

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

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF FEBRAURY 28, 2012

Meeting brought to order at 7:35 p.m., on Tuesday, February 28, 2012 by Chairman Richard Celmer.

Attendance:

Chairman Richard Celmer	John Barto III
Vice Chairman Brian Horwith	William George
Attorney Lisa Young	Joanne Guth
Township Engineer Steve Gitch	Jeff Johnson
Supervisor Jerry Joseph	Planning Administrator Jane Kelly

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

1. **Dinbokowitz Subdivision-** Preliminary- Project # NWT-11-021, AR Zone, Minor Subdivision, 2441 Peachtree Road, 5488 4819 7838, 14.3 acres, Waiver request to be considered a Preliminary/Final, 90-Day Deadline starts 2/28/12, 90-Day Deadline 5/27/12. Land Surveyor Bill Beitler presented the plan.
 - a. Keystone Engineers have reviewed the plan and offered their comments and recommendations in a letter dated February 20, 2012.
 - b. Zoning Officer's review is contained in his letter dated February 20, 2012.
 - c. Sewage Enforcement Officer's review is contained in his letter dated February 7, 2012.
 - d. This is a proposed 2-lot subdivision, located in North Whitehall Township, South Whitehall Township and Whitehall Township.
 - e. The applicant has received subdivision approval in both South Whitehall Township and Whitehall Township.
 - f. DEP also granted approval on December 22, 2011.
 - g. The applicant has been working with the Township Engineer regarding the proposed driveway sight distances along Peachtree Road.
 - h. It is proposed to post traffic control signage along Peachtree Road in North Whitehall Township and the applicant must demonstrate adequate sight distance in both directions.
 - i. Whitehall Township Authority (WTA) has indicated there are no plans at this time to extend the water line along Peachtree Road.

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 February 20, 2012.
2. Developer shall address the Zoning Officer's comments as set forth in his review letter dated February 20, 2012.
3. Developer shall address the Sewage Enforcement Officer's comments as set forth in his review letter dated February 7, 2012.
4. Property corner pins and monuments shall be set before recording.

Brian Horwith motioned to recommend Preliminary/Final Plan approval, John Barto III seconded, all agreed.

2. Zoning Ordinance Section 103.E.5 and 603.C

- o Zoning text changes were presented by Supervisor Steve Pany.
- o Supervisor Pany stated the changes presented would encourage small business growth in the community.
- o Small businesses are what makes our Township work.
- o The changes suggested to Section 103.E.5 would only address commercial/ industrial and emergency services.
- o The proposed change would not allow for any large scale retail expansion without going through the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.
- o Supervisor Pany stated the changes to the zoning text would allow for a quicker review by Township staff. The applicant would be able to invest in their business rather than the expense of going through the Land Development process.
- o Planning Commission member John Barto III stated he believes a 30% expansion is too large of an addition to not go thru the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors review and the Township shouldn't lower their standards for the Township to grow.

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- o Planning Commission Vice Chairman Brian Horwith suggested setting a limit on the size of the property this zoning text would apply to.
- o Planning Commission member Joanne Guth is concerned with the 10,000 sq ft building size, but she believes the benefits of the zoning text change would outweigh the risks.
- o Supervisor Jerry Joseph questioned the need for the text change for Township growth and why the Township stopped growing? Is this going to help, or did the Township stop growing for other reasons such as the economy? Supervisor Joseph requested Supervisor Pany give an example of a business that would benefit from these text changes. After discussion Supervisor Joseph stated "Steve, I've got one big issue here overrunning whatever we're talking about, the numbers, you're an engineer, these could help you and your business, I know you say that they don't, this is a big conflict of interest, you are a tick away from a ethics violation".
- o Planning Commission Chairman Rich Celmer indicated businesses generally prefer public water and sewer in selecting a site.
- o Planning Commission Vice Chairman Brian Horwith suggested Section 103.E.5 should be redrafted to be abuse-proof.
- o Supervisor Joseph stated when the approval process is at the Township staff level and not through one of the Township Boards such as the Planning Commission; the public does not see what is going on in the Township until building construction begins.
- o Supervisor Pany indicated the changes to Section 603.C would not include large retail businesses.
- o Any new retail intensive use would require 10ft parking spaces.
- o Planning Commission Chairman Rich Celmer stated he is not for a size reduction in parking spaces after the Township just increased the spaces to 10ft in 2007.
- o Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson stated he understands the need for larger parking spaces at shopping centers, but are the larger spaces really needed at apartment complexes and fast food restaurants?
- o Supervisor Pany stated the more paving a property has the more stormwater management is necessary.
- o Planning Commission member John Barto III stated he also is not in favor of a reduction in parking spaces.
- o Planning Commission Vice Chairman Brian Horwith stated the Planning Commission was very thorough when revising the parking requirements in 2007. Brian is not in favor of reducing the parking space size requirements, but suggested that maybe it is time to review the formula used in determining the amount of spaces needed.

Comments from the Floor:

Jeanene Bauer, 3216 Jordan Road, Orefield, stated please do not take the approval process to the backroom like so many other things, land standards are a good thing.

Nancy Braymar, 3532 Apple Road, Orefield, stated she agreed with Jeanene Bauer, Land Development should be approved at a public meeting. The office staff are not elected positions, the public would request the Land Development process be approved during a meeting by elected officials.

Eric Neubauer, 4998 Abbey Road, Coplay, stated the zoning text changes would reduce reviews and comments from the consultants, which would not be a positive move. The current Township staff might be capable, but what happens when there is a change in staffing.

Ronald Roth, 5353 Route, Schnecksville, stated the Township Office staff is always busy. Mr. Roth also stated he spoke to a few of the Planning Commission members outside of the previous Planning Commission meeting and they were not in favor of this zoning text change.

Charles Horwith, 2560 Neffs Laurys Road, Schnecksville, stated the change would be good for coolers and storage with setback issues. Supervisor Pany stated setback issues would need a variance.

Brian Horwith motioned to send an unfavorable recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, John Barto III seconded, vote was taken Jeff Johnson voted no, all others agreed, motion passed.

3. North Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan- Revisited

- o The Planning Commission members received letters from Donald Wehr and Lorraine Wolfgang requesting review of their properties and possible zoning classification change.
- o The Planning Commission members should review the letters and the properties stated in the letters for the March Planning Commission meeting

Comments from the Floor:

Jeanene Bauer, 3216 Jordan Road, Orefield, stated she spoke to Mike Kaiser from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and she obtained a copy of the Lehigh Valley Profile & Trends 2010 and Comprehensive Plan-The Lehigh Valley-2030 for each of the Planning Commission members. Mrs. Bauer suggested these books would be helpful in the review of the North Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan.

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

Planning Commission member Joanne Guth questioned the previously discussed Build-Out Study.

Planning Commission Chairman Rich Celmer discussed the possibility of a Build-Out Study and the path the Township should follow.

Planning Commission member Joanne Guth questioned if the Township has access to GIS. **Township Engineer Steve Gitch** stated the Township does have access to GIS and the Zoning Officer is very familiar with the program.

Ricky Haring, 5011 Steeple Chase, Schnecksville, questioned the Existing Land Use Plan and the Future Land Use Plan in the Comprehensive Plan? If the Schnecksville Fire Company was listed as Parks and Other Outdoor Recreation in the Existing Plan, can the Fire Company obtain the same Land Use in the Future Plan for all of the Fire Company land?

John Barto III motioned to adjourn, Supervisor Jerry Joseph seconded, all others agreed

Meeting Adjourned: 9:50pm

Jane K. Kelly

Recording Secretary

Planning Administrator

North Whitehall Township