

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
August 12, 2021 – 4:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL AND VIRTUAL MEETING**

Participants: Commission Members – Mr. Malozi, Mr. Barker, Mr. Burgos, Mr. Melosky, and Ms. Cohen. City staff included Darlene Heller and Tracy Samuelson of the Planning and Zoning Bureau, Basel Yandem and Amy Rohrbach of the Engineering Bureau, and Attorney Edmund Healy as Solicitor to the Commission. Attending in person were Atty. Jeff Fleischaker, Joseph Rentko, Eng., Mr. Alain Aoun, Duane Wagner, Kevin Fruck, Eng. Jason Shulter, Jeff Ward, Press, Don Wetmore and Marilyn Wetmore. Attending virtually was Lani Goins, Press.

Mr. Melosky explained the new rules of a hybrid meeting as both live and virtual.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 8, 2021.

Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2021 Planning Commission meeting with a correction to the description to site plan at 130 W. Goepp St. The motion was seconded by Mr. Barker and passed with a 5-0 vote.

2. LAND DEVELOPMENTS AND SITE PLANS

A. 3410-3412 LINDEN STREET– SITE PLAN REVIEW – Ward 14, Zoned RG, plan dated July 15, 2021.

The applicant proposes to merge two (2) lots into one (1) and construction of a 2 story building containing 16 dwelling units above on a 0.9939 lot acre.

Atty. Fleischaker introduced Mr. Joseph Rentko and Mr. Alain Aoun. Atty. Fleischaker is looking for recommendations from the Planning Commission to the Zoning Hearing Board on variances for parking spaces and also a density variance regarding the units.

Mr. Rentko explained the engineering side of the project and stated they would comply with almost all comments stated on the City's August 6, 2021 letter but are looking for feedback and comments from the Planning Commission so that he can have a further discussion with the Zoning Hearing Board on giving them relief on parking spaces and 16 units instead of 10 units which is what is allowed by right.

Mr. Melosky asked Ms. Heller if Planning Commission can give recommendations on the amount of units. Ms. Heller stated that the Planning Commission have given recommendations in the past and can do so. Ms. Heller also stated the final decision on density or any zoning relief will come from the Zoning Hearing Board.

Mr. Melosky asked the applicant to explain their concern regarding the parking lot layout that was addressed in the City's letter of August 6, 2021.

Atty. Fleischaker explained the parking lot was a preferable esthetic choice for the developer. Having a clean sight line to the parking is important. Atty. Fleischaker also noted that on page 4 of the August 6th letter, Zoning made a suggestion of placing the building on the southern lot line, which would be a 90 degree shift. That was noted to preserve mature and vegetation in the northwest of the property. He mentioned there are some mature trees on the side of Linden Street. Atty. Fleischaker said they are here with an open mind on the building layout.

Mr. Malozi asked the reason for the layout of the building and if it would be possible to have the building shifted up front on the site so to have more of a pedestrian scale up front. If you have more pedestrian scales with the buildings up front instead of the parking lot, that's more desirable.

Mr. Malozi also commented on the curb and sidewalk along Linden Street. That would be important too. Mr. Malozi understood that they are looking for 16 units instead of 10 units by right and also the square footage for the variance is 4,000 square feet per dwelling unit by right and looking to drop down to 2,700 square foot per dwelling unit. He also commented the concern is to not have the parking visible.

Ms. Cohen asked if the applicant can describe the adjacent properties. Atty. Fleischaker said that he believes the Southside was commercial, Northside is residential and in the back is come residential. Ms. Cohen agrees with Mr. Malozi that the preferred parking be in the back or side and continuation of the sidewalk is important. Ms. Cohen also would like to see the building façade have a residential feel rather than commercial. Ms. Cohen stated the current drawings have more of a hotel look.

Ms. Samuelson voiced the two main concerns. First, the service parking lot being in the front. Also, the 16 units when 10 units are permitted by right.

Mr. Melosky spoke about turning the building, he asked would that be possible to allow the 16 units. Atty. Fleischaker stated he wouldn't think it would make a difference.

Mr. Barker suggested maybe a height change to 3 story instead of 2 ½ story building. Ms. Heller explained that according to the Zoning Ordinance, they can go up to a 3 story building. Atty. Fleischaker said they would go back and explore the best way to present the building in the land development.

Mr. Melosky asked if there are any other comments.

There were no comments from the public.

