

**LOWER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes for February 26, 2007

The Lower Pottsgrove Township Planning Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, February 26, 2007. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Geoffrey Dailey, at 6:30 p.m. and the following were in attendance:

Geoffrey Dailey, Chair
Frank Cebular, Vice Chair
Nick Hiriak
Rich Wood (*Left the meeting at 7:33 p.m.*)
Ron Dinnocenti

Alyson Elliott, Assistant Manager
Thomas Yuhas, Township Engineer
Matthew Edmond, MCPC
Susan Ebling, Engineer

A motion was made by Mr. Dinnocenti, seconded by Mr. Wood, and carried unanimously by a 5-0 vote to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2007 meeting with changes recommended by Mr. Dinnocenti and Mr. Cebular .

Mr. Dailey welcomed Susan Ebling, an Engineer with Bursich Associates, Inc. who has been working with Tom Yuhas on Lower Pottsgrove Township planning and engineering matters. On behalf of the Planning Commission, he welcomed Ms. Ebling and said he looked forward to working with her.

OLD BUSINESS

(#06-05) Buchert Ridge Community II, Preliminary Land Development Plan: Proposal for a 38-unit, mixed-use, age-restricted development consisting of garden apartments, singles, twins, and triplexes; a community center; offices; accessory buildings; and a bus turnaround on 5.86 acres at 2011 Buchert Road in an R-2 Residential District. [Plan prepared by ProTract Engineering, Inc., dated 12-04-2006, and consisting of 17 pages].

The applicant, Wil Hallman, and the applicant's engineer, John McMenamin, represented this application. Mr. McMenamin began by discussing the progress made on the applicant's conditional use hearing for §425.5 Steep Slopes, which was rescheduled by the Board of Commissioners for March 22, 2007. The applicant worked with Township staff to prepare revised exhibits showing elevations for the buildings on the steep slopes as per the Planning Commission's request and to demonstrate a hardship requiring the grant of conditional use. Since the February Planning Commission meeting, several changes were made to the site layout to accommodate staff recommendations and alleviate pressure on the steep slopes: the retaining walls behind the apartment buildings were removed, the triplexes were rotated to allow more parking and remove retaining walls in the vicinity of these buildings, retaining walls near the garage and pool have been reduced to improve the overall aesthetic of the area. The Planning Commission was generally accepting of these revisions and did not vote to amend its recommendation on the conditional use from the February meeting.

Hearing no objections, Mr. McMenamin discussed the Phase II Land Development plan with regard to the Bursich review letter dated February 21, 2007. Mr. Hallman said after reviewing the plan, he and his staff determined that it might be a better design to rotate the triplex (units 8, 9 and 10) to reduce the retaining walls and create more parking and asked the Planning Commission if it had any objections to this change. Mr. Dinnocenti said he liked the change. Mr. McMenamin said the Bursich review letter was rather lengthy and wanted to generally address the waivers that he would request which would match those requested in Buchert Ridge Phase I and are related to road design. The Planning Commission had no significant objection on the waivers he would be requesting.

Mr. Dailey asked if there would be bumper/wheel stops on the parking spaces. Mr. Hallman responded that they would only be used where necessary because they impede wheelchairs and are tripping hazards. He often uses guardrails if there is a need for such cues. Mr. Dailey asked if the Fire Marshal had commented on the plan. Ms. Elliott said he had not yet responded.

Mr. Dinnocenti inquired about the architecture of the buildings. Mr. Hallman said the design was not finalized, but showed some pictures of similar buildings.

Mr. Edmond reiterated comments from the MCPC review letter about extending sidewalks and paths throughout the site to improve site connectivity. Mr. Hallman responded to questions about the sidewalk on Buchert Road, saying that he and Rod Hawthorne had met with property owners to discuss locations and other technical details for the sidewalks.

Action: No action was taken at this meeting.

(#06-07) John J. & Megan A. McMenamini, *Minor Subdivision Plan*: Proposal for a three-lot subdivision on 8.1 acres at 2039 North Pleasant View Road in an R-1 Residential District. [Plan prepared by ProTract Engineering, Inc. dated 06-12-2006, last revised 11-11-2006 and consisting of 1 page].

Mr. McMenamini represented this application. Mr. McMenamini explained that he will create two lots on the site, with two 50-foot right-of-ways on either side of the existing dwelling so he can preserve his right to subdivide the property at a later date.

