

LOWER MACUNGIE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING – January 12, 2021

The January 12, 2021 meeting of the Lower Macungie Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Tom Beil at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Meeting. Commission members in attendance: Tom Beil, Jon Hammer, Tim Pickel, Amy Miller, **Bob Rust (?)**, Al Perez, and Wesley Barrett. Also present were Nathan Jones, Director of Planning and Community Development, Bryan McAdam, Township Engineer, CKS Engineers, and David Brooman, Township Solicitor.

Reorganization

Mr. Hammer nominates Mr. Beil for Chairperson for 2021. Second by Mr. Perez. No Public Comment. Motion carries. Mr. Perez nominates Mr. Hammer for Vice Chairperson for 2021. Second by Mr. Pickel. Motion carries. Mr. Hammer nominates Mr. Perez for Secretary for 2021. Second by Mr. Pickel. Motion carries.

Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Perez, second by Mr. Hammer, all in favor, to approve the December 8, 2020 meeting minutes.

Woodmont Policy Discussion

Mr. Jones provided an overview of the project. A preapplication meeting was held regarding the redevelopment of the Allen Organ site. The development team is inquiring about the possibility of a phase two setting for Woodmont Properties. This would include the carriage home concept that is currently in phase one.

Attorney Durso gave a background on the history of the Grandview site. Allen Organ sold lots to the Weis Markets that is currently under construction as well as the current Woodmont property. They kept one parcel for their current building which they are now interested in selling. The development team is asking for the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners to allow for the apartment site and to take credit for the existing pad sites and the Weis Markets rather than proposing additional commercial in the Rt. 100 corridor.

Attorney Durso shares the concept plan showing the proposed apartments along with an open space area.

Mr. Santola, Executive Vice President and General Counsel at Woodmont Properties joins the discussion. He states that the carriage house model has been quite successful in their first phase. He feels that in the current climate, the township would be more preferential to have an open space/park along Rt. 100 instead of commercial space that may or may not become occupied.

Mr. Bahnick of Van Cleef Engineering joins the discussion. He states that the proposed new phase will be approximately 14 acres in size. The plan provides for 129 carriage homes in 10 separate buildings. The project will have a conventional "Woodmont" layout, which is a loop layout that is successful in their other locations. The plan will provide for at least 100ft of green space between the units.

Mr. Pickel states his concerns for the traffic impact with the new buildings. Attorney Durso states that they had thought of this, and it was one of the reasons that they were looking at just residential for this area, due to the fact that commercial would potentially bring more congestion.

Mr. Perez questions what the potential pervious coverage would be compared to what is currently existing. Mr. Bahnick states that the percentage of pervious coverage would be greater with the potential residential development rather than commercial.

Mr. McAdam states that the way the parcel sits now, most of the open space would have to be defined as storm water management, and not as the open space requirement.

Mr. Varneckas, Vice President of Development and In-House Engineer at Woodmont Properties joins the discussion. He states that regarding the open space there is an existing detention basin as well as a small depression that will be accounted for. A wetlands consultant was at the site and determined that there were no wetlands on site.

Mr. Beil states that he feels that a loophole is being used to be able to be granted to gain development. He would like to see a true mixed-use development. Mr. Perez, Mr. Pickel, Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Hammer voice their agreement with this statement.

No public comment has been made.

The development team thanks the commission for their time and direction.

A brief recess is taken to allow for attendees to exit and enter for the next item of business.

DE 20-006- ABE Doors Redevelopment 6776/6718/6692 Hamilton Blvd- Land Development

Mr. Jones states that the applicants have resubmitted the plan addressing comments that were made by the planning office, township staff, and the township engineer. The westerly portion of the site would include a proposed car wash with vacuum spaces. The easterly portion includes a retail pad that would include the existing ABE Doors in a new location as well as several other uses. Parking will be in the front due to the fact that underground storm water storage will be. There will be two entrances off of Hamilton Blvd. One entrance will be a two-way entrance and the other will be a one-way entrance. The existing sycamore trees will be located along the planned pathway. There are proposed berms, street walls, and sound walls to compensate for potential noise issues with the neighboring properties.

