

TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

August 20, 2025

PLANNING COMMISSION

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

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Lee A. Rackus, Bureau Chief of Planning,
Zoning & Development
Frank Clark, KCE
Jack Gross, Esq. - Absent
Andrew Hoffman, Esq. - Twp. Atty.
Peter Terry, Benchmark Civil Eng.

Meeting called to order at approximately 7:30 pm.

Chairman Bolton read the Fair Housing Statement as required.

A) SUBMISSION REVIEW:

1) INDEX #2044-24A – 2033 AREY LANE PROPOSED SUBDIVISION

2033 Arey Lane
Minor Subdivision
Zoning District: R-5A
Original Submission Date: 4/16/24; Revised Submission Date: 6/13/25
90-Day Expiration Date: 8/15/24; Extension Expiration Date: 12/31/25

Erich Schock, FLB; Christine Frey, Penn DOT; Bill Torr, Michael Baker International representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated August 18, 2025 and Ms. Rackus dated August 13, 2025 were received.

Atty. Schock stated they would review the comment letters and will comply with some comments but will also need some guidance.

Ms. Frey reviewed the plan for some of the new Commission members. Since their last presentation in May 2024, they were notified that the Fed's passed a bill in early March 2024, that would allow a time extension for the expenditure of the funds. With that change, they changed the plans from a Design/Build project to Design/Build/Delivery project. They found out in July 2024 that USDOT was 'on board' with that change, but they would need to create a new Raise Grant agreement. So, they had to prepare an amendment and add the project to the 2025 TIP. They finally navigated all those changes by July 2025. However, they needed to execute another Grant amendment to meet the executive orders of the new Presidency, and that process is on-going, which is preventing them from moving into final design. They hope to be under contract to move forward around mid-September. Once that happens, they can move forward with CWSA. Also, on July 9, 2025, Lehigh County stepped up as the project sponsor. August 12, 2025 the City of Allentown granted approval of the project.

Per KCE's previous review letter, they were asked to provide a list of priorities for the review process, which they provided. They presented a new simplified plan, looking for comments from the Township. Per the police comment, they are working with DCNR and others to facilitate a parking area, although it might not be included with the initial plan.

Ms. Frey also reviewed Benchmark's comment letter in detail.

Ms. Frey provided a handout and reviewed KCE's comment letter. Mr. Clark suggested they schedule a meeting with all the parties involved to review the project, instead of sending correspondence back and forth, to which they were amenable. Per the stormwater comments, they will comply with most of the items, however, would like to 'schedule a dialogue' to address some of the issues.

Mr. Geissinger asked whether the LANTA stops would be pull-offs, which they will not, based on current LANTA requests. He also questioned the speed bumps and the issue with plowing, etc., to which Mr. Clark explained that they are more like speed 'tables' with a 10-foot sloped approach, and they are not your standard parking lot speed bumps.

Mr. Bolton asked if they addressed the Police Chief's comments from his previous letter in 2023, Ms. Frey stated there have been some design changes since that comment letter that would mitigate those comments.

Mr. Clark questioned the limitation of trucks and how that is being handled. Ms. Frey stated they have investigated this, and it is being addressed, and she needs to review previous records but believes they will either be able to post the road as 'no trucks' or 'trucks limited' to a certain length.

Becky Bradley, LVPC – Ms. Bradley mentioned that LVPC has issued a revised letter, and the plan will go before the LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee next Tuesday and the full LVPC next Thursday. They are more comfortable with this plan and there are only a few remaining issues from their standpoint. She also expressed an interest to meet sooner, rather than later to get this plan ironed out, since the funding was received over 4 years ago and she doesn't want to risk losing any funding. She also mentioned that this is the largest Federal Grant the Lehigh Valley has ever received.

Mr. Szewczak asked for a summary of the outstanding issues with the CWSA. Ms. Frey related that the easements have been recorded according to CWSA's specifications, and they are designing the project to avoid as many impacts as possible to meet the requirements of the easements. There is an unavoidable impact in the City of Allentown, which they will be absorbing. There were discussions of doing a full relocation by CWSA (based on a future need to increase the line to 36"), but that would be a CWSA expense and not funded by PennDOT.

Atty. Shock asked if they would consider a recommendation contingent upon a follow-up meeting to address all concerns.

Chairman Bolton stated that's not the normal procedure for the Planning Commission.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion.

Ms. Ruhmel made a motion to table, second by Mr. Szewczak, vote taken 7-0 to table.

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

2033 Arey Lane

Minor Subdivision

Zoning District: R-5A

Original Submission Date: 2/28/25; Revised Submission Dates: 5/29/25; 7/1/25

90-Day Expiration Date: 10/31/25

Frank D'Amore, FLB; Jeff Beven, Bohler Eng.; Sophie Paxos representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed that the comment letters from KCE dated August 19, 2025 and Ms. Rackus dated August 13, 2025 were received.

Atty. D'Amore requested a recommendation for preliminary and final approval.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for preliminary approval contingent upon the settlement agreement, the Board of Commissioners Resolution and all letters attached.

Mr. Zelena made a motion, second by Ms. Szewczak, vote taken 7-0 for preliminary approval.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for final approval based upon the conditions noted above.

Ms. Ruhmel made a motion, second by Mr. Donatelli, vote taken 7-0 to final approval.

B) DISCUSSION ITEMS:

None

C) OTHER:

None

D) ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 p.m.