Mr. McMenamini asked the Planning Commission for its opinion on whether he would be required to install sidewalks. The Planning Commission discussed the pros and cons of a sidewalk at that location, citing that it was in a more rural area of the Township and that it would be very difficult to put sidewalks at that location because of the telephone pole, stormwater drainage and proximity of house and fence to the road. Mr. Edmond pointed out that the Planning Commission would want to think about potential linkage opportunities this site might have and where people might be walking to/from in the future.

Mr. McMenamini requested a recommendation of approval from the Planning Commission. Ms. Elliott said she would not support such a recommendation until the applicant has received approval from DEP for sanitary facilities.

Action: A motion was made by Mr. Hiriak, seconded by Mr. Cebular, and unanimously approved by a 4-0 vote, to recommend a waiver from the requirement to install sidewalks on this property. Applicant was directed to bring plans back when he receives approval from DEP.

(#06-15) Tanager Woods Development LLC, *Minor Land Development Plan*: Proposal to develop a 6,471 sq. ft. drive and parking area, 399 sq. ft. of sidewalks and stormwater system on .448 acres in an R-4 Residential District with a VC Sanatoga Village District Overlay. [Plan prepared by ProTract Engineering, Inc., dated 10-06-2006 and consisting of 7 sheets].

Mr. McMenamini represented this application. Mr. McMenamini received approval from the Planning Commission for this project at the January 22, 2007 meeting, but did not request approval for a waiver from the requirements of §504 of the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, which requires that driveways utilized by commercial businesses and two-way traffic maintain a minimum paving of 24 feet. Mr. McMenamini said the proposed driveway will be 24 feet wide at the entrance and for the first 20 feet; however, it narrows to a width of no less than 12 feet for a distance of approximately 27 feet due to space constraints caused by the existing building and property line. Mr. McMenamini said there will be suitable visibility to allow one vehicle to stop and allow vehicles to pass through the narrow area one at a time.

Action: A motion was made by Mr. Hiriak, seconded by Mr. Cebular, and unanimously approved by a 4-0 vote, to recommend approval of a waiver from §504 of the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS

(#07-01) Saylor Tract, Subdivision & Land Development Plan: Proposal for a 13-lot subdivision on 8.96 acres at 1559 North Pleasantview Road in an R-2 Residential District. [Plans prepared by Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, dated 01-19-2007 and consisting of 22 pages].

Ted Kochen and Jason Engelhardt represented this application. Mr. Kochen presented a plan that offered 13 lots on 20,000+ sq. ft. lots. The lots were arranged along two cul-de-sacs that allowed the existing farm complex to remain on a 1.21 acre lot in the center of the property. Mr. Kochen and Mr. Engelhardt met with Township staff and discussed utilizing the cluster option to reduce the impact on the National Register Eligible farm complex. This option would reduce the need for retaining walls, provide more land for the farmstead, allow the applicant to connect the two cul-de-sacs and align the road to Donna Lane across North Pleasantview Road.

The applicant responded to the Township's request by presenting 12 lots on 10-12,000 sq. ft. parcels, and the farmstead on a 2.75-acre lot. During analysis of the cluster scenario, the applicant determined that it might require a smaller number of waivers and zoning relief to work under the R-2 zoning regulations, rather than the cluster, and ask for waivers from the subdivision requirements. The applicant then asked the Planning Commission if they had a preference for 10,000 sq. ft. lots or 12,000 sq. ft. lots. After some discussion, the members of the Planning Commission said they did not have a preference and would support Township staff recommendations, so long as the lots were no smaller than 10,000 sq. ft. Mr. Kochen expressed a preference for the 12,000 sq. ft. lots which would allow the homes and side load garages to fit on the lots.

Mr. Dinnocenti asked who would take care of the open space – it seems too small for a Homeowners Association (HOA). Mr. Kochen replied that it probably would not be an HOA because there did not seem to be enough homes to support one, but the open space areas could be planted in low maintenance native grasses. Mr. Dinnocenti also asked about stormwater management on the site. The applicant is working with the Township to determine the feasibility of eliminating the proposed basin and connecting the project's stormwater system to the existing Township system near the Township building on North Pleasantview Road.

Mr. Dailey asked if the applicant would treat the farmhouse and barn as one lot – would it ever be subdividable? Mr. Kochen said he would be willing to talk about a deed restriction that would prevent it from further subdivision.

