

LOWER MACUNGIE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING – February 9, 2021

The February 9, 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, Al Perez, Tim Pickel, Amy Miller, Bob Rust, Jon Hammer, 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.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Beil stated that minutes from the January 12, 2021 meeting are not ready, so the minutes will be approved at the next Planning Commission meeting.

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

Mr. Jones provided an overview of the project. He stated that the ABE Doors Redevelopment Group have had multiple meetings with a registered landscape architect and an arborist regarding the sycamore trees on Hamilton Blvd. The proposed development is currently the existing ABE Doors location as well as adjoining lots. A system of mitigation has been approved and reviewed that will secure the sycamore trees before, during, and after construction. This location is in the Commercial Zone.

Mr. Jones states that Sycamore trees will be preserved along with a privacy wall along the back of the proposed car wash and a Class C Buffer along the east and west sides of the property. He notes that from a planning perspective, there is a high level of comfort in this project due to multiple rounds of review and the conditional use process that has taken place.

Mr. Jones states that the architectural renderings have been requested and the applicant's engineer states that this is currently in process. He recommends that before this plan gets to the Board of Commissioners, these would be in receipt. He is confident that this will happen.

Mr. Jones states that dark sky lighting will be implemented as a note for concerned neighbors who may be viewing this meeting.

Mr. McAdam states that the bigger concerns of the sycamore trees and PennDOT have been addressed. He is pleased with the outcome of the plans for the sycamore trees as long as there will be monitoring during construction. He states that PennDOT is generally accepting of the entrances and frontage improvements, but he does not believe that a permit is in hand. The drainage along the berm in the rear has had revisions that address the engineers concerns. He states he is comfortable with knowing that his list of "cleanup" comments will be able to be addressed. Mr. McAdam strongly recommends that the traffic related comments be addressed in their entirety before the plan is submitted for review by the board.

Attorney Eric Schock, Jason Buchta from Ott, Janet and James Lett property owners, and Andrea Kenny from the applicant's team have joined the meeting.

Attorney Schock states that renderings are indeed in process. He states that the team is looking forward to moving forward with the plan as is at this time.

Mr. Beil questions if the applicant's team will be moving forward with the recommendations from the arborists report. He was advised that they are happy with the plan and will be in accordance with the report. Mr. Beil asks about the possibility of the street wall being continued instead of stopping and the beginning of a hedge row. Attorney Schock states that this request will be looked into further. Mr. Jones will provide drawings on the types of street walls that are accepted.

Mr. Beil opens the floor to public comment. No comments or questions from the public were made.

Mr. Rust states that the Environmental Advisory Committee will be pleased to know that there are plans for the saving of the sycamore trees.

Motion made by Mr. Hammer second by Mr. Pickel, all in favor, to send a letter to the Board of Commissioners stating the Planning Commission recommends approval of the Land Development plan for ABE Doors Redevelopment conditioned upon compliance with all Township Engineer, Planning Department and Zoning Officer review letters. Motion carries by a vote of 7-0.

Spring Creek Properties Settlement Subdivision Mertztown Residential Subdivision- Sketch Plan

Mr. Jones states that the Pidcock Company, on behalf of Jaindl Land Company, has submitted a 400 residential dwelling unit subdivision. He states that these lots are subject to the Spring Creek Settlement Subdivision. Provisions were granted through the court for this lot specifically to allow for the number of mixed units to be built. The plan calls for single family dwellings as well as two streets of townhomes. This is in the Zoning District Overlay.

Mr. Jones states that the Zoning and Land Development Ordinances that this plan will be reviewed under is the April 29, 2010 ordinance. As part of the MOU there is no recreation land dedicated or proposed to be dedicated. Nor is there a recreation fee in lieu of this required.

Mr. Jones states that is important to note that this design would require a redesign of Locust Lane and its confluence with Brookdale Road. The Plan Engineer is proposing a T-Intersection in both cases as opposed to the current layout. Two proposed access roads will lead into Upper Macungie Township. He notes that the applicant should pay close attention to the clear sight triangles when making plans for street trees, signs, etc.

