

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
February 9, 2023 – 5:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL MEETING**

Participants: Commission Members – Mr. Melosky, Mr. Malozi, Mr. Burgos and Ms. Cohen. City staff included Darlene Heller and Craig Peiffer of the Planning and Zoning Bureau, Tiffany Wells, Traffic Superintendent, Amy Rohrbach, Project Engineer, and Attorney Matthew Deschler, Solicitor to the Commission.

Election of officers – Attorney Deschler chaired the meeting initially so that members could elect a chair for 2023. Mr. Malozi made a motion to re-elect Mr. Melosky as the chair of the Commission for 2023. Ms. Cohen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. At this point Mr. Melosky chaired the meeting. Mr. Melosky made a motion to re-elect Mr. Malozi as vice chair. Mr. Burgos seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Melosky nominated Darlene Heller as secretary. Mr. Malozi seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 8, 2022.**

Ms. Cohen made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Burgos. The minutes were approved as presented.

**LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW**

- A. (22-015 LD&S) – 22100005 – 1780 EAST FOURTH ST. (SHEETZ) - Land Development and Subdivision Plan – Ward 17, Zoned IR plan dated October 13, 2022.** The applicant proposes to construct approximately 6,000 square foot Sheetz with a drive through window and gas pumps.

Mr. Charles Unangst from Hanover Engineering and representative for Sheetz discussed the proposed plan. Mr. Unangst noted that a request was submitted to the City today to waive placement of a sidewalk along Emery Street. Ms. Heller indicated that the Public Works Director will need to review the request and then give a recommendation to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Heller addressed the City comments. Mr. Malozi asked for clarification of sidewalk waiver location. Mr. Unangst indicated that the request is only along Emery Street. Mr. Malozi also inquired about pedestrian connections and accommodations at the intersection of Emery Street and Route 412. Mr. Melosky asked what the sidewalk length is on Emery Street. Mr. Unangst indicated it is approx. 300 feet and will be a dead-end sidewalk.

Mr. Malozi asked if there is a LANTA stop on the south side of Emery Street. Ms. Rohrbach noted that it is farther down 412.

Ms. Cohen mentioned her concern for pedestrians coming from other side of the street and walking along Emery Street because it is more efficient. She would like to renew her concern when the deferral request is on the agenda. She is also concerned about pedestrian traffic from the existing sidewalk to pavement of the property. She believes that there needs to be a distinct connection and crosswalk due to volume of pedestrians that will be in the area. Mr. Unangst indicated that he can accommodate this request.

There were no comments from the public.

Ms. Cohen made a motion to approve the project at 1780 East Fourth Street contingent upon the completion of the items listed in the January 25, 2023 letter from the City of Bethlehem, need for time for the City offices to review the waiver for the sidewalk on Emery Street and a safe crosswalk be provided from the

existing Fourth Street sidewalk to the perimeter of the proposed building. The motion was seconded by Mr. Burgos.

Attorney Deschler asked if the applicant is aware that the plan will be approved with the requirements of the sidewalks at this point. Mr. Unangst agreed and will discuss the recommendations with Public Works. Mr. Deschler also asked if all conditions of the letter are acceptable which Mr. Unangst indicated that they are.

Being no further discussion, Mr. Melosky requested roll call on the motion. The motion passed, 4-0.

- B. (22-014 LD) – 22100003 – 2897 EASTON AVE. - Land Development Plan – Ward 14, Zoned RS plan dated October 12, 2022 and revised December 24, 2022.** The applicant proposes to construct two (2) multi-family apartment buildings with a total of 54 units with associated parking on a 2.7-acre lot.

Mr. Preston is representing the applicant along with Joe Rentko, the Project Engineer. Mr. Preston stated that there is a Zoning application pending due to a parking setback that they do not meet. Mr. Preston then turned the presentation over to Mr. Rentko.

