

ALLENTOWN CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING AUGUST 9, 2022

MINUTES

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Christian Brown, Chairman
Damien Brown
Jeff Glazier
Kelli Holzman
Hannah Clark

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

Robert Gates, Acting Planning Director
Melissa Velez, Zoning Supervisor
Nelson Varughese, Public Works
Brandon Jones, Assistant Planner
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planning Officer
Jesus Sadiua, Senior Planner
David Petrik, City Engineer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michael Lopsonzski, 702 E. Cedar St.
Paul Progen, 2452 S. Lumber St.
Marty Smith, Pany & Lentz Engineering
Joe Correia, J.G. Petrucci Co.

MINUTES

Minutes of the public meeting of July 12, 2022.

Minutes Approved.

SIDEWALK POSTPONEMENT

128 W. Hamilton Street, S22-2, requested by 309 E. Hamilton Street LLC

No representation. Damien motions to table. Jeff seconds. Motion approved.

LAND DEVELOPMENTS

702 E. Cedar Street, LMA-2022-00012, preliminary/final approval requested by Eurosport Classic Motors LP.

Michael Lopsonzski: I'm the owner of Eurosport Classic Motors. It is simply just a car collection. I purchased this land strictly to store personal vehicles so it's not a business it's not going to have customers or any delivery trucks producing any garbage or anything it's really just an extension of my home garage where I can keep my own personal vehicles that are titled in my name. I come here to take cars to shows, that is the whole purpose of this development and I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

Chris Brown: Did you submit a zoning permit application?

Mike: I don't believe so, I believed that everything that I was doing here was within the zoning ordinance and so we tried to design everything according to the rules that are for a Business Light Industrial land use.

Chris: The reason I ask is because I think a narrative that would be included along the lines of what you just gave us would go a long way with the zoning application to make the city staff understand what the nature of this property and this project is all about.

Mike: I agree. Cedar Street is on a slope and to create one large building would have been extremely costly because we would have had to dig deep into the ground, so what we did was tier the buildings much like a lot of the other buildings in this small industrial park are tiered to follow the contour of the land, so they are totally independent separate structures, three separate roofs, no doors in between because they drop down. Two of the buildings face Cedar Street and then the third building will face Gilmore Street because of the slope of the land it is actually better for the lower building to come out onto Gilmore Street.

Kelli Holtzman: Was there something about an underground storage tank on this rendering also?

Mike: Yes. All the buildings have macadam aprons that lead to the sidewalk. The buildings are setback 20 ft off the road according to the zoning rules and then the macadam for the buildings is right into the curb. Underneath that macadam apron is where the engineers designed the water storage and the disbursement of rainwater from the roof.

Damien Brown: So, the two easternmost buildings will have front and rear access and the westernmost building will have front access only along Gilmore.

Mike: In the comments I read about landscaping and making a green facility, which I, under most circumstances, would be a proponent of. I want the building to be beautiful, but it is very limited. The nature of this development does not allow for a lot of that because of how compact it is but I am willing to talk to the engineer about putting in some potted plants and shrubbery.

Chris: Street trees are probably your best way to green this site up and find some compliance with the city. I think these two green areas that you have north and south of your westernmost building is an area where you can consolidate some of those trees if it doesn't make sense to

put them elsewhere on the perimeter and I think the Shade Tree Commission has expressed some interest in possibly seeing you do that in lieu of not getting the trees at all. How do you plan on utilizing the storage for the cars?

Mike: Ideally, you would build a building with garage doors on all four sides so if you want to get a car out, you just open one door and move one car out.

Hannah Clark: So, in terms of the activities that will take place, it's exclusively storage, no work on the cars will occur?

Mike: Correct

Hannah: In the next version of this plan, I suggest having better indications of walkways. I do see there will be a depressed curb across the entirety, which might make it hard to delineate where cars are coming from, so maybe some pavement markings. Finally, the lack of the lighting plans is something that I think needs to be addressed. This is obviously going to add significant structures to the area and ensuring it is properly lit for you to access it safely, but also the people who are moving around it.

Mike: To address the first issue, the engineer and zoning attorney that I have talked to say that there is a deferral mentioned in the package of documents I received and talked about asking for the deferral. The lighting was an oversight. The engineer just forgot to put one light centered on each building on every side. We will put them on the next drawings.

