

**PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2021 - 7:00 PM  
PALMER TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL MEETING ROOM, 3 WELLER PLACE (LOWER  
LEVEL), PALMER PA 18045

The December 2021 meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 7:00 PM with the following in attendance: Chairman Robert Blanchfield, 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 November 2021 Public Meeting

Motion: Approve, Moved by Richard Wilkins, Seconded by Robert Walker. Passed. 5-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Blanchfield, Brett, Diefenderfer, Walker, Wilkins  
Commission Members voting Abstain: Kicska, Lammi

NEW BUSINESS

2. Palmer Point Apartments - Phase Two Final & Revised Phase One Final Land Development Plans

3100 Charlotte Avenue - L8-25-2  
HDR District  
Request by 3100 Charlotte Avenue, LLC

DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were John Rathfon of Metropolitan Management Group and Brian Focht of C2C Design Group.

Blanchfield explained that Palmer Point Apartments is seeking approval of revised Phase One final land development and Phase Two final land development plans. The preliminary land development plan for this development was approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 29, 2016. The Phase One final land development plan was approved in October 2019. Phase One approval consisted of 96 apartment units and the clubhouse. Construction is currently underway. The overall development will be 312 apartment units.

Waivers and deferrals were approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 29, 2016 and Conditional Use Approval was granted in May 2016 and updated in August and September 2019. Conditional Use Approval included a density bonus under a Traditional Village option for the 312 apartments proposed. Also, intersection improvements at Hartley Avenue and Greenwood Avenue required posting financial security for all improvements on the final Phase 1 Plan. All intersection improvements must be designed and approved by the Township and PENNDOT before the Final Plan for Phase 2 will be recorded. The construction of Greenwood Avenue and Hartley Avenue improvements must be

completed in conjunction with the construction of Phase 2 or July 31, 2022, whichever date is sooner.

Plan revisions to the previously approved Phase One plans include building style modifications and associated footprint reductions, garages have been proposed in lieu of carports and parking lot areas in some locations, the clubhouse footprint has been reduced, changes to open space features (dog park, volleyball court, fire pit), and minor grading and storm sewer revisions.

Rathfon explained that Metropolitan purchased this project from the prior developer fully approved. Some minor changes were made to make it more marketable, but stayed consistent with the conditional use requirements. Gawlik agreed with his statements. Lammi asked for clarification on the change from carports to garages. Rathfon explained that the enclosed garages were much more desirable to tenants, and keep a similar footprint, only adding about 6 inches for the walls in between. Focht and Rathfon showed on the maps where the six carports converted into garages will be. Wilkins asked if there are any drawings of what the garages will look like. Rathfon believes possibly only the tips of the garage roofs would be seen from Route 22.

Blanchfield questioned if all of the standards for architectural excellence are still being met. Rathfon explained the buildings still have all of those architectural features. Kramer stated that it was included with the building plans. Blanchfield questioned the fire protection systems. Rathfon stated there were some changes to fire hydrant locations. Kicska questioned if the commission has seen renderings of the changes in design. Rathfon explained that the original plan had four style designs and there are three styles now. This was reviewed by Tom Comitta and issued a professional report stating that the standards are still met.

Lammi questioned the status of the design/work at the intersection of Greenwood Avenue and Hartley Avenue. Rathfon explained that the plan was redrawn on the east side of the road where the two property owners are the Chrin company and the School District. Chrin is in agreement and this will go before the School Board in January. It will then be submitted to PennDOT for final review. Blanchfield asked if they are prepared to proceed immediately with PennDOT if the School Board gives approval. Rathfon stated this project is fully engineered.

Gawlik stated Pidcock is recommending approval. Bruno stated that there should be separate motions for Phase 1 and Phase 2. Diefenderfer questioned the timing of Phase 1 in relation to the intersection. Rathfon speculated the first building and clubhouse might be three months, with the second building 45-60 days behind that. They can't start the intersection until they receive the HOP permit from PennDOT, so he anticipates that work by mid-summer. Wilkins questioned if tenants will be in before the improvements. Kicska asked if anything more than 96 occupants would need the improvements. Rathfon confirmed that 96 are allowed. Bruno explained the improvements are tied to the increased density.

