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

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF OCTOBER 26, 2021

Meeting brought to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and a moment of silence at 7:30 p.m., on Tuesday October 26, 2021 by Chairman Brian Horwith

Attendance:

Chairman Brian Horwith	Richard Semmel
Vice Chairman Bruce Stettler	Robert Korp
Secretary Leonard Nuss	John Barto
Attorney Lisa Young	Jeff Johnson
Township Engineer Steve Gitch	Rod Lowe
Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz	Township Zoning Officer Jeff Mouer
Township Manager Chris Garges	Planning Secretary Jane Kelly

Minutes of the September 28, 2021 meeting were approved. Motion made by John Barto, seconded by Jeff Johnson, all others agreed.

1. **Kornfeind Realty Apartments** - Land Development - Final, NWT-19-019, Parcel 5479 9787 7431, 2228 Old Post Rd, C Zone, 1.9 Acres, 4500 sqft bldg., 90-Day Deadline starts 9/28/2021, 90-Day Deadline 12/26/202. Plan was presented by Engineer Steve Pany.

a. Keystone Engineers have reviewed the plan and offered their comments and recommendations in a letter dated October 21, 2021.
b. Zoning Officer's review is contained in his letter dated October 19, 2021.
c. All previous zoning issues have been resolved.
d. The applicant in the process of submitting their planning module.
e. The applicant is in the process of designing a waterline extension and will need to get a permit from NBMA.
f. An updated elevation plan was submitted to the Planning Commission at the meeting.
g. The apartment building is proposed to be 3 stories with a lower level, 4 apartments per level and 1 apartment on the lower level, a total of 13 apartments.
h. The parking will be on the east, south and west lower level sides with access to the building from the rear by the handicap parking and secondary access from east lower level and 1st level.
i. **Planning Commission member Robert Korp** questioned the parking, is it no longer under the building as it was in previously submitted plans? Engineer Steve Pany stated there will be no parking under the apartment building.
j. **Planning Commission member Richard Semmel** questioned the handicap parking, how many handicap parking spaces? Mr. Pany stated 2 handicap spaces are provided, meeting the requirements.
k. **Planning Commission member Leonard Nuss** questioned the sewage capacity, Mr. Pany stated sewage capacity is allotted and a planning module will be completed and submitted.
l. **Township Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz** questioned if both the traffic and recreation fees will be discussed the Township Supervisors and also what is the anticipated start date to break ground. Mr. Pany stated the traffic and recreations fees will be discussed at the Board of Supervisors meeting and they are hoping to break ground in spring of 2022.

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 October 21, 2021.
2. Developer shall address the Zoning Officer's comments as set forth in his review letter dated October 19, 2021.

Comments from the floor:

- **Ruth Tobia, 4433 Valley Green Dr, Schnecksville, 18078,** questioned where the proposed apartment building was located? Mr. Pany stated directly behind the Kornfeind's market on Old Post Rd.
- **Tim Tomko, 4058 Coplay Creek Rd, Schnecksville, 18078,** questioned how many apartments, how many parking spaces and how many spaces per apartment? Mr. Pany stated there are 13 apartments proposed, 36 new parking spaces, making it a total of 82 spaces(including the existing spaces for the strip mall) and 2 ½ spaces per apartment.
- **Doretta Miller, 3616 Green Hill Cir, Schnecksville, 18078,** questioned how many units? Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith stated one building with 13 apartments in the one building.
- **Kathleen Foster, 5109 Elmhurst Dr, Schnecksville, 18078**, questioned what road this apartment building would access? Planning Commission chairman Brian Horwith stated Old Post Road.
- **Stacey Bender, 3750 McIntosh Dr, Orefield, 18069**, questioned what kind of housing would this be? Would this be low-income housing? Mr. Pany stated these apartments would be moderately priced, not low income.

Richard Semmel motioned to send a favorable recommendation for Final Plan approval, subject to the conditions, to the Board of Supervisors, Robert Korp second the motion, vote was taken, all others agreed.

