

**PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 - 7:00 PM  
PALMER TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL MEETING ROOM, 3 WELLER PLACE (LOWER  
LEVEL), PALMER PA 18045

The September 2022 meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 7:00 PM with the following in attendance: Chairman Robert Blanchfield, Vice-Chairman Chuck Diefenderfer, Jeff Kicska, Robert Lammi, Robert Walker, Robin Aydelotte and Richard Wilkins. Also in attendance were Solicitor Charles Bruno, Ron Gawlik of The Pidcock Company, Kent Baird, Director of Planning, and Director of Community Development, Cynthia Carman Kramer.

1. Minutes of June 2022 Public Meeting

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

NEW BUSINESS

2. MRP Industrial Main Street - Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan

Van Buren Road & Main Street - J8-28-1  
TI-2 District  
Request by CLPF MRPI Nazareth, LLC

DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were Matt Clymer of MRP Industrial, attorney Kate Durso, Chris Arnold of Pennoni Engineering and traffic engineer Ben Guthrie of Traffic Planning & Design.

Blanchfield gave a summary of the project. The preliminary/final plan proposes the construction of 2 distribution buildings ranging from 251,000 to 400,000 square feet on a 52.5-acre tract of land. The property is located in the Transportation Industrial 2 (TI-2) zoning district on the southwest corner of Main Street and Van Buren Road. The site is currently unimproved. The proposed use is permitted by right in the TI-2 district.

Arnold explained that there will be 2 entrances off Van Buren Road just off Main Street. They are encouraging all traffic to come from Main Street down Van Buren to the southern entrance to the site. This is based on comments from the Pidcock Company as part of the site development. This is one of the primary changes from the original plan.

Arnold explained that with one of the early meetings with the Northampton County Conservation District there was a sinkhole that opened on Main Street. As part of the site design, we proposed lined basins and the use of a managed release concept. Permits have been submitted the Northampton County Conservation district. They are moving through the design process as a

managed release concept and are waiting on E&S approvals as well.

Blanchfield reviewed the waiver requests. The first waiver request is the way the plan will be submitted together. Pidcock has agreed that is ok.

Regarding the emergency spillway lining, our Geotech consultant has agreed with the natural turf mat in lieu of concrete. Ron Gawlik confirmed agreement.

Regarding the emergency spillway depth, Gawlik confirmed no objection.

Regarding the slope of the storm basins, Gawlik confirmed a slope of 2.5 to 1 is proposed. The Geotech had no objection to it. Blanchfield mentioned that Bruno had concerns as to who is to maintain this. Arnold responded that they have proposed basins with steeper slopes and there have not been maintenance concerns.

Blanchfield referenced the bottom slope, that a flat bottom versus a 2% slope on the bottom. Gawlik said they are in agreement.

Blanchfield asked Gawlik to touch base on that. Gawlik explained the request to use the SCS method rather than the rational method is not necessary. It is permitted by the Township and historically has been allowed. Blanchfield asked if that was ok. It was agreed to strike it from the list of waivers.

Blanchfield introduced the requested deferral for sidewalk along Main Street. Blanchfield addressed that they will be putting sidewalk down but would like to hold off on the Main Street section. Arnold stated that there is a current ongoing project from PennDOT to widen the road. It wouldn't make sense to put in sidewalks now with construction of the road going on. Lammi asked if by the time the project was completed, then the widening of the road should be completed also. Blanchfield was to revisit this later on but wanted to get a timeframe on it.. Clymer mentioned the feedback they received from township staff was to mirror the improvements that they are planning to design near the sidewalk that is on the north side of Main Street.

Blanchfield spoke about the waiver for the street trees to be located outside the street right of way and the concern with underground utilities. Clymer confirmed and stated also with the sidewalk along Van Buren.

Blanchfield asked about the waiver regarding the slope of the stormwater pipes. Gawlik explained they are asking for a waiver to modify the minimum slope from 0.44% from the required 0.5%. He stated the Geotech was ok with it.

Blanchfield asked about the proposed depressed curbs in the parking lot areas. Arnold stated they are proposing this flat curb for stormwater management to allow water to flow into the rain garden. This was a comment that came from the Conservation District. As part of the managed release concept, they have to use all stormwater BMP's they can on the site. They are using lined rain gardens so as not to concentrate stormwater to create sinkholes.

