

TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

August 21, 2024

PLANNING COMMISSION

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

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Lee A. Rackus, Bureau Chief of Planning,
Zoning & Development
Frank Clark, Keystone Consulting Engineers
Jacob Oldaker, 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 #2033-23A – TRACTOR SUPPLY

3561 (3581) W. Columbia Street

Land Development

Zoning District: C2-A

Original Submission Date: 11/30/23; Revised Submission Date: 7/31/24

90-Day Expiration Date: 3/20/24; Extension Expiration Date: 9/18/24

Mark Magrecki, Penn Terra Engineering & Wendy Fulton, The Keith Corporation representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed the applicant received comment letters from Ms. Rackus dated 8/20/24 and Mr. Clark dated 8/20/24.

Mr. Magrecki made a brief presentation to give an overview of the project. They feel they can address all outstanding comments.

Mr. Clark stated they have no issues with the waivers and have been working with Tractor Supply for quite a few months and are comfortable with the plan.

Mr. Bolton wanted clarification on the Sidewalk Deferral, as to whether it's for both roads or just MacArthur. Mr. Magrecki clarified that it's just for MacArthur Road and there will be sidewalks and curbing on Columbia.

Ms. Rackus asked for a revised Sidewalk Deferral for the record, which they will submit.

Resident Ms. Poshefko asked a question re: duplication of services.

Ms. Rackus stated that the Board of Commissioners would like confirmation of the Planning Commission's support of any Curb & Sidewalk Deferrals.

Mr. Clark also mentioned that the Planning Commission should note their approval of the waiver request.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for Preliminary approval contingent upon addressing all comments in Ms. Rackus' & Mr. Clark's comment letters, all waivers, with the revision of the Curb & Sidewalk Deferral to only include MacArthur Road and the Planning Commission's support of the Curb & Sidewalk Deferral for Columbia Street.

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

Mr. Magrecki asked to be upgraded to Final plan approval.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for Final approval with all conditions noted above.

Motion by Ms. Freyman, second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken, 6-0 for Final approval.

2) INDEX #2049-24A – TRACTOR SUPPLY COMPANY STORE

3581 W. Columbia Street

Conditional Use

Zoning District: C2-A

Original Submission Date: 7/23/24

60-Day Expiration Date: 9/23/24

Mark Magrecki, Penn Terra Engineering & Wendy Fulton, The Keith Corporation representing the applicant.

Mr. Magrecki reviewed the submission for a Conditional Approval request re: the sale of recreation vehicles (such as all-terrain vehicles/four wheelers) and utility trailers, with a maximum length size of 20 feet.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for recommendation of the Conditional Use approval.

Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Zelena. Vote taken 6-0 to recommend Conditional Use approval.

3) INDEX #2031-23A – 1176 MICKLEY SELF-STORAGE

1176 Mickley Road

Land Development

Zoning District: C-2

Original Submission Date: 10/24/23; Revised Submission Date: 7/19/24

90-Day Expiration Date: 2/15/24; Extension Expiration Date: 2/15/25

Bradley Rafuse, Hearthfire Capital & Lena Barone, French & Parrello Assoc. representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed the applicant received comment letters from Ms. Rackus dated 8/20/24 and Lehigh Engineering dated 8/20/24.

Ms. Barone reviewed the Self-Storage project on the former site of Green Acres on Mickley Road. They have received all variances re: building height, parking and coverage of principal structure. Ms. Barone has been working with Mr. Clark re: Stormwater management and final plans, as well as working with other agencies to obtain permits. They have received connection approval for sewer service and NPDS, they have also received verbal approval from the NBMA for water connection. She also reviewed the comment letters. In Ms. Rackus' letter, Ms. Barone addressed the concern with garbage after locker clean-out and said the on-site manager would address those issues and they arise and hire a hauler to remove garbage. In Mr. Clark's letter, she

questioned the level grading area for the emergency building egress location. Further clarification will be needed from the building codes dept. Mr. Clark requested that the lot line adjustment be added to the Title Block as a Lot Consolidation plan.

Ms. Ruhmel questioned the sidewalk accessibility brought up by the LVPC.

Ms. Barone stated they would need to provide an accessible ramp and will make accommodations around any obstacles.

Mr. Geissinger asked about the access driveway on the plan, which appears shaded out. Ms. Barone stated that is a paved, striped-off area for pull-off & parking of a U-Haul or larger vehicles.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for Preliminary approval contingent upon addressing all comments in Ms. Rackus' & Mr. Clark's comment letters, all waivers, with all conditions noted below.

