

SCHUYLKILL TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING DATE JUNE 21, 2023

Curt English called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Members in attendance were: Michael Bauer, Andrew Jacob, David Demey, Michael Pellegrino, Barbara Cohen and alternate Tom Gresko. Member Peter Bigelow and alternate Michael Walker were absent.

Alyson Zarro, Esq., appeared on behalf of Provco Pinegood seeking a recommendation for the proposed Wawa at 799 Valley Forge Road. They have previously appeared before the Planning Commission, have received all necessary relief from the Zoning Hearing Board, and are going to the Board of Supervisors in July for a Conditional Use Hearing. Zarro stated that since they presented plans to the Planning Commission, they have incorporated the Commissions comments into the revised plans. There will be sidewalks along the road frontages, increased landscaping and fencing, and a "Welcome to Schuylkill Township" sign on a decorative wall on the corner of Valley Forge Road and Whitehorse Road. M. Pellegrino asked about the gas pump canopy setbacks. Joe Botta, developer, stated that they pushed it back from a proposed 25' from the roadway to now 38'. The building exterior will be stucco and stone, as the Planning Commission had recommended. Matt Hammond, Traffic Planning & Design presented the proposed road improvement plan to the Commission. The existing site has 3 entrance/exits. They will be eliminating the one entrance on Valley Forge Road closest to the intersection. The other entrance on Valley Forge Road will be a right turn in/out only with the addition of a pork chop in the lane. A dedicated left turn lane for this entrance is proposed on Valley Forge Road, and two left turn lanes will be provided on Whitehorse Road. In order to accommodate the left turn lanes, Provco Pinegood is in discussion with the owner of Total Rental in order to purchase/use their right of way area to widen the roadway. They anticipate it will be approximately one million dollars of improvements to this intersection. B. Cohen discussed the historical significance of this corner, that it was a path of the Underground Railroad. She would like Wawa to do studies of the grounds under the roadway to locate the tunnel that was used for the Underground Railroad, and have a historical marker placed on the corner. Joe Botta stated they would discuss that with her. M. Bauer questioned if these plans were revised in response to PennDot's review letter from May 2023. M. Hammond said these plans were drawn up prior to PennDot's letter however the letter doesn't mention any items of concern. C. English asked if there was a dedicated Right turn in lane on Valley Forge Road. M. Hammond said no, it's a right turn in from the main lane of travel, they will increase the turn radius. C. English said a de-acceleration lane could be provided. M. Hammond said that PennDot doesn't like them and prefers not to use them anymore. P. Boettinger requested that these updated plans need to be submitted to the Township, as he has not had a chance to review the revised plans being presented. M. Pellegrino questioned the site lighting. M. Hammond confirmed that they have looked at the ordinance and all the site lighting will comply. There is no lighting proposed on the rear Total Rental lot. P. Boettinger stated that the internal truck turning template doesn't allow a delivery truck in the delivery zone and a fuel truck at the same time and there is no oversized parking areas. Joe Botta said that this is a typical Wawa site, that the deliveries will be planned accordingly. They are not providing oversized parking areas due to the nature of this being a "community store" with the front & back entrances. P. Boettinger stated that the Townships traffic engineer, A. Federico, shows concern that the adequacy of the roads doesn't meet the conditions needed for Conditional Use. M. Hammond disagrees with that report stating they will comply with the improvements necessary and do meet the conditions needed. B. Cohen asked that Wawa also comply with doing a LIDAR study of the intersection as part of any recommendation the Commission may make. M. Pellegrino said that can not be part of any recommendation, that is something to discuss with them

independently at another time. A. Zarro and J. Botta agreed to meet with B. Cohen outside the Planning Commission to discuss the historic issues further. C. English opened public comment.

E. Pederson Diamond Rock Road – He is clerk of the Schuylkill Friends Meeting House, adjacent to this site. He has met with Joe Botta and have made good progress regarding their concerns. The sign on Whitehorse Road has been changed from a 20' high pylon sign to a 7' high monument sign and additional landscape screening has been added.

