

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, Carl Schaeffer called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, 2022, at the Washington Township Municipal Building.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present: Carl Schaeffer, Frank Gehringer, Romnie Long, Russell Drabick, Jennifer Cunningham, Daniel Stauffer, Township Manager/Acting Secretary, Rich Sichler; John Weber, LTL Engineers and Joan London, Kozloff Stoudt. There was four (4) members of the public in attendance this evening and Mr. James D'Angelo and two (2) consultants from All County and Associates representing Prestige Property Partners.

Absent: Mark Bedle

TAPING OF MEETING

The meeting was recorded as an aid in the preparation of the Minutes. It was noted no one other than the Planning Commission Secretary was taping the meeting this evening.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, 2022

A motion was made by Russ Drabick and seconded by Frank Gehringer to approve the minutes as prepared for the February 3, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. **No comments received.**

All ayes

SPECIAL REQUEST

None

NEW SUBMITTAL

None

SUBDIVISION REVIEW

Edison Walk – Rose Gross Minor Subdivision – Revision #1 - submitted
2/3/2022

- Plan set – dated 2/1/2022
- Applicant conformance letter – dated 2/1/2022
- Waiver request letter – dated 2/3/2022
- LTL Consultants review letter – dated 2/7/2022

Mr. John Weber explained that we have two versions of the minor subdivision in front of the Commission as after LTL provided a review letter for Revision #1 the applicant

submitted Revision #2. Mr. Weber explained that the minor subdivision is part of the Township obtaining a portion of the property as open space land and there are time constraints involved. Mr. Weber saw no need for the Commission to review Revision #1 and thought they could proceed to the review of Revision #2.

Edison Walk – Rose Gross Minor Subdivision – Revision #2 - submitted 2/18/2022

- Plan set w/ Legal Descriptions – dated 2/9/2022
- Waiver request letter – revised 2/9/2022
- Applicant conformance letter – dated 2/7/2022
- LTL Consultants review letter – dated 2/23/2022

Mr. Kyle Reilly with All County and Associates, Inc. stated that he has submitted a signed copy of a non-building declaration for the subdivision as requested by the LTL review letter. Mr. Reilly also had a sealed letter by the surveyor shows that the monuments had been set. He provided a copy of the surveyor letter to Mr. Weber and will provide an original copy with the final submission.

Mr. Weber noted that there are four (4) waivers that would need to be considered and acted upon before we move ahead with the review of the plan. Mr. Reilly reviewed the waivers being requested per the All County letter dated February 9, 2022. The waivers included

1. relief from the submission requirements for a minor subdivision as the plan does not technically meet the definition of a minor subdivision;
2. relief from the drawing scale requirement of not exceeding 100 feet to the inch, as the site can be depicted better by using a scale of 200 feet to the inch;
3. relief from the requirement for street trees;
4. relief from the requirement that the property be landscaped with buffer screens

Mr. Weber reminded the Commission that they had discussed these waivers the previous month and no concerns were noted. Mr. Weber also noted that when the property owner comes back to the Commission to further subdivide Lot 3 for residential use they would be required to include street trees and the landscape buffers. Ms. London suggested that a note be made that street trees and landscape buffers would be required at the time of the resubdivision of the property but for the purposes of the minor subdivision in front of the Commission they would be waived.

Mr. Schaffer sought a motion to waive the requirements Chapter 107-18.A.3.a., the number of lots allowed to be considered to allow more than two lots to be considered under the minor subdivision process. A motion was made by Jennifer Cunningham and seconded by Russell Drabick.

All Ayes

Mr. Schaffer sought a motion to waive the requirements Chapter 107-18.B.1.A, to the required mapping scale to allow the plan to fit on a single drawing. A motion was made by Frank Gehringer and seconded by Russell Drabick.

All Ayes

Mr. Schaffer sought a motion to waive the requirements of Chapter 107-73.A.1., for street trees and Chapter 107-75.A for property line buffer screens with the stipulation that these waivers are for the minor subdivision only without prejudice to requiring them at the time of a future resubdivision. A motion was made by Frank Gehringer and seconded by Jennifer Cunningham.

All Ayes

Mr. Weber described the need for the review of the submitted Planning Waiver and Non-Building Declaration and that three (3) of these requests were submitted to accommodate the anticipated ownership of the various lots after the subdivision. These include individual waivers for Lots 1 and 2 that are to be conveyed to the Township, Lot 3 to be conveyed to Prestige Property Partners and Lot 6 and 7 that are to be retained by Rose Gross. Dan Stauffer made a motion to approve the proposed Planning Waiver and Non-Building Declarations. Russell Drabick seconded the motion.