Mr. Jones states that he had attended a field meeting and met with an arborist to discuss the sycamore trees. He states it was a productive meeting and cataloged the impact. He further states that from a planning perspective, most of the comments have been fully addressed at this time.

Mr. McAdam states that he is comfortable with the fact that his concerns can be addressed. After speaking with the CKS Landscape Architect, he feels that the meeting was very positive and will be waiting for the report from the arborist. He states that there must be movement with the end wall being shifted to not impact and existing tree. He reports that as of time of reporting there is no objection from PennDOT so far on their plans. His final statement is that he feels that they are in better shape at this time for the project than they were two months ago.

Attorney Eric Schock, and Jason Buchta from Ott, and Andrea Kenney from the applicant's team have joined the meeting.

Attorney Schock states that he feels confident moving forward due to obtaining the PennDOT letter as well as the positive feedback from the arborist.

Mr. Buchta states that while in the meeting with the arborist, concerns over gas line placement were addressed. There is an option to do a directional drilling for the gas line which would give the ability to not have to trench it and be able to drill under the tree. This would minimize any disturbance to the tree. He states the arborist was very receptive to this idea.

Mr. Hammer questions if there is PennDOT concerns at this time. Mr. Buchta states that there is one concern regarding the one-way in driveway, but it will be worked out and there is no effect on any other concerns. Mr. McAdam comments that a plan showing the sycamore trees is being requested from PennDOT.

Mr. Perez questions the hours of operations on this project, especially the car wash and vacuum area. Mr. Jones states that regulation of the hours of operation was spoken of in the Conditional Use hearing. Mr. Perez also questioned if there is a mechanism in the wash tunnel to catch the soapy water to block it from going into the storm water basin. Attorney Schrock states that there is something in the build of the car was to handle that. Mr. Perez questions the amount of vacuum spaces. Mr. Buchta states that there should be no obstructions to sight when backing out of a space. Ms. Kenney confirms that this design is something that has been done previously and it does work well.

Mr. McAdam states that there is a condition regarding the hours of operation. They are 7:30am until approximately 8:00pm Monday-Friday and 8:00am until 6:00pm Saturday and Sunday.

Mr. Beil states that comments will need to be addressed for the next Planning Commission meeting. The development team agrees that this will be able to happen.

A public comment was made by Donna Barrick questioning the hours of operation for the outdoor dining and why the buffer is only 10 feet from the property line. Attorney Schrock responds that the minimum requirement per ordinance for the buffer is 10 feet. No hours have been set for the restaurant at this time.

A public comment was made questioning the chemical discharge from the car wash possibly leaking into neighboring property wells. Attorney Schrock states that car wash is self-contained and therefore that will not be a concern. Attorney Brooman states that per regulations there also has to be a back-up containment system for any chemicals.

A public comment was made regarding concerns over the berm. All concerns will be addressed at the next meeting.

A motion to table action on this plan was made by Mr. Hammer. Motion was seconded by Mr. Perez. Motion carries 6-0.

Department Report

Mr. Jones states that the next Workshop to go over the one-year zoning look back will be held Tuesday January 19th at 6pm. This meeting will be held via Zoom. Mr. Jones goes over what will be contained in the language packet before it is sent out. There is a commission discussion at to what they would like to see.

Mr. Jones states that Emmaus Borough that the Fields at Indian Creek off of Indian Creek Road will be doing a new, small phase in Emmaus. The only impact it will have on Lower Macungie Township will be the exit that will be coming out on Indian Creek Road for the new residences.

Other Discussions

No further discussion at this time.

There being no further business, motion made by Mr. Hammer, second by Mr. Barrett, all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Boyer, Permit Clerk
Lower Macungie Township