
MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD
February 13, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Melosky, Chairman
Matthew Malozi, Vice Chairman
Joy Cohen
Thomas Barker
Eddie Burgos

VISITORS PRESENT

Monty Kalsi, R&D Homes, LLC
Chris Geary, Acela Architects and Engineers
Laura Eberly, Reuther + Brown
Brent Tucker, PE, Pidcock
Stuart Pidcock RA, AICP, Pidcock
Michael Recchiuti Esq., Kolb, Vasiliadis, Florenz & Recchiuti, LLC
Gabe Moyer, Bethlehem Property Group, LLC
Drew Moyer, Bethlehem Property Group, LLC
Vince Marucci, RA for 11-15 W. Garrison Street

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Matthew Deschler Esq., Solicitor
Craig Peiffer, Bureau of Planning & Zoning
Basel Yandem, Public Works
Stephany Sebesta, Secretary

The February 13, 2024, meeting of Planning Commission held at the City of Bethlehem Town Hall, was called to order by Chairperson, Robert Melosky at 5:00 PM.

AGENDA ITEM #1: APPROVAL OF MINUTES January 9, 2025

Motion #1: Ms. Cohen

Second: Mr. Burgos

Result of Vote: The motion carried 4-0-1 Mr. Malozi abstained.

AGENDA ITEM #2: LAND DEVELOPMENT & SUBDIVISION REVIEW

Property Location: 1742, 1746 & 1800 Elliot Avenue

Property Owner: R&D Home, LLC

Developer/Engineer: Monty Kalsi, a managing member of R&D Homes, LLC and Chris Geary of Acela Architects and Engineers

Proposed Work: The applicant proposes to consolidate Lot A - 1746 Elliot Avenue (6,000 SF / 0.1377 Acre), Lot B - 1742 Elliot Avenue (12,000 SF / 0.2754 Acre) and Lot C - 1800 Elliot Avenue (6,000 SF / 0.1377 Acre) and vacate and consolidate the adjacent portions of Craig Avenue (3,250 SF / 0.0746 acre) and Moll Street (2,000 SF / 0.0459 acre). The consolidated parcel will total 29,250 SF / 0.6714 acres.

Discussion: Mr. Geary gave a brief overview of the proposed plan. The Land Development proposes to construct two, 2, 750 square foot buildings each building will have four multi-family units. The Applicant is proposing to reconstruct and widen Elliot Avenue and add public sidewalks.

Mr. Melosky asked if the fence Clear Site Triangle issue has been resolved that was discussed previously in December. Mr. Geary responded that he spoke with the architect and it has been resolved because fence is not required atop wall at the area that includes the Clear Site Triangle because it is under 30" in height.

Mr. Peiffer spoke about the February 5, 2025 review letter and the zoning comments in regard to the significant amount of tree growth that will be removed. With the proposed plan, the applicant cannot accommodate all the replacement trees so the City Forester has agreed that 37 of the 41 trees may be planted on City-owned property elsewhere. The last to note in the zoning comments is the applicant needs to confirm that the buildings do meet the definition of 2 ½ stories for the district it is located in and trash recycling areas are ostensibly screened from view as required. Mr. Peiffer reiterated what Attorney Deschler said in regard to the sanitary sewer easement being executed as a requirement and contingent upon the lot consolidation.

Mr. Melosky asked the Applicant and the engineer if they would be in compliance with everything in the February 5, 2025 review letter. Mr. Geary and Mr. Kalsi both affirmed they are willing to comply with the City's letter.

Ms. Cohen asked if elevations had been provided. Mr. Peiffer responded that Zoning comment 2 indicates that the elevations were not included on page SP-1 of their latest submission. Mr. Kalsi attested the buildings are 2 ½ stories and they can provide the elevations.

Mr. Malozi asked if the easement and consolidation deed were sufficiently captured in General Comment 3. Attorney Deschler answered that Public Works comment and the General comment both are sufficient for the easement.

There were no comments from the public.

Motion #2: Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the Land Development and Subdivision plan as presented contingent upon the applicant meeting all the comments of the February 5, 2025 review letter.