Lammi asked about parking areas on the plan that are not going to be built at this time. It was explained the southern areas will be built, if necessary, by the client. We do not want to create more parking areas than necessary. But the desire is not to install them unless required. Banking the parking allows future construction if needed by the occupant but will leave it a traditional grass field area until needed. They have counts showing the number of parking spaces within the layout, so you can see the maximum occupancy with and without the expansion parking. The stormwater facilities are going in whether they build out or not. Blanchfield asked Gawlik if Pidcock made a comment about needing to show this on future plans. Gawlik asked if the area is going to be grass can they provide an interim grading plan that shows what the interim conditions will be. Clymer said they would provide that to the Township and Pidcock.

Aydelotte asked how the emergency spillway figures into the plan. It says it is going to be reoriented to discharge into the creek. Arnold explained that it will go to the creek in an emergency situation only. They are in the process of relocating this and running the calculations with a larger spillway than what was shown on the original plan. Aydelotte asked what the likely scenario would be for activating the spillway. Arnold responded possibly vandalism. A 100-year storm would not activate the spillway. It will be very rare to never that it would be used.

Lammi asked why they would be dumping water from the pond onto the property, why not into the creek. Arnold said that if you start flooding the Schoeneck Creek with any additional volume in a storm event, the Conservation District is concerned about damaging the environmental quality of the creek. Lammi responded that if you discharge it on the property, it will still go through the system and get into the creek. Arnold responded it will eventually go to the creek, but it will not go directly to the wetlands. Lammi asked if the stormwater management system on the property is designed to handle the overflow. Arnold responded the stormwater system is designed to handle the flow coming through the site of the pre-development conditions. The pipe capacity is what really matters, there will be no surcharging of the system. The routing calculations include the ponding area immediately before which was clipped with the grading. They have shown that they have reduced the two-year storm by 30%. Blanchfield asked where the Conservation District stands on this design. Arnold said they are working with the District Engineer and it is in technical review right now.

Wilkins asked if there was any language about discharging water onto neighboring property. Arnold answered that there was a recorded easement regarding stormwater for the neighboring property. There is a recommendation to provide curb stops or some type of guardrail to prevent vehicles from traveling over the paved areas into the grass area. Blanchfield commented that they have the responsibility to maintain grass on the property to allow the water to flow. Gawlik said that as far as stormwater management, he understands they are reducing rates considerably to the offsite property. He added that MRP did discuss the concern that if the spillway did engage, the current design would impact the adjacent property. He understands that they are willing to make modifications. Arnold confirmed.

Blanchfield asked if the sanitary sewer all goes to the Nazareth Borough Municipal Authority. Arnold confirmed. Wilkins asked if a certain area of the property was once a sludge field. Durso responded that it was and that they had submitted a report to the Township to confirm that there weren't any issues. Blanchfield responded that it had been discussed.

Blanchfield asked if they could explain the overall stormwater management system. Arnold explained how the water is collected and carried through the site. Arnold added that the managed release concept is still in review by the Conservation District because it is a new practice. Based on their review there may be changes coming. Blanchfield stated there was some concern about the pipe cover engineering detail. Arnold responded that they are double checking everything as they go to make sure they are using the correct pipe.

Blanchfield stated that there was a traffic study done but there were some issues. Guthrie said the previous version of the traffic study recommended a minor extension of the northbound right lane at the intersection of Main Street and Van Buren Rd. However, the comment of the Township Engineer is instead to coordinate and make sure that improvements accommodate future growth. They are currently working with the traffic engineer for Carson to make sure that the ultimate extension of the right turn lane accommodates traffic for both sites. Blanchfield mentioned that on the plans it looked like there was going to be a conflicting truck movement there. Guthrie said they are addressing that issue as well as taking a closer look at the right turn lane and to make sure it all works. Blanchfield said Pidcock has recommended a structural analysis of Van Buren Road and asked if that had been done yet. Guthrie responded they are looking into that as well.

