

ALLENTOWN CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING February 9, 2021

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Christian Brown, Chairman
Mark Buchvalt, Vice Chairman
Damien Brown, Secretary
Richard Button
Jeff Glazier
Anthony Toth
Oldrich Foucek

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

Irene Woodward, Planning Director
Frederick Andrayko, Zoning Supervisor
Craig Messinger, Public Works
David Petrik, Public Works
Nelson Varughese, Public Works
Jesus Sadiua, Senior Planner
Brian Borzak, Chief Designer/Surveyor

OTHERS PRESENT:

George Saunders
Dave Evans, Executive Director HADC
Robert Piligian
Daniel Farrell, Allentown Housing Authority
Toki Rehder, Pennrose Properties LLC
Jaquelin Camp, WRT, Architect
Joseph Fitzpatrick, RD management
Chirag Thakkar, Arna Engineering
Tim Koch, Director of facilities, A. Duie Pyle
Adam Goodman, Goodman Properties
Peter Latta CEO A. Duie Pyle
Jeff Beavan, Bohler engineering
Kevin Watts
Greg Seifert
Joe Piperato, A. Duie Pyle attorney
Chris McClean
John Palumbo, Vice President Manhattan Building company

MINUTES:

Minutes of Public Meeting of December 8, 2020

Minutes of Public Meeting of January 12, 2021

Christian Brown makes motion to approve minutes and board unanimously approved.

SIDEWALK POSTPONEMENT REQUEST:

--1049 E. Turner Street, S20-11, requested by George Saunders, Inc. (Tabled at January 12, 2021

Chris Brown states the board was looking to get more information on the site and now have the building plans but no additional site information site or grading plan.

Atty. Foucek states the building plan does not show where on the lot the house is situated.

George Saunders states he included the approved zoning permit which shows where the house is located on the lot.

Chris Brown states in the absence of more information do we just do a short term deferral to see how things turn out, if just the plant material are the issue can we just find a way to continue to wait and Maxwell St. being the only question, Turner can be constructed.

Mark Buchvalt states that is his thoughts as well, based on the way it is now they will need a retaining wall and depending might need a fence, based on the work and grading they are doing without any grading plans, so either get plans or wait until they get the house started.

Tony Toth states we wanted more information, and the burden of proof is on the applicant, so we require sidewalks or this either gets tabled again or deny the application.

Atty. Foucek states the slope is substantial and would need a retaining wall, should require the sidewalk to be constructed and if someone wants to come back in a year once we see the finished product he is ok with that.

George Saunders states they were planning on putting Turner St. a handicap cub on corner of Maxwell and Turner, with one sidewalk block as resting spot on Maxwell St. side the lot is leveled also putting handicap curb and sidewalk block on Oak and Maxwell St. don't have a problem to put a sidewalk on Maxwell once house is built.

Jeff Glazier asks when the house is built there is no plan to fill the space between the house and Maxwell with fill, George Saunders states that is correct will just grade that off so just slopes so they can cut the grass.

Tony Toth states financial hardship is not a reason on the ordinance we have for sidewalk and understand the amount but anyone could say that, so if they are not going to put sidewalk in on new construction I don't know when they will, if they are willing to let us look at it once the home was built and look at the grades that would be ok but otherwise I would deny the request.

Richard Button makes motion to grant 2-year deferral on the sidewalk construction along Maxwell street frontage starting from the day of the Planning commission meeting February 9th, Jeff Glazier seconded and the board unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

--438-440 North Street, LMI-2020-00018, request of HADC to waive Section 1385.11.B of the Land Development Controls Ordinance which requires that the horizontal distance from either the toe or top of an excavation or fill slope line shall be five (5) feet or one-half (1/2) the vertical height of the fill or excavation from any adjoining property or easement line, whichever is greater of the City's Land Development and Subdivision Ordinance (SALDO).

Robert Piligian states this is the last phase of a project that began 15 years ago on both sides of North St. involved the demolition and readjustment of lot lines and reconstruction of single family dwellings both attached and semidetached, lot line adjustment of 4 properties that were corner of North and Penn in the process of minor land development to obtain building permit to construct first set of twins comment was brought up to about the grading within 5ft of property line, so we are requesting the waiver to permit that grading the grading will match all of the current grading on the property adjacent to it, that HADC had constructed approx. 2007/2008 and also matching grading on 3 surrounding streets, the other issue is the northerly and western side and we will be coming in with another minor land development with another set of twins once this plan has been approved will be coming right in because HADC wants to construct both sets at the same time.