Sand Spring Commerce Center – Sketch- NWT-21-026, Parcels 5479 3366 1651, 5479 3299 9692, 5479 4237 8056, 3216 Sand Spring Rd, 4016 Mauch Chunk Rd & 3217 Levans Rd, C Zone, 29.0 Acres, 322,000 sqft bldg. Plan was presented by Engineer James Snyder and Developers Greg Bradley and Paul Loosmann.

a. Keystone Engineers have reviewed the plan and offered their comments and recommendations in a letter dated October 21, 2021.
b. The proposed project is on approximately 30 acres, 3 parcels and is in the C Zoning District.
c. The main parcel is 3216 Sand Spring Rd; both 3217 Levans and 4016 Mauch Chunk Rd would subdivide part of their parcels off and add them to the main parcel to create the 30 acres.
d. They are proposing front parking for cars and rear loading for the tractor trailers.
e. Two access/egress points are proposed, along with onsite trailer parking.
f. An easement would be needed from 3217 Levans Road for access/egress.
g. Stormwater management is proposed to be onsite.
h. **Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith** questioned if a phase 1 environmental study was completed yet and will a phase 2 be done? Mr. Snyder stated the study was completed but the results have not come back yet. Depending on the results of the phase 1 study, they will decide if they need to do a phase 2 study.
i. **Township Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz** questioned if any research was done on the intersections? Mr. Snyder stated not at this time, once the project moves forward more research will be completed.
j. **Planning Commission member Leonard Nuss** questioned what was the intended use of the warehouse? Leonard also stated this area of the Township is known for sinkholes, where they aware of this? Leonard was also concerned with the water runoff. Mr. Loosmann stated they were proposing a multi-tenant building and if there was a sinkhole concern for the proposed parcels, the environmental study would show that. Leonard also stated the Township roads cannot handle this Land Development, they are suggesting to put something where it doesn't belong in his opinion.
k. **Planning Commission Vice Chairman Bruce** Stettler questioned the excessive amount of car parking, why is there so many spaces for cars? Bruce stated he and most residents are very concerned with the truck traffic. Mr. Loosmann stated being a multi-tenant building, there might be a tenant that has customers coming to the building and would need parking.
l. **Planning Commission member Richard Semmel** stated there are better turns on Levans Road than on Sand Spring Road for trucks, also a good sound barrier will be needed between the homes and this warehouse. Richard also stated he cannot read the signature on the plan, signature needs to be legible.
m. **Planning Commission member Robert Korp** questioned how does the project comply with the setbacks, impervious cover limits and height limits? He also had quite a few concerns with the hours of operations, will phase 1 environmental study be shared with the Township, the size of this warehouse (approximately 6 football fields) is not compatible with our Comprehensive Plan or our Zoning, the scale in inappropriate for the area, agrees with a deep barrier. Bob stated the sight distance will be poor for slow-turning trucks at both Sand Spring Road/Mauch Chunk Road and the driveway onto Levans Road. The existing signal timing at Mauch Chunk Road/Levans Road gives little time for east-west through traffic. Adding trucks making turning movements will increase driver frustration. Slow-turning trucks may need turning lanes, but there doesn't appear to be room. The Mauch Chunk/Levans intersection can be difficult for pedestrians now; adding turn lanes will make it more difficult to cross. If trucks exit onto Levans and head west to Rt. 309, the rising grade will be difficult and may cause trucks to use excessive speed. The existing intersection(s) at Maple & Levans have poor sight distance due to the vertical curve of Levans. Trucks approaching the site from the west on Levans will likely be fast moving as they come down the hill. Bob made the following suggestions, he suggested they do something else. Don't do this here. The scale is inappropriate for the area, and the remote access to major transportation routes may prove to be wholly unsatisfactory. If the project proceeds: Provide a 50' deep dense buffer of evergreen trees around the entire site, not just along residential border. Levans is currently not pedestrian friendly. Added truck traffic will make it worse. The Applicant should provide sidewalk or a generous shoulder. The Comp Plan lists 9 road improvement types on page 6-4. Most would be appropriate if not necessary for this development to occur without burdening the existing neighborhood. The Applicant should review these in detail and include as many as are practical.
n. **Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson** stated he is not in favor of either access onto to Sand Spring Road or Levans Road, he suggested accessing onto Mauch Chunk Road and paying for a traffic light at Mauch Chunk Road and Cedar Crest Blvd, **Planning Commission Vice Chairman Bruce Stettler** agrees with this suggestion.
o. **Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith** commented this plan is putting 15 lbs into a 5lb sack, this is a bad concept for this site, and it will adversely impact the village character of Ironton.
p. **Township Manager Chris Garges** stated having a multi-tenant building in a C Zoned District might not be permitted. The Zoning Officer will have to look into that. Mr. Snyder stated they understand the use to be permitted by right. Chris also stated using Mauch Chunk Road as an access with the IRT crossing might be an issue.

