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

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 23, 2021

Virtual Meeting brought to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag at 6:30 p.m., on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 by Chairman Brian Horwith

Attendance:

Chairman Brian Horwith
Secretary Leonard Nuss
Attorney Lisa Young
Township Engineer Steve Gitch
Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz
Township Zoning Officer Jeff Mouer
Richard Semmel
Robert Korp
John Barto
Jeff Johnson
Planning Secretary Jane Kelly

Minutes of the January 26, 2020 meeting were approved as presented. Motion made by John Barto seconded by Jeff Johnson, all others agreed.

1. North Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan discussion

- **Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith** gave an overview for the new initiative to review and update the Township's Comprehensive Plan. The 2021 budget provides funds to engage this review, which is recommended by the state approximately every 10 years. Brian introduced **Judith Goldstein from Gilmore & Associates** to outline the Comprehensive Plan review process, and comment both on recommended best practices and what other municipalities in the region have done, or are doing.
- Judith stated a Comprehensive Plan is a living document, a guide for the Township, with a goal of providing both the state required opportunities for development while directing change or retention for the positive and favored characteristics of the township.
- The review process could include surveys to the residents asking them what they currently like about the Township and what they don't like.
- The review would also work with the Planning Commission on land use, existing and future.
- The review would include a series of public meetings and seek public input from residents.
- A tour of the township is suggested as one of the first steps.
- **Planning Commission member Richard Semmel** requested an explanation of the difference between 1st Class and 2nd Class Township. Judy stated these are government classifications and deferred to **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** for additional explanation. Attorney Young stated the classifications are determined by population. Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith questioned if the amount of money the Township receives from the State is dependent on the classification, Attorney Young stated not necessarily.
- **Township Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz** questioned the survey being sent to the residents, could the Township get a copy of this survey? Judy stated this survey would be customized specifically for North Whitehall Township and would be presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval before being sent to the residents. Supervisor Klusaritz also questioned if the ACT 537 should be done at the same time as the Comprehensive Plan. Judy stated not usually.
- **Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith** stated Planning Commission member Robert Korp would be the Planning Commission's designated ambassador to work with any outside consultants and coordinate with the township staff and Planning Commission as the Comprehensive Plan is reviewed and the update is drafted.
- **Township Zoning Officer Jeff Mouer** questioned if after the Comprehensive Plan is reviewed should the Zoning Ordinance be reviewed? Judy replied according to the MPC (Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code) the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance should be consistent.
- **Planning Commission member Robert Korp had several comments on the Comprehensive Plan review process below:**
  - Bob stated the Planning Commission needs strongly encourage the Township to update the Zoning Ordinance to align with the Comprehensive Plan after this review; noting this was not consistently done with the 2009 Comprehensive Plan.
  - Bob also stated the Comprehensive Plan should be language specific, as clear and complete as possible and avoid ambiguity.
  - He is a fan of the community engagement in the plan review.
  - Bob suggested two surveys, a baseline survey and a reaction survey. He believes the survey might be a challenge for some people, as they might state they want to keep things the way they currently are in the Township, no change.
  - Bob suggested money should be added to the budget in 2022, because this process might take longer than a year to complete and possibly add an extra meeting to the Planning Commission schedule just for the Comprehensive Plan.
- Attorney Lisa Young echoed comments from Chairman Brian Horwith that this review of the Comprehensive Plan will be disciplined and robust, helping the Township evolve to both include more public input and create a thoughtful and thorough document.
- Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith stated he is hopeful in-person meetings will resume soon, even if it means using larger venues to maintain social distancing. This should encourage more resident participation in the process. Brian also asked Judy how important is the LVPC and their Lehigh Valley 2030 Guide to this review? Judy stated the LVPC is good for background information and noted the LVPC prefers Townships in the region to be generally consistent. Brian further commented that this process will include understanding the Comprehensive Plans and current environment of the townships that surround North Whitehall.

2. **Hellwig & Melendez Lot Line Adjustment**- NWT#21-012, 4676 Scheidys Rd & 4658 Scheidys Rd, AR Zone, Parcels 5570 7154 7585 & 5570 7170 7777, 12.25 Acres, 90-Day Deadline starts 1/26/2021, 90-Day Deadline 4/25/2021. The plan was presented by property owners Greg Hellwig & Deare Melendez and Engineer Robert Hoppes.