Mr. Rentko discussed the proposed plan. He noted that they did a karst study and will be building a stormwater facility under the parking lot to collect runoff from neighbors' yards, treat it and whatever doesn't get infiltrated will pipe into City's stormwater system. Mr. Melosky commended them for this as it was of concern to neighbors.

Mr. Melosky asked Mr. Preston about the January 25, 2023 comment memo. Mr. Preston indicated that the applicant will comply with everything listed on the memo.

Mr. Villani presented the proposed elevation facing Easton Avenue. Mr. Melosky asked if there were any comments from the Planning Commission. Ms. Cohen noted that on the prior plan there was an area that had more of an amenities entrance which gave a "front" to the eastern portion of the building which the current plan does not show. Mr. Villani noted that they initially were going to have an entrance between the 2 buildings. After working with PennDOT and doing a scoping plan they thought it be best to focus on where the bus shelter will be. Mr. Rentko noted that the building parallel to Easton Avenue was moved to the northeast to put the driveway in alignment with the Giant across the street, per PennDOT's request. Ms. Cohen is happy to see that the east side of the building has detail that makes the building look like it is facing the road.

Ms. Cohen asked Mr. Rentko to go over the variances that were granted by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Mr. Malozi asked why the LANTA bust stop shelter moved from their prior submission. Mr. Rentko noted that he believes that LANTA requested the shift because the existing shelter on the south side of Easton Avenue is at that location. Mr. Rentko added that it may need to shift more to the north east because the bus may block the driveway entrance.

Mr. Burgos asked questions about the storm sewer.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the land development application for 2897 Easton Avenue contingent upon meeting all conditions outlined in the City's January 25, 2023 review letter including the successful approval by the City's Zoning Hearing Board of any remaining relief required for the project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Burgos. The motion passed, 4-0.

- C. (22-003 Sketch Plan Review) – 22120003 – 2235 W. BROAD ST. (HANOVER APARTMENTS) – SKETCH PLAN REVIEW – Zoned CL, plan dated November 23, 2022.** The applicant proposes to develop multi-family apartment buildings consisting of 317 units along Hanover Avenue and West Broad Street, on an 8.74-acre lot.

Mr. Preston is representing the applicant. With him are Duane Wagner, Project Representative, and John Anderson, Engineer with Cornerstone Engineering,

Mr. Preston indicated that they are here for sketch plan review. The project is located in the City of Bethlehem and City of Allentown. They had sketch plan review with City of Allentown's Planning Commission already.

Mr. Wagner went through the presentation slides for the Planning Commission. The slides gave an overview of the project and the site's surroundings.

Ms. Heller discussed the January 26, 2023 comment memo from the City of Bethlehem. She noted that because there is a municipal boundary Bethlehem will coordinate utility, storm and traffic with the City of Allentown. Ms. Heller also discussed comments in the January 11, 2023 letter from the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) who reviewed the plans against the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan.

Ms. Heller indicated that the Planning Commission received written comments from neighbors, Mary Jo Makoul of 449 Grandview Boulevard and Teresa Kloiber of 345 Grandview Boulevard.

Mr. Melosky provided Mr. Wagner with an opportunity to respond to the City and EAC comments. Mr. Wagner noted that he spoke with Ms. Heller regarding the landscaping along Broad Street and is seeking relief from the Zoning Hearing Board for the parking on the first floor versus having a commercial use fronting on W Broad Street. He believes that this will be more of a conversation as the project moves forward. Mr. Wagner showed a conceptual video of the site as it relates to the topography and floor heights.

Mr. Wagner stated that they submitted a traffic analysis as part of their submission. The existing condition of the Hanover and Wahneta Street intersection is currently a level-of-service A and that it will remain a level-of-service A following construction.

Mr. Wagner noted that there are no required traffic improvements necessary from PennDOT. Ms. Wells noted that they received the traffic study and will be reviewing it with the City of Allentown in two weeks. There is concern about the Broad Street and Club Avenue intersection. Mr. Wagner stated that he is willing to discuss how they may be able to help with appropriate improvements at that intersection.

