

TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
February 15, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION

Robert Piligian, Chairman
Jonathan L. Bolton, Vice Chairman - Absent
Paul Geissinger, Secretary
Robin Ruhmel, Member
Ann Freyman, Member
Jason Szewczak, Member
Andre Dasent, Alternate - Absent
Sean Ziller, Alternate

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Lee A. Rackus, Bureau Chief of Planning,
Zoning & Development
Frank Clark, Keystone Consulting Engineer
John F. Gross, Esq., Township Solicitor

Meeting called to order at approximately 7:30 pm.

Mr. Piligian read the Fair Housing Statement as required.

A) SUBMISSION REVIEW:

1) INDEX #2016-23A – DEBRA HARTMAN

5191 Garfield Avenue
Minor Subdivision
Zoning District R-5A
Original Submission: 1/18/23
90 Day Expiration: 5/15/23

Brad Rock, Lehigh Engineering representing the applicant.

Comment letters were received from Ms. Rackus dated 2/15/23 and Mr. Clark, KCE dated 2/13/23.

Mr. Piligian entertained a motion to recommend preliminary approval.

Motion to approve by Mr. Geissinger, second by Mr. Ziller. Vote taken 6-0 to approve.

Mr. Piligian entertained a motion to recommend final approval.

Motion to approve by Mr. Geissinger, second by Mr. Ziller. Vote taken 6-0 to approve.

2) INDEX #1998-22 – COPLAY QUARRY, LLC - PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

5101 Beekmantown Road
Major Subdivision/Land Development
Zoning District OS-2
Original Submission Date: 2/23/22; Revised Submission Date: 9/28/22
90 Day Expiration: 12/27/2022; Extension exp. 3/29/23

Alec Nahas, Bohler Engineering; George Broseman & Lou Pektor representing the applicant.

Comment letters were received from Ms. Rackus dated 2/15/23 and Mr. Clark, KCE dated 2/15/23.

It was stated that the applicant will be focusing on a subdivision plan first, then land development at a later date.

Underlying plan has not yet been recorded. Condition of approval, need plan recorded or withdrawn.

Mr. Piligian entertained a motion to table the plan to allow time to review comments.

Motion to table by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Szewczak.

3) INDEX #2018-23A – TAKE 5 AUTO SERVICE

2603 Mickley Avenue

Land Development

Zoning District – C-2

Original Submission Date: 8/25/22; Rev Sub Date: 1/25/23

90 Day Expiration: 5/15/23

Alex Tweedie, Landcore Engineering representing the applicant.

Comment letters were received from Ms. Rackus dated 2/15/23 and Mr. Clark, KCE dated 2/14/23.

Ms. Ruhmel expressed concern about headlights shining back towards Rt 145 and suggested they work with Township engineers towards a solution.

Applicant stated they will add additional trees and has agreed to address landscaping in area along route 145 to satisfaction of Township.

Mr. Piligian entertained a motion to recommend preliminary approval, conditioned upon the review letters, and recommending approval of the waivers requested by Landcore and that the plantings along 145/Mickley Avenue be acceptable to the Township Engineer.

Motion to approve by Mr. Szewczak, second by Ms. Freyman. Vote taken 6-0 to approve.

Mr. Piligian entertained a motion to recommend final approval with the above conditions.

Motion to approve by Mr. Ziller, second by Ms. Freyman. Vote taken 6-0 to approve.

4) INDEX #2017-23A – MUMMEY SOLAR PROJECT

4195 Scheidys Road

Special Exception
Zoning District R-1
Original Submission Date: 1/26/23
90 Day Expiration: N/A

Kate Durso, Esq., Seth and Joe Allen Burget, Burget & Associates, representing the applicant.

Ms. Ruhmel mentioned that it didn't qualify under support infrastructure because it is a business selling energy to a supplier.

It was noted by other commission members that the coverage on the lot is far greater than a single-family dwelling. Also, the power generation is an incompatible use with R-1 Zoning District and doesn't fit in with surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Ziller asked whether adjacent neighbors have been notified, and the developer indicated 'not at this time'.

Project review:

- Ground mounted array, I-beams pounded into ground
- Limited earth disturbance
- Electricity goes to utility poles out front, then goes into main grid
- All neighboring properties suing what 13 generated, approximately 100 homes
- 827 surface for mowing access
- Transformer pad
- 1' wide trench for electric line
- 2 arrays = 13' x 26'
- PUC – In Compliance with their regulatory guidance
- Panels 9' tall at highest point
- Buffering will be proposed at time of land development
- 'Cattle fence' around perimeter
- Transformer pad 6' x 10'
- 7 to 8 Inverters, 2' x 3'
- No conversations with surrounding homeowners to date

Pat Rivers, 4179 Scheidys Road - objecting to solar farm, would not have purchased his home if this was there.

Craig White, 4171 Scheidys Road - has concerns with water runoff, questioned if the grass growing under the panels would be an issue.

Karen Poschefco, 3303 Musselman Court – need to address climate change, questioned if there would be a way to block view from neighbors to allow project.

Mr. Piligian entertained a motion to deny based on the following:

1. Incompatible use in a residential neighborhood
2. Power generation is no 'Support Infrastructure' as represented by the applicant's attorney

Motion to deny by Mr. Geissinger, second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken 6-0 to deny.

B) DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Chairman Piligian requested that the following items be placed on the next meeting agenda for discussion:

1. Curb & Sidewalk Recommendation by Planning Commission
2. SALDO Amendments regarding plan submission size

C) OTHER:

Motion to approve January 2023 Meeting Minutes by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Szewczak.

D) ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.