S. Arenshield Valley Park Rd – Questioned if the left turn lanes proposed will have left turn arrows. M. Hammond said that is up to Penndot, if Penndot says yes, they will provide them. In favor of 24/7 store hours as studies show less crime occurs, most stores are robbed at opening/closing times, it will be great for night shift workers, and will greatly improve the corner.

M. Haag Dorchester Way – Asked about length of construction time. J. Botta said typically take 4-6 months.

C. Kiernan Wesley Ln – Questioned the size of this building, timing of deliveries and where the trucks would be coming from. J. Botta said this is a typical sized Wawa, 6049sf, as the new ones have larger restrooms and more interior storage. Trucks would most likely use Route 23, but he can't confirm. C. Kiernan asked if it the store could be smaller. A. Zarro stated that the ordinance allows a convenience store up to 10,000 square feet, so they are in compliance.

J. Sillup Spruce Grove Ln - Doesn't want a 24/7 store. Questioned why there had to be so many bathrooms as there was not much traffic coming through. Concerned about crime. J. Botta stated that the store will have exterior cameras, security for alarms and they welcome emergency responders to come and have a cup of free coffee.

E. Masterson S. Whitehorse Rd – Concerned that the Townships Historical Commission seemed to not know about the underground railroad at this intersection. Doesn't want a 24/7 store.

E. Harris Meetinghouse Ln – Concerned about more cut through traffic in their neighborhood.

Discussion among the Planning Commission regarding making a motion to recommend with conditions, if any. Mark Donovan, elected supervisor, stated from the audience that any conditions must be ordinance based.

M. Pellegrino made the motion to approve the plan as submitted with the condition that the review letters from T&M Associates, Penndot and Al Federico are responded to and acceptable to the Township. A. Jacob seconded. Motion passed with six (6) yes votes and one (1) no vote by alternate Tom Gresko.

Reeves Property / Sedgley Farm Pohlig Builders

C. English announced that the deadline for the Board of Supervisors decision on the Sedgley Farm / Select Sites plan has been extended to August. The Planning Commission will need to make their recommendation in July. The Applicants attorney and Township solicitor have met to discuss outstanding legal issues, and a letter reviewing that meeting is to be submitted. Todd Pohlig and Wayne Leighton of Pohlig Builders are present to answer any questions and a stop at 10:00pm will be in place.

John Kiernan, resident in attendance, spoke out and said it was illogical to go over these plans because E. Philip Drive is a non-issue. The access shouldn't be used, it will be a traffic nightmare and result in a head on collision and death. Mark Donovan, elected Supervisor, responded that E. Philip Drive access is a legal issue that is being worked on.

C. English presented a list of 27 items that he has found regarding the Sedgley Farm development and 2 items on the Select Sites plan. Each item was briefly discussed. List of items referenced is attached to these minutes. W. Leighton said these are the comments that they have been looking for from the Planning Commission and they will respond to them.

T. Pohligh advised that Select Sites was added in 2006, and in the 2008/2009 previous approval by the Planning Commission at that time. B. Cohen said it makes sense to open E. Philip drive for an access. Discussion regarding the road widths, and dedication to township ensued. B. Cohen said the Township should take the roads and maintenance of them. T. Pohligh said that it will become an issue years from now if the HOA has maintenance of the roads and the homeowners are paying the same taxes, they will tire of it and come to the Township asking for the roads to be dedicated. The taxes that will be received from these homes will cover the maintenance. T. Pohligh said the HOA will maintain the open space, Stormwater Management Facilities and the deeded restricted buffer areas.

M. Bauer asked if two recommendations are needed, for example one recommended one not, or if these two plans go together in one recommendation to the Board. M. Donovan said that they will need to be two separate recommendations, one for each plan presented.