The Commission voted to recommend approval of the revised Phase One final

plans subject to the following conditions:

1. Comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated December 3, 2021 are satisfactorily addressed.
2. Township Departmental comments dated December 8, 2021 are satisfactorily addressed.
3. All conditions of the preliminary plan approval and conditional use approval dated May 12, 2016, including waivers and deferrals granted, the conditional use modification dated August 20, 2019, including the schedule for completion of the off-site improvements, and the Phasing Plan approval dated October 4, 2019 are incorporated by reference.
4. Revised fire hydrant locations are acceptable to the Fire Commissioner.
5. Any additional comments from the Township's Lighting Consultant are satisfactorily addressed.

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

### DISCUSSION

Blanchfield explained that Phase Two is for 216 apartment units. Plan revisions for Phase 2 include building style modifications and associated footprint reductions, garages have been proposed in lieu of carports and parking lot areas in some locations, and minor grading and storm sewer revisions. Focht and Rathfon showed on the maps where the carports converted into garages will be and explained this bumped out some reserve parking.

Blanchfield referenced the Pidcock letter stating that based on the conditions of approval stated in Attorney Bruno's modification to the conditional use decision letter dated September 24, 2019, and the approval letter for the Phase 1 final plan dated October 4, 2019, all intersection improvements at Greenwood Avenue and Hartley Avenue should be designed and approved by the Township and PennDOT before the final plan for Phase 2 is recorded. Gawlik stated appropriate notes should be added to a sheet to be recorded. Blanchfield stated construction of the Greenwood Avenue and Hartley Avenue improvements was to be completed in conjunction with the construction of Phase 2 or by July 31, 2022, whichever date is sooner. Rathfon explained the timing might be very tight on that date.

Lammi asked if there were any geotechnical comments. Kramer explained these were handled with the preliminary plans. Rathfon stated they have a full-time geotechnical consultant on hand. Diefenderfer questioned if there are fire hydrant changes. Focht confirmed that there are. Wilkiins questioned if there will be issues with parking if garages are used for storage. Rathfon explained that there are strict rules on storage in garages written into the lease, garages are inspected, and rental storage is offered in the basements.

The Commission voted to recommend approval of the Phase Two final plan subject to the following conditions:

1. Comments of the Township Engineer's letter dated December 3, 2021 are satisfactorily addressed.
2. Township Departmental comments dated December 8, 2021 are satisfactorily addressed.
3. All conditions of the preliminary plan approval and conditional use approval dated May 12, 2016, including waivers and deferrals granted, the conditional use modification dated August 20, 2019, including the schedule for completion of the off-site improvements, and the Phasing Plan approval dated October 4, 2019 are incorporated by reference.
4. Revised fire hydrant locations are acceptable to the Fire Commissioner.
5. Any additional comments from the Township's Lighting Consultant are satisfactorily addressed.

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

Williamson Street - M9NW4-8-37  
 HDR District  
 Request by Rocky & Sons Construction, LLC

### DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were Keith Lawler of Keystone Consulting Engineers and Plamen "Rocky" Ayvazov of Rocky & Sons Construction.

Blanchfield explained this sketch plan proposes to subdivide an existing 1.7 acre lot into three lots for development for single family dwellings. The property is located in the High Density Residential (HDR) zoning district at the intersection of Williamson Street and Lieberman Terrace, west of South 25<sup>th</sup> Street. The site is currently unimproved. The properties surrounding the property are zoned HDR and are mostly developed with residences. The plan notes that waivers would be requested for widening of frontage streets, permitting a residential driveway within 150 feet of an arterial road intersection, providing sidewalk, providing street lighting, providing street trees, and providing curb.

Lawler explained they are looking for feedback from the Planning Commission before requesting zoning relief approvals. This lot was previously approved for townhomes.

