

TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

June 18, 2025

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jonathan L. Bolton, Chairman
Robin Ruhmel, Vice Chairman
Paul Geissinger, Secretary - Absent
Kyle Bartosh - Absent
Lane Donatelli
Jason Szewczak
Casey Zelena

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Lee A. Rackus, Bureau Chief of Planning,
Zoning & Development
Frank Clark, KCE
Jack Gross, Esq.
Lew Rauch, Lehigh Engineering (Conflict
Engineer)

Meeting called to order at approximately 7:30 pm.

Chairman Bolton read the Fair Housing Statement as required.

Chairman Bolton announced that #2046-24A – Fellowship Community – Independent Living Apts. will be first on the tonight's agenda

A) SUBMISSION REVIEW:

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

3600 Mauch Chunk Road
Phasing and Waiver Request Recommendation
Zoning District: R-3A

Lew Rauch, Conflict Engineer representing the Township. Commissioner Zelena recused himself.

Scott Pasterski, Keystone Consulting Engineers & Thomas Bartek, representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letter from Lehigh Engineering dated June 17, 2025 was received,

Mr. Pasterski reviewed the Phasing Plan & Waiver request. Per the Board of Commissioners, because they are requesting a waiver re: the construction of the stormwater facilities during Phase 1, the developer needed to come back through planning for approval of that waiver. They are proposing to build stormwater facilities 1 and 2 during Phase 1, however the larger stormwater facility would not be constructed until Phase 3. Based on stormwater calculations by the developer, the waiver request was supported by Lehigh Engineering.

Mr. Rauch confirmed there were no objections to the waiver, however he would like the phasing lines added to the plans, so when the plan is recorded, it's clear which phase is under construction.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion. Mr. Szewczak recommended approval of the waiver and phasing requirements, second by Mr. Donatelli. Vote taken 5-0 to recommend.

2) INDEX #2061-25A – 415 SEVENTH STREET

415 Seventh Street
Minor Subdivision
Zoning District: R-5A
Original Submission Date: 5/27/25
90-Day Expiration Date: 8/27/25

Robert Piligian, Bascom & Sieger, and George Abdouche, representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated June 17, 2025 and Ms. Rackus dated June 16, 2025 were received.

Mr. Piligian reviewed the project, and stated they have received a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board. They will comply with the comment letters. The DEP planning module is in the process of being worked on and no waivers have been requested.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion recommend preliminary approval based on conditions in the comment letters.

Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Zelena. Vote taken 6-0 for preliminary approval.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion recommend final approval based on conditions in the comment letters.

Motion by Mr. Szewczak, second by Ms. Ruhmel. Vote taken 6-0 for final approval.

3) INDEX #2027-23A – PLAZA ON SIXTH STREET EXTENSION

1055 North 6th Street
Land Development
Zoning District: C-2
Original Submission Date: 8/29/23; Rev. Sub. Date: 9/3/24, 2/21/25, 5/27/25
90-Day Expiration Date: 12/20/23; Extension Expiration Date: OPEN

Joseph Rentko, Black Forest Engineering, Tarek Shehab representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated June 16, 2025 and Ms. Rackus dated June 17, 2025 were received.

Mr. Rentko reviewed the revised plan and comment letters. He believes the stormwater issues have been worked out and they will comply with the Shade Tree committee's recommendations. The applicant will have no issue paying the traffic impact fee and there were also waivers requested for curb & sidewalk, as well as the stormwater management system.

Mr. Clark questioned the missing LVPC comment. Mr. Rentko stated that the letter to LVPC was submitted on May 23, 2025.

Mr. Szewczak questioned if there was any progress re: comments from WTA to which Mr. Rentko stated they plan to address all comments but were waiting for the layout to be finalized.

Mr. Shehab asked if there was a path to a conditional approval. Mr. Bolton stated that the Commission would like everything finalized before issuing any kind of approval, and the missing letter from LVPC is an issue.

Mr. Rentko wanted to know if they needed to request an extension. It was confirmed that the expiration was 'Open', so there is no extension needed.
Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to table.

Mr. Geissinger made the motion, second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken 6-0 to table.