Mr. Malozi asked if there is an entrance existing now on Wahneta Street. Mr. Wagner noted that there are several curb cuts but they are reducing the curb cuts to one to be most efficient. Mr. Wagner also noted that it is an Allentown Street. Mr. Malozi asked if there was consideration to moving buildings close to Wahneta. Mr. Wagner noted that from a circulation standpoint, visitor parking and fire circulation, the current layout worked better. The Municipal boundary also sets the position of the buildings. Allentown planning staff had the same comment however they preferred this layout. Mr. Preston noted that it simplifies the inter-municipal zoning analysis.

Mr. Malozi indicated that residents are concerned about stormwater and runoff. He asked how much of a change there will be in impervious coverage. John Anderson, Engineer with Cornerstone Engineering, indicated that it is currently 98% impervious coverage. The new plan adds additional 10% pervious coverage (not including the courtyard). There is currently no stormwater mitigation on the property.

Ms. Cohen asked about the garage doors and access. Mr. Wagner stated that they will be locked doors. She also noticed that there are no dumpsters on the plan. Mr. Wagner stated that they are looking to have them inside the buildings in the podium area. With regards to the bike storage location, she asked about how someone using a bike would go through the site. Mr. Wagner indicated that there are sidewalks within the site.

Mr. Burgos asked if there is going to be any storm layout inside the garages? Mr. Wagner indicated that it will be a solid floor and will incorporate drainage.

Mr. Melosky noted that Lynn Rothman, Chair of the EAC provided recommendations. Mr. Wagner indicated that they will incorporate what they can from the EAC letter.

Mr. Melosky opened the floor up to public comment:

Mr. Paul Fondl of 413 Grandview Boulevard provided a comment letter. He indicated that in 2016 there was a petition given to the City of Bethlehem and City of Allentown, signed by over 200 people requesting a study and to install skid resistant macadam, rumble strips and warning signs on Broad and Hanover. Mr. Fondl mentioned that the City of Allentown will also be building apartments on the south end of Wahneta Street which will add to the traffic. He has concerns about water problems, the need for a buffer along Ritter Street, Bascom Street and Florence Avenue. Lastly, he noted that the height of the proposed buildings compared to existing buildings too high.

Ms. Mary Jo Makoul of 449 Grandview Boulevard is also concerned about traffic, height of the buildings and water run-off. She stated that there will be additional noise and accidents that could occur should dogs get out of the dog park. Lastly, she noted that this will be a hinderance on the nursing and rehab center that parks along Wahneta Street.

Ms. Teresa Kloiber of 345 Grandview Boulevard agreed with prior comments. The rehab center uses parking along Wahneta Street and asked if there is a plan for overflow parking. She asked if the school district can handle extra children and do we have enough teachers. She also asked if tax dollars will go to Allentown and if taxes will go up.

Mr. Melosky asked Mr. Wagner to address the demographics and potential affects on the schools. Mr. Wagner noted that there will be little to no impact. Ms. Heller noted that all students would be part of the Bethlehem Area School District.

Ms. Dawn Jastrzenski of 2067 West Broad Street agrees with all prior comments. She noted that speed limit signs were not replaced when they were knocked over by accidents. She is concerned about public safety and noted that there are children in the area. She also mentioned that there will be additional housing constructed where the Allentown State Hospital used to be which will add to the traffic.

Mr. Melosky urged Ms. Jastrzenski to voice her safety concerns to the School Board as well. The City will make note of this if/when the project occurs.

Ms. Melissa Sherer of 340 Central Park Avenue asked if this is Section 8 housing, what will this do to property value and will there be private security in the area.

Beatrice of 457 Grandview Boulevard agrees with everyone that previously spoke.

Mr. Christopher Danyluk of 251 Grandview Boulevard agreed with prior comments and stated that they should consider more parking for the units.

Mr. Bill Scheirer of 1890 Eaton Avenue mentioned the migration of people from New York and New Jersey moving to the Lehigh Valley. He noted the need to preserve the quality of life in Bethlehem.

