

**Monthly Meeting of the
Allentown City Planning Commission**

February 13, 2024

Attendance:

- **ACPC Members:** Chris Brown (Chair), Damien Brown (V-Chair), Jeff Glazier, Erich Hornung
- **City Staff:** Jennifer Gomez, Mark Hartney, David Petrik, Adam Rosenthal, Melissa Velez, Jesus Sadiua, Daren Martocci (KCE, Consultant)
- **Others present:** Joseph Colasuonno (Central Park Apartments), Dennis McCarthy, Esq. (Davison & McCarthy), Chris Stanford (Michael Baker International)

Meeting called to Order at 12:20 PM

Announcements/Revised Agenda:

None

Item #1 - Approval of Minutes from January 9, 2024

Approval of minutes – No comments, corrections. Unanimously approved as written.

Item #4 – Waiver Requests:

Applicant: PennDOT, Location: Riverside Drive

Purpose: Waiver requests (*and postponements*) associated with the proposed Riverside Drive roadway and multi-use trail project.

Presentation:

J. Gomez presented a summary of the project, waiver requests and postponements.

Chris Stanford of Michael Baker International (MBI), presented an overview of the project which proposes a newly constructed extension of Riverside Drive (approx. 2 miles) from Furnace Street to Lehigh Avenue in Whitehall Township.

The specific location for the request is along the west side of Riverside Drive, from Jordan Drive to the City/Township Line with Whitehall Township. On the east side of extended Riverside Drive, the project will have a 12' wide shared-use path for pedestrian and bicyclists.

Justifications for the modifications/postponements were related to the presence of steep slopes, little or no pedestrian generators, a required swale roadway section and narrow right-of-way along Riverside Drive. It was noted by staff that, Shade Tree Commission review will be required.

The Commission questioned if similar waiver requests, deferrals or postponements have been sought from adjoining Whitehall Township. C. Stanford noted that PennDOT will be making similar waiver requests to Whitehall Twp.

The Commission discussed the possibility of narrowing the swale section to accommodate sidewalks in this area. C. Stanford pointed out that the project already required slope easements. It was noted by C. Stanford that sidewalk has been proposed on both sides of Furnace drive.

Waiver Request #1, Ordinance Section: §350-21, was granted unanimously.

Waiver Request #2, Ordinance Section: 350-15.E.(4), was granted as a postponement along the Wes side of the proposed Riverside Drive extension from the re-aligned Jordan Drive to the city limits for a period of 10 years or such time that an adjacent land development plan is proposed and/or considered.

Waiver Request #3, Ordinance Section: 350-30.C, upon advice and the benefit of the Fire Chief review with regard to this requirement it was officially motioned to grant relief from the fire hydrant requirement. The waiver was granted unanimously.

Item #3 – Street Vacation

Applicant: Public Works, City of Allentown

Location: Type Street from S. 8th Street to its West Terminus

Purpose: The vacation will enable the installation of pedestrian safety improvements (re: ADA compliant ramps) as part of the streetscape project on Hamilton Street.

Presentation:

J. Gomez presented the request for Type Street from S. 8th St. westward to its midblock terminus. The vacation is required to accommodate the Hamilton Street Sidewalk improvement project. Type Street, is an open, but dead-end street and is approximately 10' x 115' with five (5) properties abutting the right-of-way. The Public Works Dept. has surveyed the various landowners, Parcel D (804 W. Hamilton) response was that their preference is to leave the street open. There have been no objections by other property owners, but it was noted that other landowners have yet to comment. Presently, the street right-of-way is used for vehicular parking and storage of wheeled dumpsters.

The vacation is needed to provide continuous sidewalk along S. 8th Street and to construct drainage improvements. The sidewalk will be designed to allow for access to dumpsters, but will restrict vehicular access.

The Bureau of Engineering recommends approval of the vacation with a condition that the city reserve an easement over the lands for drainage and passage of utilities. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) provided a no objection letter, recommending that access to fire equipment and utilities be maintained.

Discussion:

The Commission asked if any additional concerns or objects were received from affected property owners since preparation of staff reports, neither Planning nor Engineering have received additional information. The Commission discussed access to 8TH Street along the Type Street, specifically with respect to trash and recycling receptacles. Other concerns were raised about general constructability of the proposed sidewalk and accessibility to the existing properties that abut Type Street during construction.

Action:

The Commission recommended against vacation of the street right-of-way, in favor eliminating vehicular access to Type Street to complete the streetscape project.

Item #4 – Extension Request

Project: Multi-Unit Apartment Complex - Central Park Apartments

Request: 5-year extension of timeline to finalize and record plans

Applicant: Central Park Apartments, LLC

Location: 605-665 N. Wahneta

Presentation:

J. Gomez, presented the extension request, including a history of approvals and past timelines.

Dennis McCarthy Esq., of Davidson and McCarthy presented further details on the extension request, including land acquisition issues from PennDOT. D. McCarthy also provided an update on land acquisition by City Center since the Commission had last seen the plan, (i.e., Northridge Development Project) which creates a second point of access to the project. With the acquisition and development of the Northridge Project by City Center, the Central Park Project may require slight redesign with respect to roadway alignment.

There was discussion related to the length of the extension as well as the fact that the plan has expired. J. Gomez provided an update on draft SALDO legislation which would extend recording timelines out to 5 Years with the ability to grant 2-year extensions.

A motion was made to grant a 2-year extension of timeline to finalize and record plans.

Meeting adjourned at 1:36 pm