Second: Mr. Barker

Result of Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM #3: LAND DEVELOPMENT & SUBDIVISION REVIEW

Property Location: 1355 Easton Road

Property Owner: Beacon Rock Realty, LLC (Peter Wong)

Developer/Engineer: Reuther + Brown (Laura Eberly)

Proposed Work: Representing the property was Laura Eberly of Reuther + Brown. The applicant has modified the plan from the original submission, including enlarging the building addition footprint, relocating or revising vehicle and trailer parking and providing a fire access lane. Note: not all of the changes are contained within revision clouds, but can be identified by a heavier line type. The applicant now proposes to construct a 104,238 SF warehouse addition to an existing 315,643 SF manufacturing and warehousing facility for EcoPax. The parcel totals 24.41-Acres or ~1,063,300 SF.

Discussion: Ms. Eberly gave a brief overview of the proposed plan. Ms. Eberly spoke about the February 6, 2025 review letter. After speaking with fire, it was agreed upon two additional hydrants will be installed on site and an expansion of the water line will occur to meet the requirements.

Mr. Peiffer spoke about comments in the EAC letter. They encourage green roofs, natural vegetation, rooftop solar using the CPACE program if possible. Lastly, the EAC spoke of their concerns of the proximity of the site to Saucon Creek and would like the applicant to find ways so that there is a limit to any kind of runoff from the roof or paved area into the creek.

Ms. Cohen asked if the new Fire Access Road will be one-way and will a sign be provided at the street entrance. Ms. Eberly stated it will be one-way and there will be arrows to indicate such but agrees a sign can also be provided. Ms. Cohen asked if the road would be limited to fire access only. Ms. Eberly responded it is to her knowledge that it will be fire access only. Ms. Cohen wanted confirmation that the Fire Chief approved the 15ft wide access road, Ms. Eberly affirmed. After speaking with the Fire Chief, it was agreed upon that the addition of two fire hydrants will be sufficient in this location.

Mr. Malozi wanted clarification to General Comment 4 (a), and asked the Applicant if the driveway in question was the new proposed fire access road.

Ms. Eberly confirmed the fire access road is referred to in General Comment 4 (a).

Mr. Melosky asked Ms. Eberly if she is in agreement and compliance with the City's February 6, 2025, review letter. Ms. Eberly affirmed this statement.

There were no comments from the public.

Motion #3: Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the Land Development Plan as presented contingent upon complying with all comments on the February 6, 2025, review letter and the installation of two new fire hydrants.

Second: Mr. Melosky

Result of Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM #4: LAND DEVELOPMENT & SUBDIVISION REVIEW

Property Location: 2545 Schoenersville Road

Property Owner: Lehigh Valley Health Network

Developer/Engineer: Brent Tucker of Pidcock Co.

Proposed Work: The Applicant proposes to construct a three-story, 93,500 SF expansion of the existing emergency department with a helipad on the roof. The project proposes the demolition of an existing medical office building, relocation of some access drives, expansion of existing parking areas and the necessary revisions to utilities and stormwater management.

Representing the property was Brent Tucker of Pidcock Company, John Bennett of LVHN, VP of Design and Construction and Stuart Pidcock of Pidcock Company. Mr. Tucker gave a brief overview of the proposed plan. The Emergency Department (ED) will double in size and there will be more parking to accommodate all patients and visitors. Mr. Tucker talked about the temporary helipad that will be placed in the northwest corner of the property. Applications to the FAA and PennDOT Bureau of Aviation have been submitted. Mr. Melosky asked how long the temporary helipad would be in use. Mr. Tucker explained the helipad would be used for two years while the new ED and helipad are constructed. Mr. Tucker is also in contact with Lehigh Valley International Airport as required in the City's ordinance.

Mr. Peiffer stated the sidewalk would need an access easement because it is on private property. Mr. Peiffer mentioned comments of the EAC letter in regard to having a canopy over the bike racks which the developer has already provided. The EAC also made a comment to potentially add EV charging stations or at least the infrastructure for EV charging stations in the new parking lot.

Mr. Melosky asked Mr. Tucker if he and the Applicant are in agreement with the City's February 4, 2025 review letter. Mr. Tucker has confirmed that they are in agreement.

