

TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

February 19, 2025

PLANNING COMMISSION

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

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Lee A. Rackus, Bureau Chief of Planning,
Zoning & Development
Frank Clark, Keystone Consulting Engineers
Jack Gross, Esq.

Meeting called to order at approximately 7:30 pm.

Chairman Bolton read the Fair Housing Statement as required.

Elisa Highley representing KCE for the Township in Frank Clark's absence.

A) SUBMISSION REVIEW

1) INDEX #2023-23A – EMERSON VILLAGE

3626 Rural Road

Major Subdivision/Land Development

Zoning District: R-3A

Original Submission Date: 4/27/23; Revised Sub. Date: 3/14/24; 11/25/24

90-Day Expiration Date: 8/14/23; Extension Expiration Date: 3/19/25

No revised plans submitted.

Justin Strahorn, WB Homes, representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed the applicant received comment letters from Ms. Rackus dated 2/17/25 and KCE dated 12/18/24.

Mr. Strahorn updated the Planning Commission on the current status of the project. He stated they will comply with all comments and have requested a few waivers. They are hoping to receive preliminary and final approval tonight.

Mr. Bolton confirmed that the meandering path through the development would be asphalt. He suggested they request a waiver to allow for asphalt instead of concrete. An easement will be included in the HOA to grant public access of the internal sidewalks and walking paths. Curbing is proposed to be installed along Rural Road.

Ms. Poshefko expressed her continued concern with the removal of trees and the vernal pool. Mr. Strahorn said they are working with the DEP and are paying a fee for mitigation of the vernal pool. She also confirmed that they are requesting approval on all Phases and asked if they would hold-off removing the trees during Phase I construction, since they shouldn't be effected at that time. Mr. Strahorn stated that they have no intention of removing the trees until they begin Phase II construction.

Mr. Bartosh questioned the waiver re: fencing around the detention pond. It was confirmed that the waiver was for the type of fencing used.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for the approval of all waivers, with the addition of the waiver to use asphalt instead of concrete on the walking path and internal sidewalks.

Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, with addition of the verbiage that the detention pond will have 'split rail fencing with mesh', and as opposed to 'no fencing', second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken 7-0 to approve.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to recommend preliminary approval based on conditions in the comment letters & all waivers requested.

Motion by Mr. Zelena, second by Mr. Bartosh. Vote taken 7-0 for preliminary approval.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to recommend final approval based on conditions in the comment letters & all waivers requested.

Motion by Mr. Swieczak, second by Ms. Ruhmel. Vote taken 7-0 for final approval.

2) 2050-24A – BRIDGE STREET RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION

4151 Bridge Street

Major Subdivision/Land Development

Zoning District: R-4

Original Submission Date: 8/1/24; Revised Submission Date: 11/27/24; 1/29/25

90-Day Expiration Date: 11/21/24; Extension Expiration Date: 4/30/25

3) 2057-25A – FULLERTON TERMINAL DISTRIBUTION CENTER

2325 Range Road

Land Development

Zoning District: I

Original Submission Date: 1/30/25

90-Day Expiration Date: 4/30/25

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

Mr. McRoberts briefly reviewed the plan for the benefit of the new Planning Commission members. They have received Zoning relief re: building height & driveway as well as Conditional Use approval. The plan is for a new 190,400 sq. ft. Distribution Center with access from Range Road. There's a 'truck court' with 28 loading docks, with 1 dock reserved for a dumpster. There are 2 drive up docks with 38 trailer storage spaces and 4 spaces specifically reserved for overnight tractor trailer parking with truck and trailer attached. Some minor changes include an added landscape path and the expansion of the paved path for firetruck access from 20' to 26'. They are pursuing Penn DOT approval for improvements to Range Road & Eberhart Road. NPDES permit formal meeting is on 2/20/25, FAA clearance received, LVPC submitted 1/30/25; NBMA submitted. Draft Planning Module submitted to CWSA, which will not proceed until at least a preliminary approval is received.

Mr. Bolton expressed concerns with the entrance accommodating both cars and trucks and believes that could be problematic. Mr. McRoberts discussed some of the improvements they proposed including road widening and some restrictions imposed on truck turning paths.

Mr. Bolton asked if there would be a berm installed along that road. Mr. McRoberts stated that part of the area along the road is actually Township property, but they are trying to maintain as many trees as possible. Ms. Rackus suggested they note on the plan details of the existing forested areas that will remain.

The stone path was discussed, and more design details will be given at a later date. Ms. Ruhmel suggested an asphalt path as opposed to stone. Mr. Carraciola stated there are some paths in other parks that are stone and still accessible by bike/stroller. Also, the stone minimizes impervious coverage and water run-off. After some back and forth, it was determined that the location of the path requires more discussion.

Mr. Zelena questioned the outdated Traffic Impact Fee comment letter. Mr. Carraciola confirmed they are working with Mr. Terry to get a new Traffic Impact Fee letter. Also, there will be an impact fee based on a Post-Construction Trip Count per Mr. McRoberts.

Motion to table by Mr. Geissinger, second by Ms. Ruhmel. Vote taken 7-0 to table.

B) DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Index #2056-25A – Ordinance Amending Chap. 27, Art. IX, Sec. 2-76 R-5A High Density Residential

Ms. Rackus stated that the Amendment is correcting some long-standing deficiencies in 2 different Zoning Districts (R-5 & R-5A), since the Ordinance was adopted in 1991.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to recommend approval.

Motion Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Zelena. Vote taken 7-0 to recommend.

Planning Commission 2024 Annual Report

Mr. Geissinger thanked Ms. Rackus for summarizing the Planning Commission activities for the year.

Mr. Bartosh inquired about the reduction of paper and wondered how quickly that would be up and running. Ms. Rackus explained the process with IT and budgeted for that in 2025.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to approve the Annual Report. Motion by Mr. Geissinger, second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken 7-0 to approve.

C) OTHER:

Approval of January 2025 Meeting Minutes.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to approve the January 2025 minutes, Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Donatelli. Vote taken 7-0 to approve.

C) ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m.