Chris Brown asks if this is a waiver request or could we apply to balance of project. Robert states they would like that if they can. Chris Brown asks Irene Woodward if we could do that and if the application for the other units, Irene Woodward states they have not. Chris Brown states if you have to come back and we cannot roll this into one it would be quick.

Jeff Glazier makes motion to grant a waiver from section 1385.11.B for 438-440 North street, Damien Brown seconded and the board unanimously approved.

LAND DEVELOPMENTS:

-- Parkway Community Building, 2335 Parkway Boulevard, LMA-2020-00023, preliminary/final plan approval requested by Muhlenberg College. (Tabled at January 12, 2021 meeting)

Applicant proposes to demolish the former Sigma Phi epsilon Fraternity building and construct a new 3-story office building.

Applicant requested the plan review be delayed to a later meeting.

--- Little Lehigh Redevelopment Phase 1, Lehigh Street and Franklin Court, LMA-2020-00024, preliminary/final plan approval requested by Little Lehigh Redevelopment, LLC.

The applicant proposes to create 3 lots, demolish 50 units and community building, and construct 50 new units and a community building.

Mark Buchvalt recuses himself because he speaks on behalf of Little Lehigh.

Mark Buchvalt on behalf of T&M associates states they were here back in December, Lot 1/phase 1 on southern portion demolish 56 units and building 50 new units and new community building to replace old one, increased pedestrian access throughout, fully ADA accessible, new driveway out to Lehigh street, all new utilities, Lot 2 phase 2 hope to do project in future, Lot 3 existing senior building no improvements/plans for that parcel right now or anytime soon, there will be updated storm water facilities, new landscaping, much better new and improved site.

Jaquelin Camp from WRT states they have been advancing the detailing of buildings but layout is the same 50 total units, 13 1br, 15 2br, 15 3br, 7 4br, and community building about 4600 sq. ft. that will include management and maintenance as well as community room and head start classroom, have 5 residential buildings all mixed of 2 & 3 story stack townhouse units, ground floor are 1 story flat for smaller 1 bedroom, 2,3 & 4 bedroom units are stacked above in townhouse units, the ground floor of each building has brick façade at street side, upper floors are vinyl siding 3 different textures and 3 different colors.

Chris Brown asks what is going on in the back part of buildings facing Martin Luther King.

Jaquelin states there is a sidewalk that goes behind the buildings, there is a lot of grade on the site and by the time we flattened it out enough to provide accessible roofs it has to drop pretty quickly when you get behind, some of the ground floor units have back doors and those have small back porches, each units has exterior storage closets, doors, windows at back of building, but no decks or balconies.

Atty. Foucek asks if there is sidewalk along Martin Luther King, and steps for people going to the southwest to get to local basketball courts etc. if not will have a lot of foot traffic on grass.

Mark Buchvalt confirms there is sidewalk on Martin Luther King and there has been discussion to provide steps or some form of linkage to get to those local areas.

Damien Brown asks about lighting plan. Mark Buchvalt states that is all included in the plan and selected a light that is all over Allentown with the acorn fixture, going to look into more of the suggested lighting from comment letter but have to see how much can do based on budget from PFHA.

Damien Brown makes motion to approve preliminary/final, object to comment letter and applicant's agreement to investigate potential connection west connection and advisement to review potential additional lighting, Atty. Foucek seconded and the board unanimously approved. Mark Buchvalt abstained.

-- **1811 SW Glenwood St., LMA-2020-00007, revised preliminary/final plan approval requested by MFB Allentown L.P.**

The applicant proposes to revise the previously approved plan from two industrial buildings to one 148,104 SF industrial building.

Chris Brown states this is a revision to a conditionally approved plan.

Joseph Fitzpatrick states the original project is a piece of land the planning commission recommended and the city rezoned, it's the parcel immediately adjoining the home depot on Lehigh street with frontage at I-78, to the North and East is Queen city airport, the use is permitted, approvals were granted about a year ago for 2 buildings, totaling 152,000 sq. ft. the properties out on the market and indicate a single building stand alone, smaller is in demand, so we are reducing the size of the total by about 3% down to 148, 000 sq. ft. building, the impacts on property are minimized in regards to traffic movement, access drives, almost a clean letter from the city, so don't think we will need additional approval from LVPC.

Tony Toth asks the staff and Irene, this plan was previously approved and we granted preliminary/final approval, is this deemed a change where the old plan is revised and it loses its status as an approval and this needs to be a new submission.

