulder. The road improvements stop at the existing utility pole. A deferral for the installation of curbing and road improvements to this 36-foot section is requested until the pole is moved.

Wilkins questioned if there will be any loss of lanes. Geary explained that no roadway is being lost.

Blanchfield clarified that if the zoning update doesn't go through, the developer would be restricted in the amount of space that could be used for commercial use on the first floor. Goudsouzian discussed the option to request a variance in this circumstance. If there is a recommendation of approval, Bruno would recommend occupancy be limited to what is approved under the current zoning, if the rezoning is not approved.

Geary stated they are only seeking two deferrals. The waiver requests were withdrawn since they are now in compliance.

Blanchfield stated it was determined that the signal timing modification would not be requested at this time.

Witzcak explained that the stormwater will infiltrate into the ground. Previously, an emergency overflow pipe system to the west had been discussed. Geary explained that it was determined that the pipe isn't needed. Lammi questioned the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission letter dated May 28, 2021. Geary explained they are no longer tied into the pipe ownership issues. Lammi stated a letter from LVPC would be needed to correct the inconsistencies. Blanchfield questioned if the stormwater management is entirely infiltration. Geary explained it is an underground infiltration system under the parking area.

Gawlik stated Pidcock is recommending engineering approval subject to a few

minor comments.

Blanchfield stated there are some policy issues, such as recreation fees and voluntary traffic contributions, that will need to be determined with the Board of Supervisors. There are no geotechnical concerns and the Township's Electrical Engineer is okay with the site lighting.

Diefenderfer questioned if there was an intention of building anything in the area on the right side of the building. Geary explained there is no plan to build there due to parking limitations.

The Commission voted to recommend approval of the Preliminary/Final Land Development and Lot Line Consolidation Plan by the Board of Supervisors subject to the following conditions:

1. Comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated October 6, 2021 are satisfactorily addressed.
2. Township Departmental comments dated October 12, 2021 are satisfactorily addressed.
3. Requested deferrals are approved by the Board of Supervisors.
4. All conditions of the April 13, 2017 Zoning Hearing Board decision letter are incorporated by reference.
5. An updated review letter is received from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission to confirm that previous comments have been addressed.
6. Use of the property and occupancy of the building are limited to the extent of what is permitted under the current zoning ordinance until such time as the new zoning ordinance is approved.
7. Recreation fees and voluntary traffic contribution are determined by the Board of Supervisors.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Jeff Kicska. Passed. 7-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Diefenderfer, Kicska, Lammi, Walker, Wilkins

NEW BUSINESS

3. Chrin Southwest Quadrant - Lot Line Adjustment Plan
1551 Van Buren Rd & Main St - K8-5A-1 & J8-27-1
NEB & MSC Zoning Districts
Request by Charles Chrin Real Estate Trust

DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were Andy Woods of Hanover Engineering, attorney Steven Goudsouzian, and Tom Beauduy and Gregory Chrin of Charles Chrin Real Estate Trust.

The plan proposes the relocation of the lot line between two existing lots. The existing Lot 1 contains 61.4 acres and is proposed to be increased to 90.8 acres. It is currently vacant agricultural land and is not proposed for development at this time. The existing Lot 2 is currently 42.7 acres and is proposed to be

reduced to 13 acres. It is proposed for continued use as an industrial use associated with the storage and repair of equipment, containers and vehicles for a commercial waste hauling business. The lots are located on the east side of Van Buren Road within the Main Street Commercial (MSC) and the North End Business (NEB) zoning districts. The Comprehensive Plan designates this area for non-residential use.

Woods explained this property is situated with Route 33 to the east, Main Street to the north, and Van Buren Road to the west. This plan is simply to move the lot line between the two existing properties.

Blanchfield stated that Pidcock has no objection to the change of scale waiver.

A discussion in regards to the deferral of the requirement to install sidewalk along Van Buren Road and Main Street took place. The applicant explained they are seeking a deferral only until such time as Lot 1 is developed, so that they could coordinate all improvements to be done simultaneously along Van Buren Road. Gawlik had no objection to that approach, as the final configuration of the land development plan for Lot 1 might not be known at this time. Bruno indicated that if the deferral is granted, the sidewalk for Lot 2 needs to be depicted on the plan and if a change to it needs to be made later, it can be. The sidewalk needs to be recorded on the plan so that this property owner's commitment is expressed. Wilkins questioned sidewalks to the west. Lammi commented on other development that will be happening soon in the surrounding area. Kramer explained there is a crosswalk across Van Buren Road at Hollo Road and there is a small section of sidewalk that comes up to the southern property line. Woods said they will show the sidewalk tying into that.

The developer is asking for a deferral for both sidewalk and curb along Main Street. Lammi questioned if there was an issue with PennDOT and the curbing in this area. Goudsouzian explained PennDOT might determine that they do not want the curbing when the time comes for development.

Gawlik explained that the existing right-of-way on Van Buren Road that is shown on this plan might not be consistent with previously submitted plans and will coordinate with the applicant's engineer to clear this up.

Woods stated they will indicate existing utilities. Gawlik expressed concern that utilities used by Lot 2 will still remain on lot after the lot line adjustment.

Woods stated that there was a submittal to LVPC, but no response yet.

Diefenderfer questioned if the existing old farmhouse building is on Lot 1. Wood stated the house is on a separate lot and is not part of this plan. Kicska stated that property would be affected if the sidewalk goes through. Lammi questioned if it would remain there if a developer purchases Lot 1 and if the developer would purchase that as well. Wood indicated that would be up to the developer. Goudsouzian stated the applicant is not making a determination now to combine the lots with the house and land. It would be dependent on what the buyer wants.

The Commission voted to recommend approval of the Lot Line Adjustment Plan by the Board of Supervisors subject to the following conditions:

1. Comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated October 6, 2021 are satisfactorily addressed.
2. Township Departmental comments dated October 7, 2021 are satisfactorily addressed.
3. Requested waivers and deferrals are approved by the Board of Supervisors. It is recommended that the requested deferral for sidewalk construction be approved for Lot 2 until such time as Lot 1 is developed. The sidewalk needs to be shown on the plan.
4. A review letter is received from Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and any comments are satisfactorily addressed.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Richard Wilkins, Seconded by Robert Walker. Passed. 7-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Diefenderfer, Kicska, Lammi, Walker, Wilkins

PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Kramer stated there will be an internal meeting of the Zoning Committee on October 28, 2021. The draft with comments from the committee members will be available for review the week before the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 PM.

Motion: Adjourn, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Richard Wilkins. Passed. 7-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Diefenderfer, Kicska, Lammi, Walker, Wilkins