

Department of Community and Economic Development

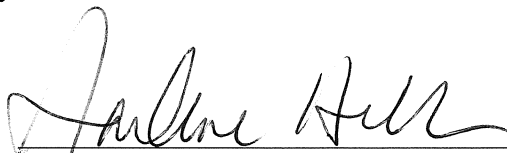
Interoffice Memo

SUBJECT: Walnut Street corridor street vacation
FROM: Darlene Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning
TO: Michael Colon, City Council President
DATE: January 11, 2024

At its January 11, 2024 meeting, the Planning Commission voted 4 to 0 to forward a favorable recommendation to City Council for the approval of the Bethlehem Parking Authority's petition to vacate a portion of Walnut Street with the findings of fact and conclusion as noted in the January 5, 2024 memo from the Planning Bureau. The recommended approval, therefore, includes the conditions that the City's traffic consultant provide a favorable review of the proposal and that all public utility sign offs are finalized.

Please feel free to reach out if you would like to discuss this information further or if you have any questions.

Cc: Council Members
M. Deschler
L. Collins
Mayor Reynolds
B. Yandem
C. Peiffer
S. Fernstrom, Parking Authority



Darlene Heller
Director of Planning & Zoning

Enclosure

CITY OF BETHLEHEM

Department of Community and Economic Development Interoffice Memo

TO: Planning Commission members

FROM: Darlene L. Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning

RE: Proposed partial street vacation at 33-61 West Walnut Street
Bethlehem Parking Garage

Attached is a formal petition and related information submitted by the Bethlehem Parking Authority (BPA) to vacate a portion of Walnut Street between Guetter and New Streets related to the redevelopment of the Walnut Street Garage site.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The area requested for vacation extends along the south side of Walnut Street for the length of the BPA property frontage that will include the newly proposed garage. The requested width of the vacation is 8 feet. (See attached map, Exhibit A of the BPA petition.)
2. The proposed vacation does not close Walnut Street at any point; however, the vacation will narrow the street corridor.
3. The BPA owns all of the road frontage along the area requested to be vacated.
4. The vacation will not prohibit or otherwise affect access to any other nearby properties.
5. The street vacation request is a part of the overall redevelopment proposal to construct a new parking garage at 33-61 West Walnut Street.
6. As a part of the overall redevelopment of the parking garage site, the street vacation allows for the reconfiguration of the Walnut Street Corridor in this block to calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety. The street vacation allows for the removal of the existing left turn lane and the widening of sidewalk. The vacation allows for the right sizing of the public realm in this block.
7. Any necessary relocation of public utilities will be addressed at the time of land development review and construction of the new Walnut Street garage.
8. The Public Works and Fire Departments have also reviewed the proposal and their comments are included in this memo.
9. A brief traffic study to review any possible impacts related to the removal of the left turn lane was forwarded to the City's traffic consultant for review. We currently await their response.
10. The street vacation includes a small 318.85 square foot triangular area on the south side of Walnut Street west of Guetter Street. This area is proposed to be vacated merely to straighten out the curve of the street. It does not change any of the existing conditions for sidewalk width or cartway width.

CONCLUSION

Because the proposed street vacation creates an opportunity to right size the cartway and sidewalk areas, the Planning Bureau supports the proposed street vacation areas with the conditions that:

1. the response from the City's traffic consultant is also favorable, and
2. all public utility sign offs are completed as the review process moves forward.

We recommend that the street vacation be forwarded to City Council with a favorable recommendation that includes the two noted conditions.

This item will be placed on your January 11 agenda for consideration.

CC:	Mayor Reynolds	M. Deschler
	L. Collins	B. Yandem
	C. Baer	C. Peiffer
	Steve Fernstrom	Richard Roseberry

DATE: January 5, 2024

Darlene Heller
Darlene L. Heller
Director Planning and Zoning