Blanchfield asked about truck queueing for trucks waiting to get into the loading docks. The concern is to make sure trucks have adequate space to get off of the road and onto the property. Guthrie stated they are working on a study that included a 2 tier analysis for the surrounding intersections. The study is looking at the queues at traffic signals on opening year and then at full build out. The only remaining issue was the northbound turn lane. Clymer stated that trucks are anticipated to stack, the goal is to get the trucks off the road. Arnold has done some designs to provide some additional areas to accommodate them. Blanchfield stated that is what they would like to hear. Arnold stated on the far northern end, there is a third lane that can be used as additional truck storage if necessary. Additionally, there is plenty of queuing space on the loop area if that would happen. Also, both sides of building 1 and building 2 will have 4 truck entrances and exits.

Lammi stated the new ordinance is asking that there would be sufficient parking spaces for trucks coming in early. The new ordinance will require parking as well as accommodations for truck drivers. The new ordinance is not in effect yet but we would like you to be proactive with these items. Clymer stated that in his experience the tenant identifies the shipping and receiving office and driver's lounge. They build them as part of their facility. It always identified as part of the tenant improvement activity.

Diefenderfer asked if they are going to have something that would allow trucks to take care of de-icing and snow removal. Clymer responded they have had some facilities that have installed them. Generally, the tenants install them but they can look into it.

Blanchfield asked about their open space contribution. Durso stated they are proposing the fee-in-lieu for a couple reasons. One is to meet the intent of the underlying zoning district as a transportation corridor. Second, they looked at the open space plan and they don't think that putting open space here for the Township to maintain doesn't really make sense given the surrounding uses. And third, because the prior use of the site for biosolids wasn't conducive for use as open space. So instead, they would be proposing a fee to be used to create open space elsewhere.

Blanchfield asked if Fire Department comments has been received. Kramer stated the project had been reviewed numerous times before so any comments the Fire Commissioner had, have been addressed.

Blanchfield asked if there was anything that needed to be reviewed in the Geotech letters. Kramer stated the current letter was looking for additional details on the stormwater management basins. Clymer stated that Mr. Casey was looking for a more detailed cross section, that will be provided in the plans.

Blanchfield asked if they had any issues with the consultant's recommendations for lights and street trees. Arnold responded that they thought the Township was ok with the way the lighting was shown. Kramer responded that for Main Street they would need to confer with PennDOT since it is a PennDOT road. Blanchfield asked if the current construction project involved lighting. Kramer stated that would need to be confirmed with PennDOT.

Blanchfield asked if any changes been resubmitted to LVPC. Durso said they typically resubmit to LVPC as it relates to stormwater not as it relates to use. Kramer stated that in their letter they did note the drainage plan was found to be inconsistent with Act 167 and asked if that had been addressed with them. Durso stated they are waiting for comments from the Conservation District before resubmitting that.

Kramer questioned whether a special exception would be needed for the banking of parking spaces. Durso clarified they are not looking to reduce the required parking., they are providing what they need based on the expected employee count. They are just providing an area for additional parking should it be required. Arnold added that the stormwater will be constructed as if the reserve area is being paved so they don't have to go back to the Conservation District.

Diefenderfer asked if they had looked at roofing based on how energy efficient it would be. They are using the black EPDM because there are more heating days than cooling days in our area. Aydelotte asked if the regulations changed would they be capable of installing solar. Clymer responded that it could be done but would create leak opportunities.

Blanchfield said since there are several outstanding issues, the recommendation is to table this for now. Durso asked if everyone was on the same page regarding the waivers as these will affect the design going forward. The item that needed to be revisited was the timeframe for the sidewalks and street trees. Gawlik added that if the sidewalk on Main Street is deferred, the plan would need to represent where the sidewalk would go in.

Seeing no further comments or questions, Blanchfield called for a motion to table the plan.

Motion: Tabled, Moved by Chuck Diefenderfer, Seconded by Robert Walker. Passed. 7-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Blanchfield, Diefenderfer, Kicska, Lammi, Walker, Wilkins

3. Villages at Wolfs Run Phase 3 - Final Subdivision Plan

Van Buren Road - K8-15-1A, K8-15-2 & K8-15-1  
HDR-2 & MDR District  
Request by Wolfs Run Land LLC

DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were Phil Malitsch of Tuskes Homes and engineer Andy Woods of Hanover Engineering.

