

LOWER MACUNGIE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING – February 14, 2023

The February 14, 2023 meeting of the Lower Macungie Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Tom Beil at 6:06 p.m. in hybrid format. Commission members in attendance: Jon Hammer, Bob Rust and Rudy Fischl. Also, present were Nathan Jones, Director of Planning and Community Development, Brian Cicak, Township Engineer, CKS Engineers, and Mark Fischer, Township Solicitor and Kim Molnar, Lower Macungie Township and John Ashcraft, Conflict Solicitor. Wesley Barrett was absent.

Announcements – Agenda modifications:

Mr. Beil stated the following shall be removed from tonight's agenda at applicant's request:
#4 – Spring Creek Estates Lots 2 & 4

Meeting Minutes

Approval of December 13, 2022 minutes; motion by Mr. Rust and second by Mr. Hammer, and January 10, 2023 minutes motion by Mr. Fischl and second by Mr. Rust, all in favor, motion approved.

Lehigh Valley Town Center Sketch and Zoning Ordinance Request

Mr. Jones stated this is a sketch and ordinance modification to request zone change to allow mixed use in HE district. Other users have now become interested.

Applicant has made changes that originally were recommended and potential uses now changed such as experiential retail use, entertainment user, aquarium and comedy club to make sure uses are allowed. Gas station has been removed being too large of a traffic generator. 700 residential units now proposed will promote success for all retail. Walkable town center very appealing to the interest and uniqueness and size of location. Looking for recommendation to Board of Commissioners to advertise ordinance as offered tonight.

Mr. Beil stated planning commission can let prior ordinance recommendation stand or recommend approval on the revised ordinance before them tonight.

Motion by Mr. Hammer and second by Mr. Rust, all in favor, to move proposed ordinance forward.

Macungie Crossings Condo Unit #2

Mr. Jones stated that John Ashcraft, Conflict Solicitor will be sitting in for this project. Technical items have been worked in great length for design guidelines for the Hamilton Blvd. corridor with renewed façade, awnings and pitched roofing. The rear of the building faces Hamilton Blvd. with double frontage to insure the storefront look and the inclusion of patio for food user. Fairly large utility easements prohibited building from being closer to the road, but will still be visible from Hamilton Blvd.

Mr. Cicak stated plan presentation now meets current ordinance standards and satisfied with changes that have been made.

Motion by Mr. Hammer and second by Mr. Rust, all in favor, to recommend approval of the Home Depot Condo Unit #2 Plan upon the following conditions:

1. The Applicant shall address all comments in the most recent Township Planning Department, Zoning Officer and Township Engineer review letters to the written satisfaction of each.
2. The Applicant shall construct the proposed building in conformity with the elevations shown to the Planning Commission at their February 14th, 2023 regular meeting.
3. The Applicant shall construct the proposed building with the exterior patio and fencing as shown to the Planning Commission at their February 14th, 2023 regular meeting.
4. The proposed retaining wall shall have a facade to be reviewed and approved to the written satisfaction of the Township Planning Department.
5. The Applicant shall install a monument sign at the paved entrance of the lot, as depicted on the plan and with a design meeting the written satisfaction of the Township Planning Department.
6. Waiver will be approved allowing this to be a preliminary final plan.

The Valley at Indian Creek/ 3510 Macungie Rd. Preliminary/Final Subdivision

Mr. Jones stated there have been several iterations of plan and now did receive zoning for 22 homes on loop road that will handle emergency and garbage vehicles. There will be open space, walking trail will tie into abutting park. Recommend street trees be on lawn side and encourage front porches and make sure no conflicts with street trees and stop signs. Management of stormwater basin is largest concern. Landscaping plan is great and privacy buffers for lots 14 thru 22 for privacy from busy road. Lots 4 thru 11 have limited backyards some with conveyance swales.

Mr. Cicak stated a lot of the concerns have been addressed such as removing sidewalks and frontage improvements along Indian Creek Rd. There are concerns around basin design and how easements are identified and ownership and also the dedication of streets and right-of-way needs to be ironed out. Frontage improvements will be done along Macungie Rd. and made suggestions on how to be done.

Applicant reviewed waiver requests and will verify with PennDOT regarding widening of Macungie Rd. Currently provided for 18 trees instead of 50. Will discuss with planning/engineer for options for alternate plantings. One streetlight is proposed at each intersection of loop road and Macungie Rd., adding two or more is recommended. The basin would be maintained by the HOA and an easement granted to property for access and maintenance for portion of Township property.

Mr. Beil suggested to discuss alternatives for the basin easements and feels it's too complicated and the Township should take the road since the HOA is too small to maintain and Township maintains both. Applicant responded they would dedicate to Township or have HOA maintain.

Mr. Beil suggested that Applicant go to the BOC workshop to figure out what happens to the road and get the basin ironed out.

Motion to table plan by Mr. Rust and second by Mr. Hammer, all in favor.

7224 Mountain Road Preliminary/Final Subdivision

Mr. Jones stated this project is on Mountain Road and Gehman Road and is a minor subdivision for Mr. Schenkel creating 3 farmstead lots for family members. Remaining 75 acres on South Mountain and remaining lot for agriculture for preservation status. Sewer tests being done on residential lots. Preservation of South Mountain is paramount. No reason for sidewalk, curbs and street trees on rural roads. Right of way discussions not necessary for Gehman Rd. Recommendation to endorse waivers at staff level.

Mr. Cicak stated sewer testing is ongoing to see where septic fields can go. Design issue is a concern in showing ultimate right of way and how we calculate the lot areas based on that.

Mr. Beil commended Applicant for the preservation of 90 acres and would like to see agreements in place to address right of way and land preservation before subdivision plan approval.

Motion to table by Mr. Hammer and second by Mr. Rust, all in favor.

Prachi Realty, LLC/801 N. Broad Street Conditional Use

Mr. Jones stated this property is at the corner of Broad and New St. and abuts Hamilton Crossings with a mobile home community to the south. Proposed conditional use for a seven residential unit mixed use structure with patio area, tot lot and dog run. New concept of plan meets guidelines of Township and recognize the challenges with pedestrian access to Hamilton

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Crossings. Applicant can install deterrent fencing to go over hill to Hamilton Crossings as a safety issue because of no connectivity. There is no stormwater design yet.

Mr. Cicak stated sketch plan review is providing sidewalk around building and there is substantial concern for site access and walkability and site doesn't provide for that for the mixed use requirement. Use does fit in with property as transitional area but no connectivity. Vehicle access and safety through Hamilton Crossings is better than using Broad Street. There are major hurdles relating to access and the adjacent property.

Applicant stated Hamilton Crossings will not allow them to connect to inlet for stormwater and will not give vehicle or pedestrian access.

Mr. Beil stated two big conditions require pedestrian connectivity and vehicle access to Hamilton Crossings. The third condition is the status of North Broad Street should Applicant make improvements to extend beyond frontage of property. Advised Applicant to work with Nate and Solicitor on these issues and come back next meeting.

Planning Department Update: Modifying Number of Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board Members

Mr. Jones stated Board of Commissioners will advertise ordinance to reduce Planning Commission members from seven to five and the Zoning Hearing Board to increase from three to five and remove alternates.

Mr. Beil thanked Mr. Bob Rust for his many years of service as this is his last meeting and all wish him the best wherever his travels lead.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Rust and second by Mr. Hammer, all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Molnar, HR/Finance Admin. Asst.
Lower Macungie Township