Gawlik explained that the project site is located in an area subject to Act 167 criteria. The plan proposes a total increase in impervious cover of approximately 7,300 sq. ft. which is less than the 10,000 sq. ft. threshold for an exemption from stormwater management. This impervious cover increase does not consider any frontage improvements. If frontage improvements are required or deferred, it would appear the additional impervious coverage would exceed 10,000 sq. ft. thereby requiring stormwater management provisions. Lammi questioned if the applicant put in curb and sidewalk could the Township grant a waiver for the

stormwater management. Gawlik stated the Township could grant a waiver to any requirements, including stormwater management, but an issue arises if over the 10,000 sq. ft. a review would still be required by LVPC. Lawler questioned if roof infiltration with seepage beds in the yards would be an option. Gawlik stated an individual system for each lot would be an option, if the underlying soils were okay and would require geotechnical testing on the conditions. Blanchfield questioned if LVPC would support a system in which each individual lot manages its own stormwater. Gawlik indicated it has been done before.

Lammi questioned if there were any comments from the Township's Public Works on possible road improvements. Kramer indicated that this is part of the Lehigh Valley long-term transportation study and Tom Adams wouldn't recommend work to be done that might get torn out eventually with a road realignment.

Lammi indicated that the Planning Commission might be willing to defer the sidewalks, but explained that curbing is important from both a snow plowing and water drainage perspective. Blanchfield commented that curbing would also include some blacktop street improvement and questioned if the applicant would be agreeable to providing curbs if the Planning Commission was in support of the on-site underground stormwater management.

Wilkins questioned if they manage individual stormwater, can it go over 10,000 sq. ft. Gawlik indicated that it can if each lot mitigates their own runoff. Wilkins stated the need to be cautious with water management and would prefer deferrals as opposed to waivers. Kramer would suggest deferrals, not waivers and pointed out this is a one-way street that isn't heavily used and doesn't merit road widening. Gawlik stated he would work with the applicant's engineer for appropriate sizing for each of the individual lots to accommodate the potential future widening and sidewalk improvements. Lammi commented on the difficult turn and traffic north of 25<sup>th</sup> Street.

Blanchfield summarized the Planning Commission's feedback of on-site stormwater management to eliminate issues, some street improvements with curbing, and deferral of sidewalk. Brett asked for clarification on where the stone retaining wall is that was referenced. Walker questioned the separation distance from a road intersection. Lawler explained they are showing 100 feet and but based on the street classification 150 feet is required, so a waiver would be needed to meet the ordinance. Wilkins questioned the northeast piece of property with the tower. Lawler confirmed lot 1 is an L shape and includes that whole section.

As this was a sketch plan review only, no action was taken.

4. Variance Request - Car Wash Use in LDR District/248 Overlay  
3310 Nazareth Road - L8NE1-1-18C  
LDR District/Route 248 Overlay  
Request by Soaring Car Wash of Palmer - Spyros Lenas, Jr.

## DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were Stephen Nowroski of Lumen Strategy, Erion Lenas of Soaring Car Wash, and Joe Paranee of Paranee Properties.

Blanchfield explained the applicant, Soaring Car Wash, is seeking variances from the Zoning Hearing Board for the construction of a 3,274 square foot car wash building on a 1.05-acre vacant parcel. The property is located at the northwest corner of Newburg Road and Nazareth Road within the Low Density Residential (LDR) zoning district and the Route 248 Overlay district. A car wash is not permitted within the Route 248 Overlay and is specifically prohibited within the LDR district. The adjoining parcels to the north and west are zoned Low Density Residential (LDR) and contain single-family residences and a residence converted to an office. The parcels to the east across Route 248 are zoned LDR and include a combination of residential and office uses. The property to the south is zoned Medium Density Residential (MDR) and contains the Township Municipal Complex. In 2002, the Zoning Hearing Board had granted approval for a change in non-conforming use from a nursery to a bank and variances for impervious coverage and parking, but this use was never constructed and the approvals expired.

Nowroski explained that the applicant has submitted an application to the Zoning Hearing Board requesting variances from the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance: specifically prohibited uses in the LDR District, lot coverage within the LDR district: 35% permitted, 73% requested, and parking orientation within the Route 248 Overlay: 6 parking spaces proposed to face Newburg Road. Nowroski stated the proposal will meet all of the community objectives and meet sidewalk and stormwater management as required.