Ms. Cohen asked which entrance would be for patients and ambulance. Mr. Tucker explained the entrance on the east side of the new ED will be the patient's entrance and the current entrance to the ED is where ambulances will arrive. Ms. Cohen asked if the parking lot is higher than the road and if the landscaping on the plan is primarily shrubbery. Mr. Tucker affirmed the parking lot is higher than the road and noted there are trees and shrubs to be planted. Ms. Cohen lastly asked about the extent of the sidewalk the Applicant is proposing. Mr. Tucker explained the sidewalk will connect to the existing ramp at Westgate Drive and Schoenersville Road and proceed north to the parking lot entrance to the old Coordinated Health. Ms. Cohen asked if a crosswalk could be added in the North where the new parking lot is proposed, Mr. Tucker agreed.

Mr. Malozi asked besides the 83 bed ED, what are the additional beds for. Mr. Tucker explained they will be for patients admitted and/or surgical patients. Mr. Malozi asked if the Applicant would seek a sewage planning exemption, Mr. Tucker affirmed and stated the exemption has been submitted.

Motion #4: Mr. Malozi made a motion approve the Land Development Plan contingent upon meeting the criteria of the February 4, 2025 City's review letter and install a crosswalk on the North side of the property which will extend from the sidewalk on the western side of the driveway slightly south of the 20'0" BRL designation.

Second: Ms. Cohen

Result of Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM #5: ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

Property Location: 11 and 15 West Garrison Street

Proposed Work: The Applicant proposes to amend the zoning map changing each parcel from the High-Density Residential District (RT) to the Commercial Central Business District (CB).

Mr. Peiffer gave a brief summary of the memo to the board and read comments from the LVPC's letter.

Attorney Recchiuti spoke about the proposed Zoning Map change and what the Applicant proposes to do if approval is given. Gabe Moyer of Bethlehem Property Group, LLC, which is acting as a developer and representing the

applicant BPG II, LLC gave more detail as to why they are seeking the Zoning Map change. BPG II, LLC owns nine contiguous parcels, seven are currently zoned CB and two are RT. If the Zoning Map change does get approved by City Council, the Applicant is looking to construct a 70 unit building with commercial on the first floor.

Mr. Melosky asked what is currently at 11 and 15 West Garrison Street. 11 West Garrison Street is currently two units and both currently occupied and 15 West Garrison Street is vacant and in disrepair. The tenants that currently reside in the properties owned by the Applicant are on month-to-month lease. The intent is to give the tenants substantial notice prior to any project taking place. Mr. Melosky asked Mr. Moyer if they had any discussions in trying to salvage the two units. Mr. Moyer explained that it would be a part of the alternative plan and the building shape would differ and they would lose parking. Attorney Recchiuti added that the two parcels are currently non-conforming.

Mr. Malozi asked if the current tax revenue is known compared to the proposed tax revenue. Mr. Moyer responded the increase would be approximately ten percent.

Ms. Cohen asked if the properties south and west of the parcels are zoned RT. Mr. Moyer and Attorney Recchiuti stated the parcels to the west of West Garrison Street are RT and those on West North Street are CB.

Mr. Melosky asked why it was originally denied by City Council. Attorney Recchiuti explained the vote was 4-3. There were residents who came to speak out against the change. Mr. Melosky asked if they are willing to speak with the community to get their feedback. Attorney Recchiuti explained they are meeting with some members of City Council who have met with the North Side Alive Group to try and talk about street scape. Surrounding businesses are in favor of this zoning change as well. Mr. Moyer stated that they are willing to have more dialogue with the community about this change. Mr. Melosky asked how many commercial spaces could be accommodated. Mr. Moyer responded potentially four.

Motion #5: Mr. Malozi made a motion to offer a positive recommendation to City Council and specifically recommend they approve the petition on behalf of the applicant for the Zoning Map Change of 11 and 15 West Garrison Street from High-Density Residential (RT) to Commercial Central Business (CB) as stated in their December 30, 2024 petition to the City.

Second: Mr. Barker

Result of Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM #6: DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Peiffer gave an overview of upcoming items for the Planning Commission.

There being no further business, upon a Motion by Mr. Melosky, a Second by Mr. Malozi, and a unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.

ATTEST:

Craig D. Peiffer, Commission Secretary