a. Keystone Engineers have reviewed the plan and offered their comments and recommendations in a letter dated February 17, 2021.
b. Zoning Officer's review is contained in his letter dated February 11, 2021.
c. The proposed plan will take two lots and combine them into one lot.
d. The property owners are currently living on one lot in a temporary single family structure (accessory structure). This accessory structure will change to a storage building once their primary home is built.
e. They are proposing the lot consolidation to provide for the location of the new home they intend to build.
f. Parcel #1 already has ROW dedicated and the property owners do not wish to dedicate any ROW from parcel #2, and noted this is a state road.
g. **Planning Commission member John Barto** questioned the pool being built before the primary structure.
h. **Planning Commission member Richard Semmel** asked for clarification on what will happen to the temporary housing once the primary structure is built? The property owners stated this will become storage.
i. **Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz** reminded the property owners that they will need to come before the Planning Commission again if they ever decide to resubdivide their land for more homes.
j. **Township Zoning Officer Jeff Mouer** stated this property file will have many corrections once this consolidation is complete.
k. **Township Engineer Steve Gitch** stated the HOP needs to be shown on the recorded plan.
l. **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** reiterated the accessory structure needs to be reverted back to storage once the primary structure is built.

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 17, 2021.
2. Developer shall address the Zoning Officer's comments as set forth in his review letter dated February 11, 2021.
3. HOP shall be shown on the recorded plan.

Richard Semmel motioned to send a favorable recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, John Barto second the motion, vote was taken, all others agreed, motion carried.

3. **Tracy S Roth Lot Line Adjustment**- NWT#21-013, 4187 Shankweiler Rd & 4207 Shankweiler Rd, AR-L Zone, Parcels 5478 0535 4155 & 5478 0525 1222, 2.4410 Acres, 90-Day Deadline starts 1/26/2021, 90-Day Deadline 4/25/2021. The plan was presented by property owner Tracy Roth and engineer Robert Hoppes.

a. Keystone Engineers have reviewed the plan and offered their comments and recommendations in a letter dated February 17, 2021.
b. Zoning Officer's review is contained in his letter dated February 11, 2021.
c. The proposed plan will take two lots and combine them into one lot.
d. The property owner wants to put an accessory structure on lot 2 but he wants to be in compliant.
e. Both parcels have HOP's and these HOP's can be provided to the Township.
f. **Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson** questioned the probes in the setbacks and ROW, was there an issue? **Township Engineer Steve Gitch** stated there was no issue.

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 17, 2021.
2. Developer shall address the Zoning Officer's comments as set forth in his review letter dated February 11, 2021.
3. Sight distance shall be shown on the plan.

Leonard Nuss motioned to send a favorable recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, Jeff Johnson second the motion, vote was taken, all others agreed, motion carried.

4. **Daniel Loch Subdivision & Lot Line**- NWT#21-011, 4417 Mauch Chunk Rd, SR Zone, Parcels 5479 3627 9741 & 5479 3688 3097, 11.8547 Acres, 90-Day Deadline starts 1/26/2021, 90-Day Deadline 4/25/2021. **No discussion on this plan as the plan was withdrawn from the agenda per email from applicant's engineer.**

5. **UNFI Improvements at North Valley Trade Center Land Development**- NWT#21-010, 4255 & 4240 North Valley Dr, LI-B Zone, Parcels 5469 5271 7364 & 5468 6957 5278, 106.9 Acres, 90-Day Deadline starts 1/26/2021, 90-Day Deadline 4/25/2021. Waiver request for Preliminary/Final and Lettering Size. The plan was presented by Engineer Josh Hoffman and applicant representative Tom Dziki.