4) INDEX #2057-25A – FULLERTON TERMINAL DISTRIBUTION CENTER

2625 Range Road
Land Development
Zoning District: I

Original Submission Date: 1/30/25; Revised Submission Date: 5/1/25; 5/29/25
90-Day Expiration Date: 4/30/25; Extension Expiration Date: 7/29/25

Rocco Caracciolo, Jaindl Land Co. and John McRoberts, The Pidcock Co., representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated June 16, 2025 and Ms. Rackus dated June 17, 2025 were received.

Mr. McRoberts mentioned that they went before the Board of Commissioner's (BOC) re: temporary construction easements and received a favorable recommendation and the BOC is in favor of granting those easements.

Mr. Clark questioned the off-site traffic patterns and resolution of the traffic issues. Mr. McRoberts stated they have put together the HOP plans, but that the Township has to be the applicant, so they won't move forward without the Township's approval. The Traffic Impact fees will be based on ITE154 and the after study. Mr. Clark questioned if there was any more thought regarding how Route 145 south bound traffic would get to the facility (and if Penn DOT would be involved in this process). Mr. McRoberts, said that nothing was required during Conditional Use process and that would be a Penn DOT issue. Mr. Clark stated that it would still be a local road issue because the traffic would impact on other areas.

Ms. Rackus expressed her concerns about the future traffic impact and all the unanswered questions re: the roads that will be utilized by employees and trucks alike. She suggested a more in-depth conversation was needed with Mr. Terry. Mr. Caracciolo said they would be willing to put up signage, educate the drivers and use GPS to direct them to certain roads. Comments from Mr. Terry's last letter from the Conditional Use approval were reviewed. Mr. Bolton mentioned that some of the concern also relates to the 72 +/- cars that will be entering and exiting every day.

Atty. Gross reviewed the Conditional Use verbiage and the expectation that more information would be needed re: traffic.

Mr. Bolton clarified that an actual traffic plan, in writing, was necessary in order for the Planning Commission to send this to the Board.

Mr. McRoberts stated that the total p.m. peak hour traffic for cars would be 20-50.

Ms. Ruhmel questioned what came about with Penn DOT re: Eberhart & Route 145, and if anything was being required. She is concerned with the tractor trailer traffic using the jug handle,

and the lack of a turning lane on Eberhart. Mr. Caracciolo said that was 'outside' of their traffic impact study area. Mr. Clark stated that the section of road at Eberhart and Route 145 has been redesigned & approved and are waiting to hear from Penn DOT. But, because Penn DOT is an 'outside agency', the Township cannot hold a project up waiting for an outside agency's response.

Atty. Gross mentioned that he would be looking for a separate Temporary Construction easement for the record. Mr. McRoberts stated there was one created and prepared by Atty. D'Amore.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for a Conditional Preliminary approval, based on the conditions noted in the comment letters, a 'clean' review on the traffic plan from Mr. Terry, as well as an agreement that the Preliminary plan will not go to the Board of Commissioners before a final approval has been received from the Planning Commission.

Motion by Mr. Zelena, second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken 6-0 for Conditional Preliminary approval.

5) INDEX #2059-25A – 2033 AREY LANE PROPOSED SUBDIVISION

2033 Arey Lane
Minor Subdivision
Zoning District: R-5A

Joe Fitzpatrick, FLB, representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated June 18, 2025 and Ms. Rackus dated June 17, 2025 were received.

They are seeking Conditional Final approval for a lot line between Haven Ridge and Arey Lane which will enable them to arrange for stormwater and maintenance easements between the communities. They will comply with all comments noted in the letters.

Ms. Rackus' was concerned that the conditions recommended by the Zoning Hearing Board are not in writing anywhere to date and will be a challenge to enforce.

Mr. Fitzpatrick stated that the Zoning Hearing Board ruling would be considered outside the realm of the Planning Commission, and all they're seeking from the Planning Commission is to "strike a property line". Mr. Bolton was at the Zoning meeting and said there was a 'laundry list' of items that would be hard to understand without a 'playbook'. Atty. Fitzpatrick questioned if there were any issues addressed by Zoning that are within the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission. Atty. Gross stated the Planning Commission, as a rule, will not give approval until Zoning is resolved.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion.

Mr. Geissinger made a motion to table to allow time for the Zoning Hearing Board's opinion to be issued. Second by Ms. Ruhmel, vote taken 6-0 to table.

B) DISCUSSION ITEMS:

None

C) **OTHER:**

Approval of May 2025 Meeting Minutes. Motion by Mr. Geissinger, minutes approved.

D) **ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m.