

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

The September 2021 meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 7:00 PM with the following members in attendance: Chairman Robert Blanchfield, 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 July 2021 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 Absent: Wilkins

NEW BUSINESS

2. MRP Industrial Main Street - Sketch Plan

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

DISCUSSION

Present for the applicant were Matthew Clymer of MRP Industrial, engineer Judd Dayton of Snyder Secary & Associates, Robert Hoffman of Traffic Planning & Design, and attorney Catherine Durso of Fitzpatrick Lentz & Bubba.

Blanchfield explained this sketch 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 properties to the south of the property and to the north across Main Street are developed with distribution uses. The property to the east across Van Buren Road is vacant. The Township Comprehensive Plan designates this area for non-residential use.

Clymer explained that MRP focuses on large scale distribution and logistics projects in the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland markets. Clarion is their partner in this project. This will be their first project in Palmer Township. This is a speculative development project intended to meet the demands of warehouse logistic users based on the consumer demand that they continue to see for the immediacy of product.

Dayton provided orientation for the site. He noted that the Schoeneck Creek is to the west of the site and Its floodplain does project into this site a bit. Beyond

the creek is the Nazareth Borough Municipal Authority Treatment Plant, from whom they are purchasing the property. The larger warehouse on the right of the plan at 400,000 square feet is the maximum allowed in this district. The smaller warehouse on the left is 251,200 square feet and they are leaving space for some stormwater management infrastructure. There is trailer parking on both sides of the larger building, on the west side of the smaller building, and there is auto parking on the north and south ends of both buildings. A loop road goes around the outside to keep traffic separate. The main intersection is off to the east to the Route 33 interchange which creates a quick connection for truck traffic. Utilities are on-site with electrical and water on two frontages, gas to the east side.

Blanchfield mentioned that during a pre-planning discussion there was interest in two entrances to the site and questioned why there is only one entrance on this sketch plan. Dayton explained that the ordinance requires that primary access not be off of Main Street. Based off of site distance, there seems to be enough frontage on Van Buren Road to allow for an additional access. Clymer believes there was a concern on the code that requires 150 foot minimum distance between driveways and they focused on the single central access point in order to satisfy that code requirement. Blanchfield requested proper measurements be taken and discuss this with the Township and engineering staff.

Diefenderfer questioned if the driveway construction could force the truck traffic to only be able to go in one direction onto Van Buren Road. Blanchfield explained that there is a concern with the flow of truck traffic toward Route 33. Kramer mentioned that trucks going south could get access to Route 33 via 248 and this should be looked at in the traffic study.

Diefenderfer questioned if the buildings will have multiple tenants. Clymer clarified that the buildings are designed for multiple tenants. There would not be an expectation for more than two tenants per building.

Diefenderfer expressed his concern for keeping the truck and auto traffic separate. Clymer explained that there is a significant area to get the trucks into parking areas and off of Van Buren Road. The secondary loop road will help to get the trucks circulating in the right direction and segregate the auto and truck parking. Diefenderfer questioned if this would be a gated facility. Clymer stated that the facility might utilize a guard shack, but he is unsure whether the tenants would decide to or not. Blanchfield explained that the Township is continuing to have a lot of problems with trucks queuing out on the roads and the Township would like to avoid trucks waiting on Van Buren Road or Main Street until their appointed dock time. A guard house might help to get the trucks into a queued area. Blanchfield asked if the small road closest to Van Buren Road would be wide enough to accommodate a truck passing a parked truck there. Clymer stated they could look into a three lane roadway there that would provide a stacking area on one side.

Diefenderfer questioned if there will be heavier screening along Van Buren Road. Dayton explained that the trees on the sketch plan weren't meant to conform with any ordinances and were used for decorative purposes.

Diefenderfer questioned the purpose of the road on the Van Buren Road side of the small warehouse. Dayton explained the utilities would run under the road and it allows for some flexibility of truck movement around the property. Clymer explained that the intention is for traffic to make a right and move counterclockwise. Diefenderfer stated that if that road wasn't there, the building could be moved further away from the floodplain area. Dayton said the floodplain is actually closer to the treatment plant. Clymer said they may have a slope or small retaining wall closer to that floodplain. Blanchfield asked what the impact would be if the small road that was going to be used for utilities was removed. Dayton explained that moving the building east or west wouldn't matter. That aspect of the site is flexible. Lammi mentioned the need to check with the fire commissioner about the loop road if the building is moved to the east.

Lammi questioned if there are environmental concerns since this land was previously used to spread sewage sludge. Clymer stated that their geotechnical engineer did not find any environmental concerns and they have all of the paperwork related to the spread of biosolids that were done on the facility and it was done to DEP standards. Blanchfield asked if Phase 1 recommended a soil sample. Clymer stated it did not.

Lammi explained that a new zoning ordinance will be coming out in the next several months requiring warehouses to reserve adequate trailer parking spots to provide queuing for trucks that come earlier than their dock time. The Planning Commission can't require this for this project, but they strongly encourage it.

Lammi also expressed concern for employees who take public transportation, especially with hazards in the winter. He would like to see the plan for how walking traffic will be handled on this site when the next plans are submitted. Clymer mentioned that a comment letter from LANTA was received with advice on the existing bus service and recommendations for appropriate sidewalks along this area. Kramer stated that this letter was received yesterday. Durso mentioned that they anticipated sidewalks along Van Buren Road, but were going to ask for a deferral of sidewalks along Main Street.

Blanchfield asked about the proposed scope of the traffic study. Hoffman anticipates the study would be from the interchange to the Van Buren intersection and to Hollo Road and Newlins Mill Road. Kramer also suggested including Prologis and 248.

Brett expressed his concerns for on-site rest areas for the truckers and for the chemical run-off of oil and gas from the truck parking getting into the Schoeneck Creek.

Durso stated waivers that might be needed to submit as a preliminary/final plan and for stormwater inconsistencies between DEP and the Township requirements.

Diefenderfer questioned if the total building size was 400,000 square feet. Clymer confirmed.

Richard Karp, 107 Stephanie Drive, asked why requiring spots for the trucks to wait isn't mandatory. Blanchfield explained that it will soon be mandatory when the new zoning ordinance is passed and that the Planning Commission has made a strong argument on the importance of this. Karp questioned if sidewalks are being waived on Main Street. Durso explained they are asking for the sidewalks to be deferred. This means that the Township could require the developer to install sidewalks at a later time at the developer's expense. Karp asked how many employees are anticipated on this site. Dayton stated 400 employees over the course of multiple shifts. Karp expressed his concern for the traffic on Van Buren Road. Blanchfield explained that the traffic study will take all of that into consideration. Karp asked if the land was zoned for warehouses. Blanchfield confirmed that the land is zoned TI-2 for industrial use.

As this was a sketch plan only, no action was required to be taken by the Planning Commission.

#### PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Kramer explained that the Carson Company offered to give the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors a tour of the inside of all of the buildings in the township to get a feel for what their tenants are bringing to the area. The Planning Commission members expressed interest in this offer.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Karp asked when the Wolf's Run project was voted on. Blanchfield explained that the Planning Commission voted at the July meeting and the Board of Supervisors will address this again at the meeting at a later meeting. Bruno recommended no further discussion on that project. The developer is not present to discuss, the Commission had several meetings to discuss the project and heard all of the community's concerns over the past year and reached a vote.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:40PM.

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

Commission Members Absent: Wilkins