All Ayes

Mr. Weber suggested that the Commission could take action on the plan with the condition that the previously submitted Rose Gross Subdivision Plan be withdrawn prior to the Board of Supervisors approving the Edison Walk – Rose Gross Subdivision Plan. Mr. Weber stated that everything LTL requested in their most recent review letter has been addressed.

Mr. Schaffer sought a motion to approve the Edison Walk – Rose Gross Subdivision Plan provided that the previous plan for the property is withdrawn. A motion was made by Jennifer Cunningham and seconded by Russell Drabick.

All Ayes

Edison Walk Residential, Major Subdivision – Revision #3 – submitted 1/12/2022

- Applicant response letter to SDE review – dated 1/11/2022
- Applicant response letter to LTL review – dated 1/11/2022
- LTL Consultants review letter – dated 2/21/2022
- SDE review letter – dated 2/24/2022

Mr. James D’Angelo with Prestige Property Partners addressed the Commission and stated that they were not seeking preliminary approval of the subdivision this evening but would like to seek approval within the next 30 to 60 days. Mr. D’Angelo did want to answer any questions the Commission may have and to go through the details of the latest review letters. Joan London stated that she is in discussions with Mr. Howard Brown who represents Prestige Property Partners about sewer and sewer capacity agreements. Mr. Steve Tabakelis, All County and Associates, Inc. stated that they plan to address all comments in the review letters they have received.

Questions about the plan were fielded by Mr. D’Angelo and Mr. Tabakelis.

Ms. Cunningham asked about the removal of the previously proposed walking trails. Mr. Tabakelis responded that they were removed after previous discussions indicated the

need for sidewalks on both sides of the project roads. The previous plan had walking trails and sidewalks on one side of the interior roads, the current plan has no walking trails and sidewalks on both sides.

Mr. Stauffer asked if any they are proposing improvements of any type for the proposed open spaces. Mr. D'Angelo stated that they are not.

Ms. Long asked if the proposed open spaces are areas of wet soils. Mr. Tabakelis stated, no and pointed out the stream areas of the plan that would be wet, with the rest of the open space being fairly dry.

Ms. Cunningham asked if the plan included overflow parking. Mr. Tabakelis stated the current version did not include overflow parking but that they could include 14 or 15 spaces near the new townhomes. Mr. D'Angelo stated that they would revise the plan to include overflow parking near lot 234.

Mr. Stauffer observed that within the area that is being swapped with the Township the plan shows the siting of seven (7) townhomes and three (3) single homes that provides the developer with a net increase of four (4) homes over the previous plan that did not consider the land swap. Mr. Stauffer suggested that the developer add lots 181, 182, 183 and 184 to the open space area shown on lot 252. This would reduce the total number of homes in the development to the previously proposed 249. Mr. D'Angelo stated that it would be hard to agree to the request considering the \$600,000 cost they are incurring to purchase property from Rose Gross as an open space donation to the Township. Mr. Stauffer pointed out the removal of the walking trails, the lack of open space improvements and the higher value of the open space area on a per acre basis that is being gained by the developer as reasons to consider the request. The request was discussed by the Planning Commission. Mr. Stauffer called for a motion to recommend his proposed changes to the open space on the plan. A second was not received.

Mr. Gehringer asked how the issues raised by Mr. Palmer with the proposed roundabout on Route 100 are being handled. Mr. Weber explained that further review of the plan indicated that the resident concerns with not being able to turn south on 100 from his property were not an issue as what were thought to be barriers on the plans were just painted lines. Mr. D'Angelo stated that they are still waiting for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PADOT) to complete its review of their proposal. Ms. Long asked if the roundabout would encroach on any of the adjacent properties. Mr. D'Angelo said that it will not.

Ms. Long expressed concern that proposed roundabout will prevent cars from turning left on to Route 100 from Stauffer Road. Mr. D'Angelo stated that the development will enhance the ability of residents to get to the traffic light located at Barto Road. Mr. Weber stated that these types of issues should be part of the PADOT review of the project. Mr. Tabakelis stated that the stacking of cars on Stauffer Road is part of the traffic study and under review by PADOT. Ms. Cunningham asked is a traffic study has been performed and Mr. D'Angelo stated it had.