Mr. Melosky turned to the Planning Commission members for any additional comments. Being none, Mr. Malozi made a motion that the Planning Commission forward comments to the Zoning Hearing Board in the City's January 23, 2023 review letter along with highlights of the testimony today regarding traffic concerns, traffic safety, pedestrian safety, stormwater and building height. Mr. Malozi pointed out the January 11, 2023 letter from the EAC that is also attached to the comments. Mr. Melosky seconded the motion which passed with a 4-0 vote.

**D. (23-002 LD Master Plan) – #23010007 – Martin Tower Complex Revised Master Plan Review – 1170 Eighth Avenue, Ward 13, Zoned OMU, Plans dated January 10, 2023.** The Applicant proposes to subdivide the parcel thereby creating Lots 1-6; lots 7-8 have been previously subdivided and approved as: Lot 7, a 60,000 SF medical office building and Lot 8, a 42,000 SF medical office building, with 496 shared parking spaces and other site appurtenances. Lot 1 is proposed as future development. Lot 2 is proposed as a three-story, 200 room hotel, totaling 225,000 SF, with 400 parking spaces and other site appurtenances. Lots 3-6 are proposed as four, five-story and one four-story residential buildings, totaling 1,085 dwelling units, in 1,612,793 SF, and with 2,526 parking spaces\* and other site appurtenances. The parcel totals 51.67 acres.

\*Off street parking calculations are based upon 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit.

Mr. Preston indicated that the same individuals that presented the Hanover Apartments are presenting this project.

Mr. Duane Wagner reviewed the new plan that was submitted.

Ms. Heller discussed the February 2, 2023 review letter from the City. Mr. Wagner will try to do what is possible to comply with the comments as they get further into the planning process. He noted that they will try to address the EAC comments and continue to work with LANTA.

Mr. Melosky asked Mr. Wagner to elaborate on the future use of Lot 1. Mr. Wagner noted that it is in the future plan and would look at office, commercial or potentially additional housing or hotel space. It would depend on the demand at the time and what is allowed.

Mr. Malozi noted that the project is evolving nicely. He stated that the residential portion is maxed out. He wants to see this as a high-quality development.

Ms. Cohen noted that there is a property in Florida called Seaside. She suggested looking at that for mixed use ideas. She is concerned that this project is heavily residential and doesn't have the scale and mix as in the prior master plan. She also had comments on the number of parking spaces and the entrance to the site having signage identifying the area as a whole. She recommended residential amenities and park-like setting instead of detention pond. She would like the feel more of a neighborhood. She has a concern with the effect on Burnside Plantation and encourages a small-scale building in that area. Mr. Wagner noted that they will work with Planning to minimize the impact on Burnside Plantation. Their goal is for a neighborhood feel. It will be walkable and they are working on how to incorporate an area acknowledging the history of the site.

Mr. Malozi added to Ms. Cohen's comment on the need to make the area feel like a neighborhood.

Mr. Melosky asked if there is any comment on the phasing portion of the project that Ms. Heller mentioned in the February 2, 2023 review letter. Mr. Wagner indicated that there is no information at this time.

Mr. Bruce Haines from Hotel Bethlehem, stated that initially he wanted a residential community only. He complimented Mr. Wagner and Mr. Herrick on the new plan. He said he would increase the number of residential buildings even more to support Westgate Mall and the Historic District.

Mr. Bill Scheirer of 1890 Easton Avenue stated that he agrees with Mr. Haines about the commercial portion but indicated that it an awfully large number of residential units.

Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the Martin Tower revised master plan located at 1170 Eighth Avenue contingent upon meeting the comments and recommendations contained in the City's January 23, 2023 review letter and also the comments made by Planning Commission members at the February 9, 2023 Planning Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melosky and passed with a 4-0 vote.

**5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

Mr. Melosky congratulated Ms. Wilma Rosario for her new position in the Department of Community and Economic Development. She will be in attendance at the next Planning Commission meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
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Darlene Heller, Commission Secretary