Damien: One thing that could possibly be done to mitigate the impact on your overall site plan is to waive the planting strip. If you are able to just build the sidewalk right along the curb that would reduce the cost and the impact on the overall site plan.

Mike: There's no sewer, no water, and no gas. It is just a dry storage building with electricity.

Chris: Anyone from the audience?

Paul Progen: My wife and I own the neighboring property. Our western wall of our building is the property line. I would like to be made knowledgeable regarding the requirements of water and sewer on the facility itself in that, who is going to be in the building, who is attendant, are guest going to be in the building? My impression is that the only person that would be permitted in the building is Michael and his immediate family if there are no bathrooms or sewer. I also have concerns about the distance between his building and mine. I do not believe there should be a variance or any accommodation to reduce the 20 FT side lot set back if that is designated as the side of the lot. I believe the side lot setback should be a minimum of 20 FT regarding both the zoning and what should be appropriate for new construction.

Chris: That may be a legitimate interpretation, but we will leave that for the zoning department decide. The plans will not get approved until it passes all the requirements of the City Departments.

Paul: Will I be notified when new plans are submitted?

Chris: Yes, our planning director will reach out to you. We're going to table the project. So, we are not taking any official action, approving, or denying the application, that keeps it open. If you do not think you will be back for the next meeting, you might want to talk about an extension.

Damien motions to table. Hannah seconds. Motion approved

1024 N Bradford Street, LMA-2022-00013 & LDC-2022-00006, preliminary/final approval requested by Tiger Den Partners II, LLC.

Martin Smith: So we were before you a couple months ago with sketch plans on both 1024 N Bradford St and 1051 American Parkway. Taking the input that we received at that time and preliminary input from the City Staff, we have revised the plans and submitted preliminary/final plans on the projects. For this project we took the advice of the Planning Commission and flipped the building around so that the loading dock is at the back of the building now facing American Parkway. That was able to eliminate all the retaining walls that we had on that site previously. On both projects we are in receipt of all the review letters from City Staff, Shade Tree and LCA for our water and sewer. I am awaiting a review from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. We have not received that review letter at this time, and we are still in the process of making our submission to Lehigh County Conservation District for NPDES permit.

Today we will be looking for some further thoughts and input from the Planning Commission on the updated plans and then we plan to table the projects until the comments have been addressed. We did submit a traffic impact study with this submission and are just waiting on comments.

Chris: It would be helpful to have some renderings included in the next submission. Is this something that you think would ever need to become a fenced in truck court or a secure facility?

Marty: It varies depending on the user. We do not typically fence them.

Chris: Where is the floor elevation relative to the center of the building and Bradford Street. Is it below the road?

Marty.: Yes, it is.

Chris: How tall is the building estimated to be?

Marty: 37 FT tall and it will probably go up to 40 FT at the high side.

Damien: The balance of the property to the east and west, what is planned for that area?

Marty: We'll probably do some sort of meadow mix.

Chris: The parking requirements are less than you are proposing. What is the reason for proposing so much more than what is required?

Marty: It is easier to have more than less.

Kelli Motions to table. Jeff seconds. Motion approved.

1051 American Parkway NE, LMA-2022-00014, preliminary/final approval requested by Tiger Den Partners II, LLC.

Marty: This is another site that we're proposing with self-storage. We do have steep slope issues on this property as well. We are in receipt of review letters. I am still waiting on the Allentown Planning Commissions letter. We are proposing work in and along PPL right-of-way. The main building coming in is a 3-story building and in total there is over 100,000 square feet of potential storage. The two smaller buildings are single story. These projects work together on the water and sewer side of things in that we are proposing to extend the sewer on this site. We are going to get over to the larger site through a force main to minimize disruption to American Parkway and also through the creek on the other side of American Parkway. To minimize disruption to those items we are doing a force main across N. Bradford Street.

Chis: What have you done to look into a secondary access?

Marty.: The grade differential between American Parkway and where the buildings would sit will make it impracticable to have a secondary access from American Parkway.

Chris: Is this a self-serve facility?

Marty: Yes. It's going to be a climate-controlled building there's access on the ground floor and the second floor, and then the third floor would be accessed through an elevator.

Hannah: For engineering, have you looked at the traffic study yet?

David Petrik: We have the study, and we will be looking at it.

Hannah motions to table. Kelli seconds. Motion approved.

ADJOURN