Irene Woodward states the city looked at it as it was a revision to the existing plan, part of the reason it came back to the planning commission was because you approved 2 buildings previously and wanted it to come back to be reviewed and it was reviewed by all departments, we looked at it as a revision and most of the sq. footage remains somewhat the same so that is why it is back to get approval.

Chris Brown makes comment about south façade facing 78, see alternating row of evergreens, not sure if it is unique to the building, not sure what those trees are there to do but think that is a missed opportunity to do something with along the 78 side and asks how tall the building is.

Chirag Thakkar states the building height is 50 ft. we have an application with FFA and spoke with queen city in regards to height, in regards to landscaping that's fronting on 78 at the prior planning commission meeting there was request to add some evergreen trees so that is why we added about 10 or 12 trees, there is a heavy vegetation along 78, so the top of building will be visible but not the lower end of building, there is a chain link fence that borders the property line along 78 right of way, the existing home depot sign the lower base of the sign is not visible, the grading that you see are the storm water basin. No review from fire department but will commit to working with engineering department and fire marshal to figure it all out.

Chris Brown asks to make note to cluster the evergreen trees on the site during installation to fill in void with existing vegetation.

Mark makes motion to approve with condition being February 6th staff review letter, the additional commitment to explore and incorporate secondary emergency access, and more strategic use of the proposed landscaping on southside of building, Jeff Glazier seconded and the board unanimously approved.

-- **Llyod Street & North Irving Street, LMA-2020-00025, preliminary/final plan approval requested by A. Duie Pyle.**

The applicant proposes to construct a 326,630 SF industrial building (174,000 SF in Allentown).

Adam Goodman of Goodman properties, commercial real estate company states they own the airport center, and purchased property 7yrs ago, have of property in the City of Allentown the other half in Hanover Township.

Joe Piperato Attorney for A. Duie Pyle states that Pyle is currently an operative facility on Hoover Avenue in Hanover Township, we have been through Hanover & Lehigh County planning commission both for lot consolidation and land development plan, Hanover Township council for lot consolidation, land development is conditioned to moving through both city of Allentown and Hanover Township. The applicant is proposing a warehouse and distribution center of 326,000 Sq. Ft. the 174,000 Sq. Ft. is the amount that would be located in the City of Allentown, property consists of 21 or so acres, bound by public streets North by Lloyd, East by Airport Road, South by American Parkway and the West by Irving Street.

Peter Latta CEO states A. Duie Pyle is privately owned family business, been around 97 years, supply chain service, one of our services is less than truckload transportation services, also provide driver and equipment services for places like Wegmans. The operation proposed will be part of our warehouse & distribution center operations, one of the supply chain services that will be provided is handling distribution services for various Companies for various different reasons, this will be storing product in rack, storage or bulk, and as the customers are receiving orders our customer service reps in our facility interact with customer and we prepare the shipment and ship the product to the destination.

Gregg Seaford states he will discuss the overall site plan of the project, the building splits about halfway down the center of it into Hanover township on the North and City of Allentown on the South, the site is oriented that all the car traffic will enter a separate driveway on Northeast corner coming off of Lloyd street, all vehicle access will come off of Lloyd street. Just to the west is the truck entrance, all trucks will come into the facility bare right and follow along the north truck court, everything will be one-way traffic, everything on the site will be fenced in.

Chris Brown asks how things were going with Hanover Township land development, Joe Piperato stated everything was going well and the issues are items that will be complied with.

Mark Buchvalt asks about sidewalk postponements and what Hanover townships thoughts are on sidewalks on Lloyd street, Airport road, and Irving St.

Joe Piperato states they did not request any sidewalks on any of their portions of this project but did request curbing on Lloyd street and Eastern portions of Irving but no sidewalks.

Chris Brown asks if they are going to reconsider the sidewalk situation and take the comments and input received at this meeting and come back with some site modifications

so we can possibly move forward at the next meeting. Jeff Glazier makes motion to table this approval, Richard Button seconded and the board unanimously approved.

-- **Request of A. Duie Pyle for the following waivers from the Land Development and Subdivision Ordinance:**

From Section 1377.03.A to permit a plan size of 30"x42".

Chris Brown states does not think this is a problem.

From Section 1379.04.C.13 to permit a plastic impermeable liner in lieu of clay liner/core.

Craig Messinger states that this is something that Mark Geosits prior did not want it to be that way wanted the liner but have to wait to discuss with engineer David Petrik.

Jeff Beavan stated they are proposing a pvc type impermeable liner on both facilities the waiver request is for the underground located in the city, being an underground facility the pvc gives more flexibility.

Craig Messinger states the city engineer David Petrik states the pvc liner would be fine.

