

**NORTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**3256 LEVANS ROAD, COPLAY, PA 18037**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF MAY 22, 2012**

**Meeting** brought to order at 7:30 p.m., on Tuesday, May 22, 2012 by Chairman Richard Celmer.

**Attendance:**

Chairman Richard Celmer	William George
Vice Chairman Brian Horwith	Leonard Nuss
Secretary Bruce Stettler	Joanne Guth
Attorney Lisa Young	Jeff Johnson
Township Engineer Steve Gitch	Planning Administrator Jane Kelly
Supervisor Steve Pany	

**Minutes** of the April 24, 2012 meeting were approved as presented.

**LCA – Conditional Use - Project # NWT 12-012 –3127 Jordan Road, 54.85 acres, PIN 5468 1240 0443, 5.11 acres proposed use for a Wastewater Treatment Plant, AR-I zone, Parcel ID# 5468 1240 0443. SSM Group Engineers, Laura Eberly, PE and John Spitko, PE, along with Attorney James Preston presented the plan.**

- a. Keystone Engineers have reviewed the plan and offered their comments and recommendations in a letter dated May 15, 2012.
- b. Zoning Officer's review is contained in his letter dated May 17, 2012.
- c. Sewage Enforcement Officer's review is contained in his letter dated May 15, 2012.
- d. The plan is proposing to subdivide 5.11 areas from the parent tract along Jordan Road.
- e. There is a dirt road access to the property.
- f. The sketch plan shows a gated access from Jordan Road that will limit vehicular height and weight.
- g. The proposed sewage treatment plant is not located in a flood plain.
- h. The proposed sewage treatment plant location is not within any wetlands on the site.
- i. There are no waivers or variances proposed for this project.
- j. A 200,000-gallon sewage treatment plant is proposed for the site.
- k. The sewage treatment plant will be unmanned for a majority of the time, but monitored part time by an employee at the site utilizing a pick-up truck.
- l. During the construction phase of the project, vehicles will utilize an easement through KidsPeace to enter and exit the site.
- m. The easement access will be maintained on the site after the construction is complete.
- n. A visual buffer is proposed along Jordan Road.
- o. The proposed project will comply with Township Ordinances regarding noise, lighting and odor.
- p. To minimize odors, the sewage will be treated, with ultra violet light and as little chemicals as possible.
- q. The sludge will be taken to another sewage treatment plant through the easement on the KidsPeace property.
- r. **Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson** stated North Whitehall Township does need a Sewage Treatment Plant because the Township has so many existing plants, but they are all at a higher elevation and that will require pump stations. Mr. Johnson stated the plant is needed, but he believes the location is wrong.
- s. **Planning Commission Vice Chair Brian Horwith** questioned why this site? Attorney Preston stated this site was the proposed site in the ACT 537 Plan.
- t. **Planning Commission member Leonard Nuss** stated he is in agreement with Jeff regarding the location; sewage treatment is needed in Schnecksville and to get to that area of the Township will be very expensive. Mr. Nuss suggested the KidsPeace plant should be upgraded and this new plant should be located in a different area. Mr. Nuss also suggested a berm along Jordan Road.
- u. **Planning Commission member Bill George** stated he agrees with Jeff and Leonard regarding the location of the proposed plant, but where can you put the plant and stay out of the Coplay Creek?
- v. **Planning Commission Vice Chair Brian Horwith** questioned why this is the right site? Attorney Preston stated because this area is where the ACT 537 plan stated sewage was needed. Mr. Horwith also questioned what area of the Township the proposed plant would serve. Mr. Spitko stated the west side of Route 309 in the next 10-15 years.
- w. **Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson** stated it is his belief that the problem areas of the Township are on the east side of Route 309.
- x. **Planning Commission member Bruce Stettler** stated there are four sewage plants on the east side of Route 309 that need to be replaced.
- y. **Planning Commission Vice Chair Brian Horwith** questioned the cost to the residents to hook-up and who is financing the proposed plant? Township Engineer Steve Gitch stated there will be no mandatory hook-up. Aurel Arndt from LCA stated the proposed sewage plant will be financed through LCA. Mr. Arndt also stated no matter where the sewage plant is located pump stations would be needed from the Coplay Creek to the Jordan or from the Jordan to the Coplay Creek.

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- z. **Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson** questioned if LCCC has shown any interest in hooking up to the proposed sewage plant. Mr. Arndt stated LCA and LCCC have had discussion on the proposed sewage plant.
- aa. **Planning Commission member Leonard Nuss** asked in what road the sewage line would be constructed to extend the line to Schnecksville? Mr. Arndt stated Old Packhouse Road is the proposed road.
- bb. **Planning Commission member Bruce Stettler** inquired if a second sewage plant might be proposed for the east side of Route 309? Mr. Arndt stated that is a possibility.
- cc. **Planning Commission Vice Chair Brian Horwith** questioned how scalable is the site? Mr. Spitko stated there is room to expand.
- dd. **Supervisor Steve Pany** stated a sewage plant is needed on the east side of Route 309 and the sooner the better, but he is not sure of the suitability of the location of the KidsPeace Plant; normally a sewage plant would be placed on a flat area.
- ee. **Planning Commission member Joanne Guth** questioned the project engineers and Attorney as to whether they were happy with the site for the proposed sewage plant? Attorney Preston stated they do not usually get asked where they think a proposed plant should be placed; they were complying with the ACT 537 location. He has not discussed the proposed sewage plant with the project engineers regarding how any of them feel about the site location. Ms. Guth also questioned the crossing of wetlands? Ms. Eberly stated the wetlands were being crossed to use the same discharge area that is currently being used.
- ff. **Planning Commission member Bruce Stettler** inquired about the purchase of the land; the plan is dated 2006. Mr. Arndt stated they have an agreement of sale.
- gg. **Supervisor Steve Pany** stated a visual barrier should be placed along Jordan Road to block the view from the proposed plant.