Mr. Malozi made a motion that the Zoning Hearing Board consider the comments by the Planning Commission including the site layout, parking in the rear or otherwise around the building, the building height as a potential way to maximize the footprint for other uses on the site, the esthetic treatments of the building to look more residential in character versus commercial along with curb and sidewalk as a priority along the frontage and pedestrian access throughout the side connecting to curb and sidewalk. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melosky and passed with a 5-0 vote.

B. 2958 & 2970 Linden Street– Land Development and Lot Consolidation Plan – Ward 14, Zoned CS, plan dated June 10, 2021. The applicant proposes to consolidate 2 lots to construct a 61 unit apartment building, a 2400 square foot restaurant and a 133 space parking lot.

Mr. Duane Wagner presented the plan and introduced Mr. Kevin Fruck from Keystone Engineering and Mr. Jason Shulter from Traffic Planning and Design.

Ms. Cohen stated that some of the crosswalks are not connected to the sidewalk system and asked if there's a way to incorporate them together so that people don't walk on grass and then sidewalk. Mr. Wagner stated that the main entrance connects with a sidewalk by the emergency exit. Therefore, pedestrians and bikes can have access with non-vehicular access. Ms. Cohen asked if the plans for the breakdown ballers on the emergency drive have been reviewed by the emergency services in the City. Mr. Wagner replied they have not reviewed it with the Fire Department but they have seen them used by them and they will coordinate with the Fire Marshall to make sure he is satisfied with what he puts there.

Ms. Cohen also commented that she noticed they are working with the City Forester to replace the knocked down trees. Mr. Wagner stated that a lot of the trees on the east edge would be damaged with the development of the project. They are replacing every tree that will be removed.

Mr. Malozi asked about the link from the corner of the building to the sidewalk. He would hate to see crosswalks lead to grass or to a tree. Mr. Wagner stated that there's a tree right at the crosswalk that is going to be shifted to the east so that the crosswalk doesn't end at the tree trunk. Instead of the sidewalk, they are

thinking of putting a hardscape paver system in so that people can walk on it safely. They would still have the direct access to the sidewalk for anyone coming from the service road.

Mr. Melosky asked for any comments from the City. Ms. Samuelson stated that the traffic impact assessment report is being studied for the HOP by Ms. Wells and the Traffic Consultant.

Mr. Melosky asked were there any comments from the public.

Ms. Marilyn Wetmore, 1201 Butztown Road, represented the Executive Board of the Greenleaf West Condo Association which is located west of the landscaping strip. Ms. Wetmore stated they were not aware of the first Planning Commission meeting as they wanted to discuss some issues on the plan. She also thought there was a Zoning Hearing Board meeting that did not pass all the requested variances. Mr. Wagner replied that there was a variance that was denied related to a drive aisle setback from the building, but it has been addressed on this plan and it did not impact the project. Ms. Wetmore asked how close the parking spots will be to the actual backyard of the condo association. Is it possible to move the building. Mr. Wagner responded that there is a slope issue so, unfortunately, they cannot move the parking spots. Ms. Wetmore is also concerned with the height of the building and the size. Mr. Wagner explained that the height of the building is a by right height so they are not changing the height. Ms. Wetmore asked if they can keep the mature trees. Mr. Wagner stated, unfortunately, they need to remove them and replace them with new ones. Ms. Wetmore asked if they moved the dumpsters. Mr. Wagner confirmed that the dumpsters were moved to another location.

Mr. Don Wetmore, 1201 Butztown Road, asked Mr. Wagner about the stormwater runoff. He stated that their property is towards the Northeast and he's concerned because the water travels in that direction. Mr. Wagner described how the stormwater will be designed. It will be collected through inlets throughout the site and there will be underground detention. That detention will hold the water and release at a rate that is less than what comes off the property now. It will be a controlled release.

Mr. Malozi voiced some suggestions from the EAC letter regarding a Northampton County program for financing solar projects, the inclusion of bike racks, vehicle charging stations. Mr. Wagner responded they are going to look at exploring all options. He also stated that they are looking at using solar where they can, for example the parking lot lights.

Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the application for a lot consolidation and land development at 2958–2970 Linden Street contingent upon meeting all the conditions outlined in City's review letter dated August 6, 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. Barker and passed with a 5-0 vote.

4. DISCUSSIONS:

The Planning Commission discussed rescheduling of the September meeting.

Ms. Samuelson reminded members that there are current opportunities for training through LVPC.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

ATTEST:



Darlene Heller, Commission Secretary