

TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

October 16, 2024

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jonathan L. Bolton, Chairman
Robin Ruhmel, Vice Chairman
Paul Geissinger, Secretary - Absent
Jason Szewczak, Member
Ann Freyman, Member - Absent
Casey Zelena, Member

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Lee A. Rackus, Bureau Chief of Planning,
Zoning & Development
Frank Clark, Keystone Consulting Engineers
Jack Gross, Esq., Township Solicitor
David Lear, Lehigh Engineering,
Conflict Engineer

Meeting called to order at approximately 7:30 pm.

Chairman Bolton read the Fair Housing Statement as required.

A) SUBMISSION REVIEW

1) INDEX #2027-23A - PLAZA ON 6TH STREET EXTENSION

1055 N. Sixth Street

Land Development

Zoning District: C-2

Original Submission Date: 8/29/23; Revised Submission Date: 9/3/24

60-Day Expiration Date: 10/28/24; Extension Expiration Date: OPEN

Joe Rentko and Tarek Shehab representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed the applicant received comment letters from Ms. Rackus dated 10/15/24 and KCE dated 10/16/24.

Mr. Rentko reviewed the project and the changes to the plan. The original plan to use the road privately owned by the City of Allentown is no longer feasible. The applicant re-configured the access to use a one-way loop off the Sixth Street Extension in Whitehall. Traffic would enter from the east side, with 2-way traffic on the entry way & parking lot, then exit one way out.

Mr. Shehab stated the building size has been reduced and they will be bringing in fill in to raise the elevation of the lot to get the parking to work.

Mr. Clark reviewed some items discussed in the workshop meeting re: Sixth Street extension eventually becoming a 2-way street as per PennDOT and the need for sidewalks. Also discussed was a sidewalk accessible path down to the Allentown border for access to the park.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to table the plan to allow the applicant time to address comments and revise plans.

Motion by Mr. Szewczak, second by Ms. Ruhmel. Vote taken 4-0 to table.

2) INDEX #2051-24A – LANDSTON EQUITIES, LLC – FULLERTON TERMINALS DISTRIBUTION FACILITY

2451 Main Street

Conditional Use

Zoning District: I

Original Submission Date: 8/28/24

60-Day Expiration Date: 10/30/24; Extension Expiration Date: 11/30/24

Erich Schock, Esq. Fitzpatrick, Lentz & Bubba and Rocco Carrociola, Jaindl Land Co. & John McRoberts, The Pidcock Co. representing the applicant.

Atty. Schock reviewed the Conditions of Approval as a result of the September PC meeting. The first nine are generally OK, however there were some concerns with #10, which limits the amount of tractor trailers that would enter/exit each day.

Mr. Carrociola clarified their position on the conditions and updated progress on water service. With regards to condition #10, they are concerned with limited number of truck trips. They would like to allow for 80 trucks per day (40 in and 40 out).

Mr. Terry, Benchmark Engineering, reviewed the truck turning template and the Planning Commissions concerns with truck traffic.

Ms. Ruhmel expressed her concerns for the residents of Whitehall and any increased tractor trailer traffic on an already busy road that is packed with shopping centers and is the main corridor to the northern section of the Township.

Ms. Poshefko expressed her concerns with the increased projected truck traffic.

Atty. Gross clarified that the applicant is looking for recommendation from the Planning Commission with comment #10 being amended from 50 daily trucks (25 in/25 out) to 80 (40 in/40 out).

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to amend conditions #4 & #10 from the September PC Conditional Use recommendation.

There were no motions to amend, so the conditions will remain the same.

3) INDEX #2046-24A – FELLOWSHIP COMM. – INDEPEN. LIVING APTS

3600 Mauch Chunk Road

Land Development/Minor Subdivision

Zoning District: R-3A

Original Submission Date: 5/30/24; Revised Submission Date: 8/30/24

90-Day Expiration Date: 9/19/24; Extension Expiration Date: 12/20/24

Mr. Clark & Mr. Zelena recused themselves from giving input on this project.

David Lear, Lehigh Engineering, representing Whitehall Township as conflict engineer

Scott Pasterski, KCE, Tom Bartek representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed the applicant received comment letters from Ms. Rackus dated 10/15/24 and Lehigh Engineering dated 9/18/24.

Mr. Lear clarified that the only changes from last month was a change to the sidewalk deferral

request and to note that the ACT 167 was approved.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for preliminary approval based on comment letters.

Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken 3-0 to approve.

Mr. Pasterski requested an upgrade to final approval.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for final approval based on comment letters.

Motion by Ms. Szewczak, second by Ms. Ruhmel. Vote taken 3-0 to approve.

Sidewalk Deferral along Schadt Avenue, Rural Road & Mauch Chunk Road was requested and outlined by Mr. Pasterski. Based on the slope/grading and lack of sidewalks on surrounding properties.

Ms. Rackus reviewed the Curb & Sidewalk Deferral Ordinance, and this project meets all 3 sidewalk relief factors.

Atty. Gross also pointed out that the addition of curbing would significantly affect the drainage calculations as well.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to defer Curbing and Sidewalk installation along Mauch Chunk Road, Rural Road & Schadt Avenue.

Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken 3-0 to recommend.

4) INDEX #2023-23A – EMERSON VILLAGE

3626 Rural Road

Major Subdivision/Land Development

Zoning District: R-3

Original Submission Date: 4/27/23; Revised Submission Date: 3/14/24

90-Day Expiration Date: 8/14/23; Extension Expiration Date: 1/25/25

B) DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Ms. Rackus updated the Commission on the Comprehensive Plan, the Electronic Submissions for the Planning Commission.

Discussions need to be had clarifying the difference between a Warehouse and a Distribution center (Logistics Center, Parcel Center, Truck Terminal, Fulfillment Center, etc.). Chairman Bolton crafted a document based on these definitions and looking at surrounding municipalities and would like the Commission to review for discussion next month.

C) OTHER:

Approval of September 2024 Meeting Minutes - Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to approve. Motion by Mr. Szewczak, second by Mr. Zelena, minutes approved.

D) ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10 p.m.