Blanchfield expressed concern on possible queueing on Newburg Road and 248 and asked for information on this. Lenas explained that the ingress/egress would be at the further corner of the property near the real estate building and away from the intersection. Walker questioned the length of the sidewalks and Nowroski answered approximately 100 ft. Lenas used the map to indicate the flow of traffic inside the property. Blanchfield questioned if all of the parking spaces would be vacuum spaces. Lenas confirmed and explained that the noisier vacuum components are centralized inside and sound insulated. Blanchfield questioned the water recycling. Lenas explained 100% of the water is captured, up to 75% is recycled and 25% is discharged.

Lammi questioned how many vehicles can be on the property before traffic would spill out onto the roads. Lenas explained approximately thirty vehicles could fit in the queueing/stacking lanes. Wilkins questioned how long a vehicle would be on the property for service. Lenas stated approximately 4 to 5 minutes. Kicska questioned if this would be a 24-hour operation or if the corner will be dark again at night. Lenas stated this would not be a self-serve facility and operating hours would be 7 AM to 9 PM. Lights would be set on timers and localized, low lighting for security reasons would remain on after operating hours.

Kicska expressed his concern for minimal lighting and sound in this residential area.

Lammi believes this is a nice-looking operation, but is not a good fit for this location due to it being a car intensive operation and the excessive sound from dryers. Nowroski stated the sound is below the state decibel threshold. The dryers have special quiet technology and would be facing the Palmer Municipal building and they are also proposing extensive landscaping with walls, fencing, and trees, to help deaden the sound. Diefenderfer questioned the decibel rating for the dryers. Lenas stated in the high fifties.

Walker questioned where the closest Soaring Car Wash locations are. Lenas stated they are located in northern New Jersey. Blanchfield questioned why they want to set up this business in an LDR area. Paranee explained that this property hasn't been built on for almost 20 years. It has gone through different brokers and if any interest is shown for this lot, the proposed uses don't fit with zoning. Brett questioned if Lenas would be purchasing or leasing. Paranee stated he would be purchasing.

Wilkins commented on the building renderings being very bright and questioned if it would have to be white. Lenas stated the company colors are red, white, and blue, but commented that the building doesn't have to be those colors and confirmed it could be toned down. Brett questioned how many vehicles would be serviced daily. Lenas projected 300 to 500. Kicska asked if the impact of traffic has been analyzed. Gawlik stated that signal timing and the traffic impact would have to be looked at. Walker expressed his concern on the traffic this would generate in that area. Lenas stated it would be about 35 vehicles per hour. Brett expressed his concern for cars idling near residential areas.

A discussion took place on the zoning uses that are allowable on this piece of property. The Planning Commission summarized that they are not enthusiastic about this project in this particular location.

As this was an informal review only, no action was taken.

## PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

### 5. 2022 Meeting Dates

Kramer presented the regular monthly Planning Committee meetings to be held on the second Tuesday of the month in 2022. These meeting dates would be advertised to the public.

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

Kramer asked if the Planning Commission members would be willing to meet on the third Tuesday of each month in 2022 for workshop meetings to review and discuss the zoning ordinance changes. These would be meetings that are

advertised to the public, meant for discussion with no actions being taken. These workshops could be cancelled if there wasn't a need to meet to discuss anything for a particular month.

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

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim Fisher, 68 Moor Drive, questioned if the workshops will be public hearings that people would be able to ask questions. Blanchfield explained there will be separate advertised meetings for the public. Kramer explained these workshop meetings will be for the Planning Commission members to allow them an opportunity to review, discuss, and debate the changes. The public is able to attend, but the purpose is not to solicit public comment. Fisher questioned when the public meetings might be scheduled. Kramer anticipates they might start in February. Fisher questioned if the job of the advisory zoning committee is finished. Kramer confirmed. Fisher asked when documentation will be available to the public. Kramer stated it would be public after the information has been reviewed at the Planning Commission meeting in January.

### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

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