

**Lower Salford
Township Planning
Commission Meeting
February 28, 2024**

Planning Commission Vice Chair John Kennedy called to order the Lower Salford Township Planning Commission meeting at 7:30pm. Other Planning Commission members in attendance were Joe Harwanko, David Goodman, David Bowe, Scott Bamford, and Julia Hurlle. Also in attendance was George DiPersio, P.E. of CKS, the Township Engineer's office, and Claire Warner of the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Planning Commission Chair Manus McHugh and Stephanie Butler, P.E. of Bowman, the Township Traffic Engineer's office attended the meeting via Zoom.

Minutes

The minutes from the January 24, 2024, meeting were reviewed. Mr. Goodman made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Harwanko seconded the motion.

Motion 7 yes; 0 No

Plan Reviews

196 Main Street

Present to discuss the revised Conditional Use application was Rick Mast, P.E. of RCMA; he was joined by applicants Bryan Hunsberger and Leo Orloski. One review letter was prepared by Michele Fountain, P.E. of CKS Engineers, dated 2/13/2024.

Mr. Mast gave a brief overview of the project stating that bank use is now allowed following the new ordinance amendment. A drive-through ATM only is planned, the residential units are now proposed as two-stories, and nothing is proposed to be built in the drainage feature area due to the alluvial soils.

Addressing the CKS letter, Mr. Mast said they will comply with the lighting and landscaping, the building materials will be revised to stone veneer and cement board siding and the windows will be changed to be more residential in character.

The Planning Commission requested the applicant supply a rendering of the Quarry Road side of the apartment building. Discussed was the appearance of the buildings, including facade, materials, façade breaks and building length. The Planning Commission would like to see a more simplified color pallet.

Mr. Kennedy pointed out a correction that needs to be made to the plan where the parking is listed erroneously for restaurant. He also asked if a dumpster is necessary for the bank building.

Mr. Kennedy also pointed out an area where he would like to see buffering in lieu of the 4 or 5 parking spaces since there is more parking shown than required.

Mr. Goodman commented that there are no dumpsters at other Chase Bank sites. Mr. Mast will inquire if it can be eliminated.

It was noted that a monument sign will be requested for the Rt 63 side of the parcel and perhaps the Quarry Road side. Sidewalks are also proposed for the site.

Mr. McHugh would like to further discuss the parking between the bank and retail space at land development.

Mr. Kennedy asked the applicant to supply a rendering of the side of the retail building, confirmed that the residential units are two bed/two bath with no three bed options and inquired if the applicant would agree to no three bed units as a condition. He also encouraged the applicant to investigate including the horizontal breaks as discussed.

Mr. Mast requested a recommendation as his client is under a strict time constraint with Chase Bank and waiting until June is not viable for them.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that an exception will be made regarding the deadline for the next Planning Commission meeting and the Planning Commission would suggest that the Board authorize advertisement at their March meeting.

Mr. Kennedy asked the applicant if they would consider the condition that the area north of the drainage never be used for residential as he would like the commercial and residential areas kept separate; the applicant will take this into consideration.

The applicant was given permission to return to the Planning Commission in March. Mr. Kennedy requested that revised plans be submitted in a timely fashion (approximately a week period) for review prior to the March PC meeting.

Walkable Lederach Feasibility Study

Natasha Manbeck, P.E. of Bowman was present to review the draft report. She gave a brief historical description of Lederach, the six-point intersection and the planning that has gone into this study. She noted that the deadline to submit written comments on this study is 3/11/2024.

Ms. Manbeck presented the slideshow of the report and discussed traffic data, stakeholder input, previous meetings, the possible Route 113 bypass as well as the village core, village gateways, and village edge. Sidewalks, crosswalks, speed limits, signage and traffic calming were also discussed. Ms. Manbeck noted that the last step associated with the TCDI grant process will be for the BOS to accept that the report was completed in accordance with the grant requirements and scope of work. This acceptance is not an adoption of the report or approval of the projects identified in the study.

Trail connection for walkability and biking were discussed as well as potential future connections of these trails to the Perkiomen Trail and Evansburg State Park.

It was noted that at the first public meeting more than eighty residents were in attendance and fifty residents attended the second meeting; both written responses and emails have been received.

Ms. Butler explained that the study is a planning tool, a study for potential ideas; projects noted in the study are for future consideration by the Township and that none of the projects listed are considered a done deal. Hundreds of residents were notified via USPS for each meeting. Mr. Kennedy added by stating that the trails and sidewalk committee was established three years ago to identify gaps in the system and prepare the Township for future available grants. He reiterated that this is certainly not a done deal.

Resident Phil Lederach expressed that no Lederach Village businesses are interested in this change nor is he a proponent of the bypass. He acknowledged that the new traffic signal has improved traffic.

Rick Mast of Lederach mostly agrees with Mr. Lederach but is in favor of the trails and sidewalks if they are connected to other parts of the Township. He is opposed to the bypass as he sees no benefit to the Township; he feels the bypass will hurt the commercial businesses as the village needs the traffic to be viable.

Mr. Kennedy informed everyone that this study is not dependent on the bypass; he stressed that the trail connections are critical, and it is difficult to get trails built due to the expense. These studies prepare the Township to be ready for grants when they become available, and this can be done with or without the bypass. Mr. Kennedy reiterated that the Walkable Lederach study was intended to look at the village independently as well as with consideration of the PA 113 Alternate Route due to its proximity and effect(s) on the village.

Mr. Bamford completely supports the trail system and would like more people to make use of it. He was a proponent of the bypass but is now reconsidering his original thoughts after listening to the public comments.

Mr. Goodman stated that he is not in favor of the by-pass but likes the walkable Lederach idea; he too agrees the new traffic light has been an improvement.

Ms. Butler stated that truck traffic must be addressed, especially for walkability and that taking truck traffic away from the village is one of the traffic considerations. Ms. Butler noted that any engineering for the PA 113 Alternate Route will be required to evaluate all types of traffic conditions and intersection controls at each intersection location. Ms. Butler also noted that while comparisons can be made to the Mainland Village, there are other circumstances that make the traffic movement through Lederach Village different than Mainland. Both Salfordville Road and Cross Road are significantly traveled roadways that end at the village of Lederach. Traffic on (and using) these roads will continue to do so by traveling into and out of the village, even if the alternate route ever comes to fruition.

Restaurant Parking

Mr. Beuke reviewed the Proposed Restaurant Parking Study. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Goodman shared newer parking scenarios he has been working on in other municipalities.

Mr. Kennedy suggests including outdoor seating in the seating count.

Dwelling Unit Definitions

Mr. Beuke led the discussion on defining a Townhouse. The discussion included triplexes, quads, duplexes, multiplexes, limiting the number of contiguous units and façade breaks.

Stormwater Management

Mr. Beuke led a discussion on appropriate planning for stormwater management; he explained concerns that have arisen following the development of a recent subdivision.

A brief discussion ensued regarding cluster lot developments and basing the impervious coverage on the largest size home proposed and allowing for common site improvement.

It was discussed that a 100% design would not be appropriate, and the Township should investigate alternative solutions.

County Plan Reviews

Ms. Warner revised the amendments and supplied a red-line draft from the solicitor's office.

Due to the late hour, this discussion will take place as the first agenda item in March.

There being no additional public comment, Mr. Bamford made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Goodman seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the meeting adjourned at 9:55pm.

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for 7:30pm on Wednesday March 27, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Reimel
Administrative Assistant