Comments for the residents:

- **James Osmun, 3623 Green Hill Circle, Schnecksville, 18078**, stated he is concerned with this proposed warehouse being so close to two elementary schools, in and out, up the hill and the noises, there should be sound barriers, and this needs to be close to a main highway, rather than at this location.
- **Dan Grim, 5454 Ridge Road, Slatington, 18080**, he thanked the Planning Commission for be very objective and he is in favor of more restrictions.
- **Kathy Rothdeutsch, 3946 Coffeetown Road, 18104**, questioned where Alpha is located, is it local and why this parcel? Paul stated he is local, he lives in Macungie, the company is a small company from Chicago and the parcel was available and the correct zoning.
- **James Rothdeutsch, 3946 Coffeetown Road, 18104**, questioned the building size, will there be guard houses, what is the proposed height of the warehouse? Greg stated 45', comment was made by several Planning Commission members that a Zoning Variance would be needed for the building height.
- **Ruth Tobia, 4433 Valley Green Drive, 18078,** stated there is only one turning lane from Route 309 onto Sand Spring Road and Sand Spring Road has many drop offs. Ruth is also concerned with the proposed warehouse being close to a park for children and dogs.
- **Sherry Rivera, 4045 Mauch Chunk Road, 18037,** commented on the current traffic on Mauch Chunk Road, between 6:45am and 9:00am it is like a parking lot, and now this proposal will add more traffic. Sherry was also concerned with the wetlands behind the Chuck Wagon by Grouse Hall.
- **Colleen Moriarty, 4112 Penn Street, 18037,** concerned with the barriers around her property, she will be surrounded on 3 sides, and it will be the biggest wall. If this warehouse is as large as they are proposing, can you imagine the lights in the parking lot and this will all shine onto my property.
- **James Stortz, 2820 Raspberry Lane, 18037,** where is this company from? Paul stated Chicago.
- **Judy Blose, 3312 Sand Spring Road, 18037,** he lives to the west of the proposed warehouse, he is concerned with stormwater and he is not favor of this proposal. He would like to know if there is an Ordinance on lighting, he also questioned whether this proposal was onlot or public sewage. James stated this was undecided at this time.
- **Bridget Knopf, 3792 Maple Street, 18104,** stated she using the Ironton Rail Trail, she is concerned with this proposed warehouse, where will the truckers sleep? Will they use Maple Street?
- **Gary Gray, 2816 Vista Drive, 18037**, he is concerned with the traffic on Mauch Chunk Road and the kids in school.
- **Eugene Wolfgang, 3426 Faye Drive , 18069,** he owns property across from Sand Spring Road, he stated the intersection at Sand Spring Road and Mauch Chunk Road is not fit for the traffic it gets now, he is also concerned with the water run-off from Todd Lake and the Superfund Site.
- **Stacey Bender, 3750 McIntosh Drive, 18069**, questioned when the traffic study would be completed and what are the benefits this company will bring to the Township? Paul replied that they will probably learn more from this meeting tonight than they would learn from a traffic study and they will not be adding to the school system.
- **Jennifer Evans, 3320 Levans Road, 18037,** commented that Levans Road is already a very busy road, it cannot handle any more traffic.
- **Megan Lesser, 3813 Estate Drive, 18078**, Alpha, is this a Development Company? Someone mentioned this development was the size of 6 football fields, is that correct? **Planning Commission member Robert Korp** stated he was using that as a size reference by the measurements.
- **Ann Shoemaker, 3328 Levans Road, 18037,** stated her husband was once t-boned at Levans Road and Mauch Chunk Road, it is a very busy intersection.
- **Liz Younger, 4952 High Ridge Circle, 18078,** questioned what the proposed building really is, it is called a Logistic Center & a Commerce Center and there is no Ordinance for either one?
- **Ruth Tobia, 4433 Valley Green Dr, 18078**, is 30' cartway standard? Is there a standard for trucks?
- **Mark Tomko, 4058 Coplay Creek Road, 18078,** questioned when does EPA get pulled in for the water? James replied that NPDES will review the Wetlands.
- **Dan Grim, 5454 Ridge Road, 18080,** suggested the use for the facility needs to be decided before the plan is submitted, is it a single use or multi-use?
- **Wayne Schubert, 5026 Spruce Street, 18078**, stated he moved out of Upper Macungie due to warehouses, he doesn't want it to happen in North Whitehall Township.
- **Megan Lesser, 3813 Estate Dr, 18078**, questioned if the applicant owns the land or if it is under contract? Is there any testing being done yet? Paul stated the applicant will not buy the land unless they get the approval to do what they want.
- **Mike Price, 2246 Meadowbrook Drive, 18078**, suggested the applicant stick around to see what the Township wants to do with the comprehensive plan.