Planning Commission has recommended the following conditions:

1. Developer shall address to the satisfaction of the General Planning Engineer the comments and recommendations set forth in his letter dated May 15, 2012
2. Developer shall address the Zoning Officer's comments as set forth in his review letter dated May 17, 2012
3. Developer shall address the Sewage Enforcement Officer's comments as set forth in his review letter dated May 15, 2012.
4. A permit for wetland crossing will need to be obtained.
5. Additional information shall be added to the plan for clarification.

**Comments from the Floor:**

**Jeanene Bauer, 3216 Jordan Road, Orefield**, stated SSM wrote the ACT 537 Plan for LCA and she pleaded with the Planning Commission members to revisit the ACT 537 Plan.

**Ronald Roth, 5353 Route 309, Schnecksville**, stated the proposed sewage plant is needed; maybe the old sewage plant should be rebuilt. The reason the Township is in need of an additional sewage treatment plant is due to the increase in development. Mr. Roth also stated the Parkland School District has a sewage treatment facility of its own. Mr. Roth also suggested a pumping station off of Route 100.

**Karen Komlos, 3211 Jordan Road, Schnecksville**, requested the Planning Commission members to read the ACT 537. Ms. Komlos also pleaded with the Planning Commission to not allow a beautiful section of the Township to be ruined with a sewage treatment plant because of a plan that was written 10 years ago. Ms. Komlos also questioned the method being used to treat the sewage; are reed beds not being used?

**Ed Ziegler, Slatington**, stated the Slatington Sewage Treatment Plant had a capacity of 600,000 GPD at one time and now is one million gallons.

**Nancy Braymer, 3532 Apple Road, Orefield**, stated at the Zoning Hearing Board Meetings it was stated that the proposed sewage plant could be located in other Townships.

**MaryBeth Bohri, 5266 Creekview Drive, Orefield**, questioned if any of the Planning Commission members have been to the site? Ms. Bohri also stated the Jordan Creek is very shallow and currently has sand bars which you can walk across, how will this effect the water flow for the proposed sewage plant? Ms. Bohri is also concerned with large trucks crossing the covered bridge and why is this proposed west of Route 309 where the population decreases greatly.

**Mark Hills, 5149 River Drive, Laurys Station**, inquired as to who required the ACT 537? Township Solicitor Lisa Young stated DEP requires updates and the Township requests updates regularly.

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**Jeanene Bauer, 3216 Jordan Road, Orefield**, stated DEP may require the ACT 537, but they didn't require LCA to push for the proposed sewage plant. Ms. Bauer also discussed emails between former Supervisor Ron Stahley, Township Solicitor Lisa Young, Township Engineer Steve Gitch and LCA; Aurel Arndt. Ms. Bauer also questioned whether the aerator at the sewage plant will give off an odor when it is turned on? Mr Spitko stated no.

**Ron Roth, 5353 Route 309, Schnecksville**, stated we all know we need a new system, but we do not need all the bickering and name-calling.

**Planning Commission Chairman Rich Celmer** stated things need to be looked at in the big picture and we can disagree about things; but we need to move ahead. Public water is being provided but there are still sewage issues.

**Jeanene Bauer, 3216 Jordan Road, Orefield**, stated this all about greed and empire building and nothing more. She pleaded with the Planning Commission members to revise the Act 537 Plan and stated this area does not need the sewage plant.

**Planning Commission member Bruce Stettler** questioned what happens if we give an unfavorable recommendation to the Board of Supervisors and then the Board of Supervisors denies the plan. Township Solicitor stated LCA could appeal the decision.

**Attorney James Preston** said they are present tonight requesting a Conditional Use and they meet the stated requirements in the Ordinance.

**Planning Commission member Leonard Nuss** questioned if when the proposed sewage treatment plan comes back for subdivision and land development will the Township be told what type of plant? Attorney Preston stated yes and this could be a condition.

**Township Solicitor Lisa Young** stated the Planning Commission must make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for the scheduled LCA hearing on June 4, 2012.

**Charles Horwith, 2560 Neffs Laurys Road, Schnecksville**, stated he has a sewage plant in his back yard and he has more of a smell from Crystal Springs than the sewage plant.

**Dennis Komlos, 3211 Jordan Road, Orefield**, stated when he moved to this area he realized he was going to an agricultural area, homes and farms, but this is an industrial smell, not farm, it is a totally different piece. We need to think for the future.

**Ron Roth, 5353 Route 309, Schnecksville**, stated when he moved here 60 years ago with his parents, they moved for the peace and quiet, if you moved to an agricultural area you know you are going to get agricultural smells, if you don't like it, then you need to move.

**Jeff Johnson** motioned to send a favorable recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for the Conditional Use for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Leonard Nuss seconded, Brian Horwith opposed, all others agreed with the motion.

**LCA, Aurel Arndt** stated he understands the residents concerns and LCA is willing to do what they can to work with them.

➤ **Any other items that may be discussed at the discretion of the Planning Commission**

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Brian Horwith motioned to adjourn, Bruce Stettler seconded, all others agreed

Meeting Adjourned: 10:00pm.  
Jane K. Kelly  
Recording Secretary  
Planning Administrator  
North Whitehall Township