Blanchfield gave the background on the project. The preliminary subdivision plan for this development was first approved by the Board of Supervisors in November 2007. The Board of Supervisors has granted an extension until November 30, 2022 to the requirement to submit a final plan within five years from the date of approval of the preliminary plan, as required at Section 165-35.B of the SALDO.

The final plan for Phase 3 proposes revisions to the previously proposed plan for Phase 3, to eliminate private alleys and garages and add three off-street parking areas containing a total of 45 parking spaces. The number of units remains the same at 139 units and the general street layout remains the same. The property is within the MDR and HDR-2 zoning districts.

Blanchfield asked about the extent of the revision of the plans and what the status was of having the bridge in place versus the review and approval the final plan of this phase.

Bruno said there is nothing holding up the submission of the plan to be reviewed. The holdup will be with permits. They won't be able to get permits until the bridge is constructed.

Malitsch stated there was nothing they were asking from the Planning Commission that evening. A sketch plan was discussed with the Commission in the spring, the final plan is based on that sketch plan. The major elements are

the elimination of the rear alleys as a reduction in impervious cover across the site. The units shifted back to be consistent with front-loading townhouse requirements. They are consistent with the conditional use approval to construct 5- and 6-unit townhouses. One of the comments from Phase 1 was that the townhouses were too narrow, so the minimum unit width was changed from 22 foot wide to 24 foot wide. The waivers being requested are consistent with Phase 1. This phase works with the new bridge and realignment of Van Buren Road. They do need an NPDES modification, which would be submitted in the next 30 days. The Conservation District had previewed the stormwater management design.

Malitsch said the reason the 5 to 6 unit buildings reappear in the plan is the riparian buffer element. A detention basin has been proposed due to the DEP parameters. Blanchfield asked them explain what they were asking for regarding the ratio of the townhouses. Malitsch said they were asking to go to the 6:1 ratio, because of the removal of the alleys, they would like to eliminate the dead space behind the units. Due to that, some of the lots exceed the ratio.

Blanchfield asked about the architectural detail. Malitsch responded that the architectural detailing is exactly as what was presented with for Phase 1. Blanchfield stated his concern over the original width of the townhouses. Malitsch stated the original plan ratios were in the 7:1 or 8:1 range, they are now at 6:1 Blanchfield asked Gawlik if he had any concerns with the ratios. Gawlik said he thought some of the lots could be shortened in the rear yard, but he had no objections.

Blanchfield mentioned the driveway offsets and asked Gawlik if he had any problems with it. Gawlik stated that he didn't. Aydelotte asked for more information regarding the length of the driveway offset. Malitsch explained there will be 30 feet from the back of the sidewalk to the base of the units. However, what the waiver is for is the distance from the intersection. The Township requires 50 feet and some of these push into that. Gawlik added this consistent with the preliminary plan and the nature of the traffic within the development is light.

Blanchfield asked for explanation on the emergency spillway. Gawlik said they are requesting a waiver from construction the spillway with reinforced concrete and they are proposing turf matting. This has historically been granted by the Township. Aydelotte asked what it meant about a larger storm being released upstream of the basin. Malitsch explained that in the case of an emergency such as a blockage and then a cataclysmic storm, the emergency spillway will engage so the water has a directed path to go. The waiver is just regarding the type of material the spillway is constructed from. Aydelotte asked if they will still be able to maintain grass on a 2:1 slope. Malitsch said it may not be something you can ride a mower on but they can work with the township on choosing a low maintenance planting mix as well as the rock that is already there. Blanchfield asked if there was enough room to put a larger basin that would flatten the slope. Malitsch responded that it is something they are looking into and are open to.

Blanchfield asked about the distance from the top of the berm. Gawlik

responded that the criteria in the ordinance is outdated. The LVPC has revised the elevations as it relates to the basin and berm elevations. What they are proposing is to be in compliance with the LVPC regulations. There is no objection to the waiver request.

Blanchfield asked about the waiver from providing cross sections of the road every 50 feet. Gawlik said there is enough detail that they are not needed. If one is needed they will coordinate with the design engineer as necessary.