a. Keystone Engineers have reviewed the plan and offered their comments and recommendations in a letter dated February 18, 2021.
b. Zoning Officer's review is contained in his letter dated February 11, 2021.
c. The proposed plan is for tenant site improvements.
d. The following are a list of proposed improvements to the site:
   - 2 remote trailer storage
   - Truck maintenance facility and washing bays
   - Truck fuel island
   - Office bump-out
   - Access drives & Gated card access
   - Truck scale
   - Snow scraper
   - Guard shack
e. The original plan was for two guard shacks now they are proposing one guard shack.
f. Based on the now identified tenant, the amount of truck traffic from the original approval has been reduced.
g. **Planning Commission member Robert Korp** stated the plans are hard to follow for what is new this time, Bob is also questioning the storm chambers and where they are to be installed. As for the waivers, Bob has no issues with those.
h. **Planning Commission member John Barto** questioned the names of the tenant, UNFI, what does this stand for? Will this be a 24hr operation and will there be lights on the basketball courts? Tom Dziki stated the name of the company was United Natural Foods Inc. the company will have 500 associates when they are up and running, they are 56th in North America, UNFI are the folks that delivery the groceries to the grocery stores. The hours of operations have not been determined as of yet and as to the basketball courts, if they are not working 24 hours a day, there will be no need for lights on the courts, so that has not been decided on yet.
i. **Planning Commission member Leonard Nuss** questioned if UNFI was going to use both buildings? Tom stated yes they are, one building would be mainly for dry goods and the other for freezers/cold goods.
j. **Planning Commission member Richard Semmel** questioned the traffic at the smaller building, what will the truck flow be? Richard was concerned with noise and air pollutants and the impact to the housing development across the turnpike. Tom stated the traffic pattern will be one way, as for the air and noise pollutants their plan is only use the loading docks on the east side closer to the turnpike.
k. **Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz** commented on the lighting complaints the Township has received. Dennis suggested rapid growing trees to block the lights. He also questioned if it will be all tractor trailers. Tom stated UNFI is leasing the building and the interior. The leasee is responsible for mainly the interior and the snow removal to get trucks out. Engineer Josh Hoffman stated they are following the Land Development Plan regarding landscape lighting and buffering.
l. **Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith** questioned if the trucks and trailers are owned by UNFI? And will the refrigerated units run all night? Also are any of the other UNFI sites this large, how long is your lease and when do you expect operations stating? Tom stated the UNFI will own their own fleet and he is unsure on the refrigerated units at this time, it would depend if the truck was loaded in the evening. Tom stated there are two other sites larger than this site, the lease is currently for 15 years and they are anticipating a late spring early summer start.

<u>Planning Commission has recommended the following conditions:</u>

1. Developer shall address to the satisfaction of the General Planning Engineer the comments and recommendations set forth in his letter dated February 18, 2021.
2. Developer shall address the Zoning Officer's comments as set forth in his review letter dated February 11, 2021.

Comments from the residents:

Mary Tomko, 4058 Coplay Creek Rd, Schnecksville, is concerned about the lights and questioned the 200 truck traffic daily. Josh Hoffman explained the 100 trucks in, 100 trucks.

Tim Tomko, 4058 Coplay Creek Rd, Schnecksville, suggested changing the access to the building to the set side due to the houses on the opposite side of the Turnpike.

Tom Haraske, 4038 Coplay Creek Rd, Schnecksville, stated there is too much noise, the lights should be lowered and he is worried about his house depreciating.

Jennifer Durkin, 4223 Coplay Creek Rd, Schnecksville, expressed her concern with the diesel smell, lights and the barrier wall, is the Township going to put one up? Is a sign going to be put up on our road saying no trucks allowed?

Township Solicitor Lisa Young stated some of these issues are enforcement issues. They need to follow all measurements of the Zoning Ordinance from their original plan.

Jeff Johnson motioned to send a favorable recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, including the two waiver requests, Leonard Nuss second the motion, a vote was taken, all others agreed, motion carried.

6. **Edmund Hadeed Apartment Complex Sketch Plan-** NWT#21-014, 2260 Quarry St, VR Zone, Parcel 5489 0543 8920, 3.1132 Acres, 15,703 sq ft bldg. the plan was presented by Engineers Larry Tusoscy & David Lehr and property owner Diab Hadeed.

a. Keystone Engineers have reviewed the plan and offered their comments and recommendations in a letter dated February 17, 2021.
b. Zoning Officer's review is contained in his letter dated February 11, 2021.
c. The Ironton Rail Trail goes right through this parcel.
d. This project is proposed for a 20 unit apartment building.
e. The 50 needed parking spaces are proposed to be behind the apartment building.
f. The applicant will discuss this proposal and fire lanes with the local fire chief.
g. Mr. Tusoscy questioned if there was sewer allotment for this project.
h. **Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson** had concerns with stormwater management.
i. **Planning Commission member Leonard Nuss** stated he has lived in North Whitehall all his life and that particular area never flooded.
j. **Township Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz** questioned the private access road, will it be named?
k. **Planning Commission member Rod Lowe** mentioned the Ranger Rod and Gun Club that is nearby, it can be very noisy.
l. **Planning Commission member Robert Korp** suggested the apartment building might look better closer to the trail and also a connection to the trail.
m. **Planning Commission member John Barto** supported Ranger Rod and Gun Club and hopes this development does not request any changes to the club.

This plan was a sketch and no motion was needed or made at this time.

7. **Review of AARC Overlay District Boundary**
   - After a brief discussion, the Planning Commission members decided to review the document received for the overlay districts and discuss it at the March 23, 2021 Planning Commission meeting.

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

Richard Semmel motioned to adjourn, Jeff Johnson seconded, all others agreed

Meeting Adjourned: 9:45 pm
Jane K. Kelly
Planning/Recording Secretary
North Whitehall Township