- Label recorded plan as Lot Consolidation
- Egress pad shall be subject to Building Code review
- Traffic impact fee will be determined with input from Benchmark Engineering
- Evaluate and construct sufficient area to provide ADA clearance around existing obstructions

Motion by Ms. Freyman, second by Mr. Zelena. Vote taken, 6-0 to for Preliminary approval.

Mr. Magrecki asked to be upgraded to Final plan approval.

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion for Final approval with all conditions noted above.

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

4) 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: 8/1/24

90-Day Expiration Date: 9/19/24

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

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

Keith Lawler, KCE, MaryKay McMahon representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed the applicant received comment letters from Ms. Rackus dated 8/20/24 and Lehigh Engineering dated 8/19/24.

Mr. Lawler briefly reviewed the plan, and most comments can and will be addressed.

Mr. Lear stated that the requested Sidewalk Deferral would need to include and alternate route, if suitable.

Mr. Lawler clarified that they are referring to Mauch Chunk & Schadt Avenue and discussion ensued re: the Sidewalk Deferral and placement of future sidewalks.

Mr. Lear expressed concerns with the rock outcropping and possible stormwater issues, will need clarification of living zone's elevation and some loading ratios are larger than permitted. He also stated that they are fine granting the waiver for the velocity in the storm pipe. The PPL easements were reviewed re: parking lots & wood shop.

Atty. Oldaker requested that the applicant submit an extension request, based on the items that still need to be addressed.

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

Motion by Ms. Ruhmel, second by Mr. Szewczak. Vote taken, 4-0 to table with 2 abstentions.

5) 2050-24A – BRIDGE STREET RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION

4151 Bridge Street
Major Subdivision/Land Development
Zoning District: R-4
Original Submission Date: 8/1/24
90-Day Expiration Date: 11/21/24

David Wilson, CED & Philip Malitsch, representing the applicant.

Chairman Bolton confirmed the applicant received comment letters from Ms. Rackus dated 8/20/24 and KCE dated 8/21/24.

Mr. Wilson reviewed the plan, which is a 7.92-acre property, and they are proposing 14 single family residential lots, located off Bridge Street. The site has some steep slopes and has received Zoning relief re: lot size for 2 of the lots. Waivers were reviewed, as was the Sidewalk Deferral request along Bridge Street and the north side of the driveway, because of grading issues. Also discussed was the right-of-way requirements of 55'. There are some substantial grade changes that will make it difficult to go from the current 38' to 55'.

Mr. Szewczak clarified the Sidewalk Deferral request location and thought there might be value to installing a sidewalk at that location for access to the IRT.

Mr. Wilson & Mr. Malitsch stated that the slope at the proposed deferral location would make it difficult to install sidewalks. Mr. Wilson asked if a crosswalk across Bridge Street might be beneficial.

Mr. Clark said it needs to be looked at further to see what makes the most sense. He also suggested that discussions with WCSD are needed, to see how they want to approach the student bus stop situation.

Mr. Clark wanted restrictions noted on the plans re: flood plains, that those areas are restricted for sheds, pools, etc. Also, the cul-de-sac would need a 20' x 20' easement with a curb cut for snow removal purposes. He also mentioned all storm water basins need to be inspected every 3 years, so the Township inspectors will need access to that area.

Mr. Geissinger inquired about the home designs, and Mr. Wilson stated more design details will be revealed in future plans.

Mr. Zelena confirmed that the Stormwater Management is part of lot 3.

Resident Ms. Rosene asked a couple questions about landscaping, sidewalks & stormwater management, re: the Coplay Creek.

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

Motion by Mr. Zelena, second by Ms. Ruhmel. Vote taken, 6-0 to table.

B) DISCUSSION ITEMS:

SALDO Submission Requirements

Ms. Rackus said they are looking at what the Township can transmit and receive with the current IT system. Hopefully, she will have more information at the next meeting. Most likely there will be a 'sharing site' where PC members can access the plans.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Ms. Rackus reviewed the timeline re: advertisements, pre-quote meeting (which will be online) and then the update will be in September. Opening proposals will be at the end of September and then some interviews to select the consultant. The PC members are welcome to join any meeting that are able/willing to attend.

C) OTHER:

Approval of July 2024 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Bolton entertained a motion to approve the July 2024 minutes, motion carried 6-0.

D) ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10 pm.