Mr. Weber asked if any widening of Sugar Maple Road is being proposed. Mr. D'Angelo stated that it is under consideration.

Resident Michael Christman stated that he observed the removal of stop and no left turn signs from the intersection of Sugar Maple Road and Old Route 100. Mr. Weber stated that the intersection will need to be improved with the improvements following the recommendations of the pending PADOT review.

Ms. Cunningham asked if the intersection and PADOT issues will have to be resolved prior to the plan receiving preliminary approval. Mr. Weber said it did not but they would need to be resolved prior to the plan receiving final approval.

Ms. Cunningham asked if the straightening of Barto Road is part of the plan. Mr. D'Angelo said it is not but that they would contribute to the Township to assist in the project.

Mr. Weber stated that the lots would be subject to the Townships Traffic Impact fee to help fund off site traffic improvements.

Mr. Weber asked if the developer has committed to the roads being wither public or private. Mr. D'Angelo said they had not and would like to. After discussing the various possibilities for the roads being either public or private,

Mr. Stauffer made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend that the Township take dedication of Battery Road and Sugar Maple Road with the rest of the roads being private. The motion was seconded by Ms. Long.

Ayes, Gehringer, Long, Schaeffer, Stauffer
Nays, Drabick, Cunningham
Motion passed 4-2

Mr. Stauffer asked if there had been any progress in the Township reaching a sewer agreement with the developer. Ms. London stated that she has made some progress in her discussions. Mr. D'Angelo stated that he realizes that the Townships wastewater treatment plant will need to be expanded.

16 Kutztown Road Minor Subdivision Plan – submitted 12/21/21

- Berks County Planning Commission review response letter dated 1/27/2022
- LTL Consultants review response letter – dated 2/23/2022

It was noted that the applicant or his representatives were not present at the meeting. The Commission agreed that no action could be taken without representation by the applicant.

Mr. Stauffer asked if the depicted Lot 6 on the plan had access to Kutztown Road and noted that it should have an access agreement for the project to move forward. Ms. London stated that an access agreement would be needed prior to final approval of the plan.

Mr. Stauffer described his research into the locations of natural caves on an adjoining property and the general area. Mr. Stauffer handed out copies of a map generated by a local caving club showing the extent of a cave system with an explored length of 370 feet and a depth of 38 feet.

Ms. Cunningham asked if the presence of potentially hazardous caves would be something that the Township would have responsibility for. Ms. London stated that the consideration of underground hazards during the development of a property would be solely the responsibility of the developer to perform sufficient due diligence as to the suitability of a parcel for development.

Mr. Weber stated that the plans were accepted for review on January 6, 2022 and the 90 day review period will expire prior to the Board of Supervisors April 28, 2022 meeting. Mr. Weber stated that the Board of Supervisors will have to take action on both the 16 Kutztown Road Minor Subdivision Plan and the Schwenkfelder Road Minor Subdivision Plan or extensions for both plans will have to be received.

Ms. London stated that the Planning Commission recommend denial of the plan unless an extension is received from the applicant. Mr. Stauffer motioned for the denial of the 16 Kutztown Road Minor Subdivision unless an extension request is received from the applicant prior to the start of the March 24, 2022 Board of Supervisors meeting with the denial reason being the items noted in the February 23, 2022 review letter by LTL Consultants LLC. Mr. Drabick seconded the motion.

All Ayes

Schwenkfelder Road Minor Subdivision Plan – Submitted 12/21/21

- Berks County Planning Commission review letter dated 1/27/2022
- LTL Consultants review letter – dated 2/23/2022

Without the presence of the applicant or a representative for the applicant no discussion of the plan was had except for the need to receive an extension request from the applicant for the same reasons noted in the Commission review of the 16 Kutztown Road plan. Mr. Stauffer recommended the denial of the Schwenkfelder Road Minor Subdivision unless an extension request is received from the applicant prior to the start of the March 24, 2022 Board of Supervisors meeting with the denial reason being the items noted in the February 23, 2022 review letter by LTL Consultants LLC. Mr. Drabick seconded the motion.

All Ayes

SUBDIVISION EXTENSIONS

None

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

- BOS meeting minutes dated January 27, 2022.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Board of Supervisors Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 7 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next Planning Commission meeting is Thursday, April 7, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Jennifer Cunningham and seconded by Frank Gehringer to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. **No comments received.**

All ayes

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Sichler
Acting Planning Commission Secretary