Regarding the surveying of trees, Malitsch said their justification is that they are looking to save more pockets of trees. They are asking to not go into the woods and survey every tree because they are only developing consistent with the plan that was approved. Blanchfield added that the Commission was looking to save as many trees as possible and that he looks forward to see future submissions about tree preservation. He also added that there is a comment regarding how much change will then require a revised plan. Malitsch responded that the plan submitted is the final plan.

Malitsch then discussed the basin and riparian buffers. They will be responsible for installing and maintaining plantings as a requirement by the DEP. The HOA or whomever will be responsible for maintaining the basin over time. It will be put into an agreement.

Aydelotte asked what the retaining walls are for. Woods responded that they are for grading and are less than 4 feet high. Gawlik added that they would like confirmation that they are less than 4 feet.

Blanchfield said that in regard to the sanitary sewer, there is concern over the elevation of the sewer manholes. He asked if there was a way to reduce the elevation. Malitsch added the original connections proposed to the interceptor were not feasible with respect to the DEP's requirements for creek crossings. There is room for improvement and they will work with the Township to minimize the conditions.

Blanchfield asked if there was a need for a new traffic study. Malitsch said they don't think so. However, they think it best for attorney Piperato to handle. There is no change in the number of units that were proposed and approved but they will work with the Township on this item.

Regarding open space, the open area on the plan is actually a wooded lot. There is opportunity for little pocket parks and things, if that is the direction the Commission wants them to move in, they can present some options. Lammi suggested some tot lots. Malitsch asked if in order to meet recreation requirements, were they looking at improvements at Fox Run Park or gravitating more towards the tot lots. Lammi suggested because of young families he would prefer the tot lot. Kramer added that there is not room at the park where the soccer fields are because there is a drop off toward the creek.

Diefenderfer added that the Supervisors are probably going to want to know the number of 24 foot wide and 27 foot wide townhomes and how the snow removal



will be handled. Also, if there is a way to handle the garbage cans and recycling cans with a multi-unit structures.

Blanchfield stated there are numerous engineering details that need to be cleaned up. He called for a motion to table the plan.

Motion: Tabled, Moved by Robert Lammi, Seconded by Robin Aydelotte. Passed. 7-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Blanchfield, Diefenderfer, Kicska, Lammi, Walker, Wilkins

#### 4. Sewage Facilities Plan - Central Interceptor Special Study

##### DISCUSSION

Blanchfield spoke about the Sewage Facility Plan that has to deal with a special study done on the central interceptor line. The plan was prepared and approved by the BOS and it is a formality for the Commission to endorse. Gawlik was asked to explain the special study.

Gawlik said there are currently two 10-inch clay pipes that need to be replaced with a 15-inch PVC pipe. As part of the permitting process, the DEP requires the Planning Commission's endorsement of the special study.

The Planning Commission voted to endorse the special sewage study.

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

##### PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Kramer introduced Kent Baird who will be taking over as Planning Director in November.

Kramer reminded the Commission of the workshop meeting on September 20 to continue, and hopefully complete the review of the draft zoning ordinance.

##### PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim Fisher, 68 Moor Drive, wanted to an update on the zoning ordinance. Kramer said that there was a workshop meeting on September 20 to discuss the new ordinance.

Matt Franco, 116 Scotty Drive, asked if the tree conservation at Wolf's Run they spoke about earlier was also done in Phase 1. Phil Malitsch of Tuskes Home stated that Phase 1 had more to do with buffers between properties, the current phase has more wooded areas. The majority of the large trees taken on Tuskes property were dead or dying. Any trees cut down on Glenmoor property were requested by Glenmoor residents.. Franco also wanted to know if there will be a traffic study done for Phase 3. Kramer stated it is the Township's position that there should be a traffic study.

Harry Graack, 1380 Van Buren Road, stated that looking at the bridge plan for Van Buren Road, he and his neighbors do not feel that it will work for them. His understanding is that the bridge should be built prior to Wolf's Run Phase 3. The plans for the new bridge are catering to the Wolf's Run project. His concern is for the size of the bridge. He would like a traffic study to be done.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 pm.

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