M. Pellegrino said he understands Pohligh has the right to develop, the exit onto Valley Forge Road (23) is controlled by PennDot, and the big elephant in the room is the East Philip Drive access. The site distance at E. Philip and Whitehorse is terrible, making a left is dangerous, asked if they had a Plan B if this was denied. W. Leighton said they would fight it as a legal right to access or keep one access and then traffic would turn right onto Valley Forge Road, then left onto Moorehall and cut through to N. Whitehorse to come out at the light.

Public Comment

C. Kiernan- asked why a signal couldn't be put at the entrance to the property at Valley Forge Road. W. Leighton replied that it doesn't meet PennDots warrants for a light, and the traffic engineers have also advised that a signal there would not be a good idea.

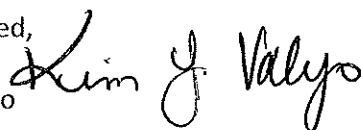
M. Welding – Against the opening of E. Philip Drive for an access to the development.

M. Haag – has concerns about the drainage pipe that exists under the access now. His concerns were addressed.

With no further comment or business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Yocom Valyo



Next Business Meeting July 19, 2023

Sedgley Farm

1. The layout of Lots 31, 32 and 33 shall be revised so that the proposed house can be rotated approximately 90 degrees so that the front of the house faces the cul-de-sac.
2. The layout of Lots 40, 41, 42, 43 and OpenSpace #2 shall be revised so that the emergency access is solely within Open Space #2. If this cannot be accomplished, then Lot 43 should be eliminated and made part of Open Space #2.
3. The layout of Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 to be revised to allow the building envelope of Lot 15 to accommodate the proposed house prototype and be consistent with rest of the development.
4. Given the proposed proximity of the Riparian Buffer Zone 2 as defined by PA DEP to the rear of the proposed house and that the house does not face the street, Lot 16 should be eliminated.
5. Lots 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 shall be reconfigured to allow:
 - The proposed full width prototype house as proposed on the other lots.
 - Reduction of the development density backing up to the Pickering Creel Reservoir
 - Preservation of the character and environment of the reservoir shoreline.
 - Preservation of the historic development along the edge of the reservoir
6. The Tenant House is to remain and the lot it is on shall be deed restriction prohibiting follow:
 - Full-time year-round occupancy as a residence
 - Use as a Bed and Breakfast
 - Boarding Houe
 - Other similar uses

The uses of the Tenant House shall be limited a studio, allowable home business, family gatherings, and visiting out of town friends and family.
7. The Carriage House shall remain for use as garage for vehicle parking and storage by the parcel owner. Any relief necessary to preserve this building should be granted.
8. The proposed Eagles Point Aqua-PA Waterway Crossing should be an open bottom structure that spans both the 1% chance annual occurrence floodplain and wetland areas of the waterway. The low chord of the structure shall be a minimum 1.0 foot higher than the 1% chance annual occurrence water surface elevation at the upstream right-of-way of Eagle Point. The proposed structure shall not increase the 1% chance occurrence floodplain at the tract boundary. The structure to be a single span or twin span with one center pier.
9. Access from East Philips Drive to the proposed development shall be limited to a controlled access reinforced turf emergency accessway within a 30 feet wide easement. The reinforced turf surface shall be designed for HS-25 loading. Use of the accessway shall be controlled and authorized by Emergency Services, Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, Township Road Master and a designated HOA representative should conditions at the main access warrant.
10. The development shall have a Home Owners Association (HOA).
 - The streets and all improvements within the access easement(s) and rights of-ways shall be owned and maintained by the HOA
 - The stormwater management and drainage system shall be owned and maintained by the HOA
 - The HOA will be responsible maintenance of the Open Space(s) and Riparian Buffers