Mr. Jones states that the green space along Mertztown Road will propose several storm water management features. One comment that was suggested was the opportunity for a trail or path system for residents. This suggestion was taken favorably by the applicant.

There are three lots (48,49, and 50) that are impacted by the 500-Year floodplain. Possible shifting of the lots has been recommended. The proposed pumphouse is also potentially impacted by the floodplain. It is wished for the possibility to have that moved around for safety and access purposes.

Mr. Jones states that given the density and size of the development, the Board of Commissioners may want to talk about their potential policy about private roads vs. public roads.

Mr. Jones states that this development would make a good TND, Traditional Neighborhood Development. Between the trail system and the TND, he feels this development could truly shine.

Mr. McAdam states that since this was just a sketch plan, most of the items he would view were covered by Mr. Jones. He states that the proposed t-intersection would be a dramatic improvement from what is currently there. He states that the Township Engineers are in favor of the concept. PennDOT will be weighing in on their affected roads to apply to the eventual development design.

Mr. McAdam states that from the provided calculations, a gravity sewer would not be plausible and that the pump station would be necessary.

Mr. McAdam states that pertaining to the floodplain, he feels that it may not be as accurate as it could be and that the applicant may want to look further into this with onsite topography to work with FEMA for a possibly floodplain line shift.

Attorney Joe Zator, David Jaindl, Adam Jaindl, and Project Engineer John McRoberts from the Pidcock Company have joined the meeting.

Attorney Zator states that the reason behind there not being any intention for dedication of any recreation land is that this was an overall 700-acre development and in connection with that entire project there was a great deal of open space land dedicated to the township and it was scheduled to be done in various phases. In accordance with the wishes of the Township, Mr. Jaindl moved forward with the dedication of the land in advance of the schedule that had been attended.

Mr. McRoberts states that Lots 1,2, and 14 are the previously dedicated lots that address the required recreation improvements. He continues that the primary access point on Locust Lane, the developer would be obligated to widen Locust Lane by 10 feet along the entire length, about 2,000 feet of frontage. This would equal to about 20,000 SqFt of roadway widening.

Mr. McRoberts states that they are working with Sun Pipeline to relocate the existing easement.

Mr. McRoberts states that the Homeowner's Association will own and maintain the 23 acres of open space to include the storm water basins.

Mr. Zator states that public road ownership was always envisioned for this development. It is really part of the settlement agreement and court order. The basins will be set as private ownership, but in 2010, the roads were left as public. This was part of provisions in the SALDO agreement.

Mr. Rust states his concerns for how many homes are shown in the development. He does agree with the previous statements regarding private vs. public roads. He states that the EAC does have some concerns regarding additional stormwater flow and the quality of water.

1:04:18 (WHO??) states that there should be no additional concerns over the quality and quantity of water flow.

Mr. Beil questions if the 400 units are referenced in the settlement agreements, this was confirmed to be true. The agreement allows for single family, townhomes, and apartments. However, apartments are not a part of the plan at this time. He also encouraged a look into the current trail network within the township.

Mr. David Jandl states that they do like the idea of the trails and they will take a better look into this before the preliminary plan comes in.

Mr. Beil asked about the possibility of tying into the Upper Macungie sewer system, but this was stated as a north to south flow, and Upper Macungie has a pump station as well.

Mr. Beil suggested once a buyer is identified, it would be encouraged to take the Traditional Neighborhood Design elements into consideration.

Mr. Beil opens the floor to public comment. No comments or questions from the public were made.

No further action was needed as this was a sketch plan.

Department Report

Mr. Jones states that the next Workshop will be held Tuesday February, 16th at 6pm. This meeting will be held via Zoom. The intent is to follow up on items that were discussed at the last meeting.

Other Discussions

Mr. Barrett asked Mr. Jones for examples of the street walls. Mr. Jones states that those can be found online at E-Code, but he will circulate some of the designs to the Commission Members via Power Point.

There being no further business, motion made by Mr. Rust, second by Mr. Hammer, all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Boyer, Permit Clerk
Lower Macungie Township