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

- **Gary Gray, 2816 Vista Drive, 18037,** questioned what were the next steps for the applicant? **Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith** stated, they can revise their plan, they can submit the same plan or they can never come back. He also noted that the Planning Commission encourages applicants to bring a sketch plan in first to outline their ideas.
- **Scott Mellon, 4209 Mohican Drive, 18078**, questioned if minutes could be approved before a meeting and posted or posted as a draft? **Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith** stated minutes are approved at a public meeting and that once made public, residents can offer comments or questions.
- **Karen Osmun, 3623 Green Hill Circle, 18078,** stated the residents would like to see the minutes before the meeting.
- **Robin Monkiewicz, 5803 Manor Road, 18078**, would like to stay informed.
- **Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith** suggested to be informed, residents must take responsibility to access the township information on the website, by visiting the township offices, and being on the email distribution. He further asked the residents review the current Comprehensive Plan & the Zoning Ordinance, and offer questions and comments to assist the township in the development of the Comprehensive Plan update.
- **Linda Clemens, 5178 Shawnee Blvd, 18078**, questioned the submittal process if and when the warehouse submits a preliminary plan, will they have all their studies completed? Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith replied no. She also questioned if there a clock on a sketch plan, **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** replied no.
- **Dan Grim, 5454 Ridge Rd, 18080**, questioned if the Planning Commission can be a "gated factor"? **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** replied no.
- **Brian Shaffer, 4549 Boxwood Circle, 18069,** questioned the Comprehensive Plan meeting on 10/12/21, and then the Ordinances, Can something be done sooner?
- **Ruth Tobia, 4433 Valley Green Drive, 18078,** questioned which Ordinances does this warehouse follow? **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** stated the current Zoning Ordinance has several sections addressing warehouse use and any applicant is required to comply with all Ordinances in effect when they submit a complete submission**.**
- **Colleen Moriarty, 4112 Penn Street, 18037,** questioned what VC means**, Planning Commission Chairman Brian Horwith** stated VC is Village Center**.**
- **Scott Mellon, 4209 Mohican Drive, 18078**, Property owners should be able to do what they want as it's zoned, why do they get special exceptions or variances? **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** replied, short answer, State law.
- **Linda Clemens, 5178 Shawnee Blvd, 18078,** questioned if they need a variance for the building height, where would they go? **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** replied to the Township Zoning Hearing Board.
- **James Osmun, 3623 Green Hill Circle, 18078,** expressed his thanks and respect to the Planning Commission for their patience with residents this evening and for being open to listen.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 10:05pm.
Jane K. Kelly
Planning/Recording Secretary
North Whitehall Township