From Section 1379.04.D.2 to permit stormwater calculations to be prepared using the SCS Method (TR-55) for a site under 200 acres, for consistency with NPDES requirements.

From Section 1379.04.E.3 to permit high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe in lieu of reinforced concrete pip (RCP) for on-site facilities.

From Section 1387.03.7.I to permit an orifice size of 1.0 inches in order to mete release rate requirements in lieu of the 3-inch minimum required.

From Article 911.05.A.4 to permit street trees to be located beyond the street right-of-way due to an existing high-voltage overhead line easement along American Parkway and grading constraints along Airport Road and Irving Street.

Richard Button makes motion to grant 5 waivers as cited in agenda not including the 6th waiver regarding the street trees which is not a waivable motion, Atty. Foucek seconded and the board unanimously approved.

REZONING:

Amends the rezoning of certain parcels to B-5 urban Commercial District, (ii) providing for a new Urban Transition Multi-Family Development use within the B-5 Urban Commercial District and the B-2 Central Business District and providing a definition of, and regulations relating to, such use, (iii) permitting Adaptive Reuse in the B-5 Urban Commercial District by Special Exception, (iv) increasing the height limitation for Hotels and Motels in the B-5 urban Commercial District, (v) modifying parking requirements for Urban Transition Multi-

Family Development, and (vi) providing for a repealer clause, a severability clause, and an effective date as requested by The Manhattan Building Company, Inc.

Atty. Foucek recused himself from this matter.

Joe Fitzpatrick states a portion of the proposal is a bridge to the waterfront which is a neighboring property, this area is urban residential and mixed commercial residential use, we are starting in the vicinity of Front street near Allen and Liberty, a rezoning is necessary, we pushed the city to go to a B-2 and the consultants were not receptive, so the largest part of the proposal is leaning to B-5 and existing district that will allow this vision bridge from the river waterfront area, west towards center city and developed NIZ areas to occur. The Manhattan's vision is trying to address realities of urban residential needs that include basic services, basic commercial services, and places where people can walk to work.

John Palumbo Vice President of the Manhattan building company states they are looking to move the corporate headquarters to Allentown and stacking the company with local Allentown residents, hire local professionals and contractors, give hiring preference to Allentown residents, on site job training, working with youth build Allentown and look to expand, and making a commitment to public parks and open spaces and turning Bucky Boyle park into one the countries best water front parks. John Palumbo states they plan to redevelop 207 N. Front St. in regards to Bucky Boyle park and Lehigh River, proposes to redevelop 500 N. Railroad St. into Riverview lofts 5 floors of mixed used residential and the 2 bottom floors for parking, and parking deck would be deeded back to APA once finished and they would maintain the parking deck site. Proposes to develop 249 N. Front St. into the Cliff Lofts mixed used residential, new construction but will preserve the historic fabric.

Jeff Glazier asks on the 500 Railroad St, it states 26 spaces how many are utilized by people in the neighborhood and will any of the spaces in the parking deck be for residents of the neighborhood.

John Palumbo states out of the 26 spaces we have a current lease agreement with the APA for 25 of the 26 spaces and that is used for a portion of the tenants at Riverview Lofts. Only 1 space available to the public, the 2 floors of the building that will be parking deck all 72 spaces will be managed by the APA, the first floor would be for residents of neighborhood and 2nd floor would be for residents of the building.

Chris Brown asks what cannot be done under current zoning and what would be permissible under the change.

John Palumbo states there are several different zonings that regulate all the properties but most of them are industrial uses I2 and I3 so without a zoning change they would not be able to implement the vision of the Lehigh Riverfront masterplan, mixed use development, so want to do a zoning map change with text amendment which allows development of 5 floors of residential on top of 2 stories of parking up to 80 ft. in total under the current zoning other than adaptive reuse provision there is not a residential component so this plan would not be able to be implemented.

Chris Brown asks what does not the RRO give us that we otherwise need.

John Palumbo states that the RRO does not extend to this property so that is another hurdle we have to get over, this property has never been properly rezoned, the proposal properly zones all

of the properties included in the Lehigh Riverfront Masterplan which were not incorporated in the RRO rezoning.

Jeff Glazier asks how far North are they proposing the rezoning will go to.

John Palumbo states they are proposing to develop and rezone up to the property line of the sites, and directly adjacent to the waterfront development.

Chris Brown asks Irene Woodward to schedule a virtual workshop.

Jeff Glazier makes motion to table the case until the next meeting, Richard Button seconds and the board unanimously approved. Atty. Foucek abstained.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.