11. The offset in the Sedgley Lane right-of-way at approximately station 8+75 shall be eliminated. The right-of-way shall align with one side or the other of the existing access strip or be centered with the existing access strip.
12. Allow Sedgley Lane access from Valley Forge Road (SR 0023) to Eagles Point to be a curbed 28 feet wide cartway with sidewalk on one side and landscape buffers.
13. The Sedgley Lane culvert shall be an open bottom structure that spans the 1% chance annual occurrence floodplain of the drainageway as determined for the drainageway without any obstruction or enclosure at the location (preexisting culvert drainageway condition). The low chord of the structure shall be 1.0 higher than the % chance storm water surface elevation at the upstream right-way of Sedgley Lane. The 1% floodplain upstream and downstream of the structure shall not be increased.
14. The proposed structure shall be designed with Type D Endwalls.
15. Provide a traffic calming speed table along Sedley Lane at the culvert location.
16. The double yellow lane striping shall be extended from the intersection with Valley Forge Road to the Eagles Point intersection.
17. Consideration should be given to allow a narrow strip of land between the limits of a right-of-way or easement for Sedgley Lane and the adjoining parcels to avoid causing the adjoining parcels to become double frontage lots. This should consider a combination of a narrowed width right-of-way or access easement and strip of land owned by the HOA. The strip is not to be considered as part of the required open space.
18. The offer to allow the owner of parcel 27-6B-35 to have the right but obligated to have access to Sedley Lane for the driveway access to the parcel shall continue in perpetuity.
19. The "status unknown" of Belmont Terrance shall be resolved.
20. The limits of Riparian Buffers Zones 1 and 2 shall be marked at lot boundaries and major inflection points within the lots using fiberglass utility marker posts with Riparian Buffer Zone designation labels.
21. Lots with Riparian Buffer Zones 1 and 2 shall be deed restricted prohibiting clearing these areas. Non-native and invasive species may be removed as part of landscape maintenance of these areas. Areas where vegetation has been removed shall be replanted in accordance with riparian buffer recommendation and guidance.
22. Areas within 300 feet of the site shall be investigated for Bog Turtle Habitat unless access to perform the survey is denied in writing by the adjoining parcel owner. Areas that have been identified as bog turtle habit shall be shown on the plans. A Bog Turtle Habitat Buffer as recommended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shall be implemented, the limits of the buffer shall be marked using fiberglass utility marker posts with Bog Turtle Habitat designation labels. A deed restriction shall be placed on the lots prohibiting use of the buffer area for anything other than meadow or wooded areas.
23. Riparian Buffer Zones 1 and 2 shall be planted with native species suitable for these buffer zones to achieve uniform coverage as recommended PA DEP for riparian buffers.
24. The previous back-to-back left turn lane design for Valley Forge Rd (SR 0023) recommended by PennDOT should be shown on the plan as the design that will be submitted to PennDOT for the new Highway Occupancy Permit application.
25. Streets shall be provided at 1 per 50 feet of proposed street right-of-way. The location of streets can be allowed to vary by five feet to avoid conflicts with other improvements as long as the average distance between the trees is 50 feet over 500 feet lengths of road right-of-way.

26. The proposed subdivision and land development shall comply with or resolve the Township Engineer's review letter comments, Township Traffic Engineering Consultant, the EAC letter comments and the Township Historic Commission that have not been covered by these recommendations.
27. Provide an 8-foot-wide multiuse trail through the emergency use access easement to connect the neighborhoods.

Select Sites

1. The Select Sites subdivision plan should be revised to be a 35 wide emergency access easement parallel to the side property line. Access from East Philips Drive to the proposed development shall be limited to a controlled access reinforced turf emergency accessway within a 30 feet wide easement. The reinforced turf surface shall be designed for HS-25 loading. Use of the accessway shall be controlled and authorized by Emergency Services, Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, Township Road Master and a designated HOA representative should conditions at the main access warrant. The emergency access shall be maintained by the Sedgley Farm HOA.
2. Provide an 8-foot-wide multiuse trail through the emergency use access easement to connect the neighborhoods.