Mr. Dailey expressed concern that the road connecting the two cul-de-sacs would be too narrow for emergency vehicles to pass and questioned whether it was sufficiently wide enough to meet the requirements of the Township's ordinances and the liquid fuels program. Mr. Engelhardt explained that he designed the connector road to be 20 feet at the request of the Township staff. Mr. Yuhus explained that this width was recommended to reduce speed and cut-throughs from the neighboring development. Mr. Dinnocenti said he did not like the narrow width of the roads in Sunnybrook, which has parking on one side. Mr. Yuhus said this road would be narrow, but prohibit parking on both sides. Mr. Dailey said he would need convincing that it would be appropriate to reduce the road width to 20 feet and wanted to have the Fire Marshal weigh in on the road width. Mr. Yuhus said Township staff would work with the applicant on creating alternative plans that enabled safe emergency access and maximized traffic calming.

Mr. Edmond said the revised plan already incorporated many of the comments in his review letter. He reiterated that the house and barn are National Register Eligible sites, which carries as much weight as if they were listed on the National Register, and would like to preserve as much land around the site as possible in order to maintain the historic setting, even if it meant the applicant would have to have smaller lots or less lots on the site.

Action: No action was taken at this meeting. The Planning Commission asked the applicant to work with Township Staff to work through some of the issues/concerns discussed.

(#07-02) Chestmont Storage, LLC, Amended Site Plan. Proposal to amend the Chestmont Storage land development plan, approved by the Board of Commissioners July 21, 2005 (Resolution #612), to pave an additional 2,953 sq. ft. to enable access to approximately 10 garage doors along the front of the two-story building located at the rear of the site on four acres at 1500 Industrial Boulevard in an IN Industrial District. [Plans prepared by ProTract Engineering, Inc., dated 08-02-2004, last revised 01-24-2007, and consisting of nine pages].

Mr. McMenamain represented the applicant. He explained that the applicant is adding more paving to the site and will be moving some trees and a light post to accommodate an increased number of storage spaces on the site. Mr. Edmond and Mr. Yuhas said they had no problems with the proposed changes.

There was discussion about a proposed temporary trailer on the site that the applicant would use for office space to allow them to do business while the site is under construction. Members of the Planning Commission expressed concern about allowing a trailer on a temporary basis because the applicant has not defined what temporary means. They would prefer not to have the trailer on the site at all because there is office space proposed on the site.

Action: No action was taken at this meeting. The applicant will need to address the trailer and a review letter from the Authority Engineer has not yet been received.

OTHER BUSINESS

1289 Washington Street

The applicant, Mr. Frank McLaughlin, and the applicant's engineer, Mr. McMenamain represented this project, which involves a 9+ acre parcel in the R-2 Residential District. Mr. McMenamain said he and Mr. McLaughlin presented a sketch plan to Ms. Elliott a few weeks ago. She encouraged them to look into a cluster option, similar to that which the Saylor project looked into. This would bring the same yield as the R-2 requirements would allow, but because the lots were smaller, would require less disturbance and help preserve the stream. He presented a plan with approximately ten 12,000 sq. ft. lots, which would probably be governed by a small HOA. The area of the site with the stream would remain open space to be governed by the HOA or dedicated to the Township. It would have public water and sewer. Mr. Yuhas expressed concern about the location of the access road in relation to Washington Street. Mr. McMenamain said he met with PennDOT and asked their opinion as to the best location for the drive. Their suggestion was incorporated in the plan presented at the meeting.

The Planning Commission generally favored the proposed plan and asked the applicant to work with Township staff on the details. They also requested the applicant show the floodplain on any plans presented to the Planning Commission and Township.

Zoning Ordinance Rewrite

Mr. Edmond reported that Township staff is meeting February 27, 2007, to continue its review of the sign ordinance. He will be meeting with staff more often to increase the pace.

Joint Lower Pottsgrove and Limerick Township 422-Sanatoga Interchange Gateway Study

Ms. Elliott reported that the Requests for Proposals were sent out to 17 consulting firms. They will receive responses by March 8 and are planning to interview consultants the week of March 12.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m. by a motion made by Mr. Cebular, seconded by Mr. Hiriak, and unanimously approved by a 4-0 vote.

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for March 19, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Alyson Elliott, Assistant Manager