

**Lower Salford
Township Planning
Commission Meeting
October 25, 2023**

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, Brad Landis, David Bowe and Scott Bamford. Also in attendance was Mike Beuke, Director of Building and Zoning, Michele Fountain, P.E. of CKS, the Township Engineer's office, Stephanie Butler, P.E. of Bowman/McMahon Associates, and Claire Warner of the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Chairperson Manus McHugh joined the meeting a few moments later via Zoom.

Minutes

The minutes from the September 27, 2023, meeting were reviewed. Mr. Goodman made a motion to approve the minutes; Mr. Landis seconded the motion. Mr. Bowe abstained due to being excused from the September meeting.

Motion 5 Yes; 0 No; Abstain 1

Mr. McHugh joined the meeting via Zoom.

Following a brief discussion, it was determined that the joint November/December meeting would be held on December 13, 2023.

Plan Reviews

196 Main Street – Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment

Present to review the application on behalf of the applicant, Mainland V, LLC, was Rick Mast, P.E. of RCMA.; he was joined by Nate Seaman of Spring Hill Realty an entity of Mainland V, LLC. Two review letters were prepared, one by Michele Fountain, P.E. of CKS Engineers, dated 10/23/2023 and one by Clare Warner of the MCPC dated 9/25/2023.

Mr. Mast gave a brief overview of what has been discussed to date regarding this application. He explained that, in his opinion, Bank or Financial Institution was inadvertently left out of the Class Three Uses for the RO District. He explained how other, more intense uses are currently allowed such as a restaurant with a drive-through and retail establishments.

Mr. Mast pointed out several inconsistencies in the current ordinance. He feels that this is an opportunity to clear up the language as it related to driveways.

Mr. Mast discussed shared driveway access, corner lots, and street classification.

In addressing the CKS letter, Mr. Mast and Ms. Fountain entered into a discussion regarding the inconsistencies of the current ordinance and discussed the number of allowable accesses and roads of same and different classifications as well as corner lots.

Mr. Mast explained that Class One and Class Two Uses relate to smaller lots and less intense uses. Class Three Uses are for lots larger than 5 acres and for more intense uses.

Ms. Fountain asked Mr. Mast how many accesses would be preferred at the 196 Main Street site.

A detailed discussion took place addressing the CKS review letter and reviewing the inconsistencies in the existing ordinance.

Mr. Mast addressed the MCPC review letter; the issues discussed were Class Three Uses on corner lots, restricted turning movements, road classifications, and primary and secondary accesses.

Turning restrictions for the 196 Main Street site were discussed although it was acknowledged that PennDOT will have the final determination.

The County also recommends addressing the allowed uses in Mixed Use.

Mr. Beuke briefly questioned allowable accesses for Uses and Use changes.

After continued discussion, Mr. Beuke suggested that the rewriting of this ordinance be forwarded on to the solicitor's office. Mr. Mast stated that the applicant has some commitments with potential leases that need to be addressed and is concerned with the timing.

Mr. Kennedy noted that Mr. Freimuth's comments, via email, were similar to Ms. Fountain's comments. Mr. McHugh and Mr. Kennedy agreed that it would be acceptable for Mr. Mast and his client to start the land development process while the amendment is being finalized but a vote at this time or before the ordinance is amended would not be prudent.

Mr. Beuke noted that the applicant cannot move forward with the Conditional Use application until the amendment is finalized.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the Conditional Use and the Land Development could be worked on concurrently.

Mr. Mast stated that he would like to submit the Land Development plan and start working on the other issues. He mentioned that he and Ms. Butler have already met at the site to work through the access and site distance issues. Mr. Mast said he could be ready to submit the plan for review at the joint November/December meeting.

Mr. Kennedy asked Mr. Beuke how long he anticipated it would take to get a clean copy from Mr. Freimuth; Mr. Beuke replied that this review will be substantial and complex but perhaps we could see a clean copy by January.

Mr. McHugh stated that he had no additional comments nor was there any public comment.

Mr. Beuke will speak with Mr. Freimuth regarding amending the ordinance.

785 Cressman Road – Three lot subdivision

Present to review the application on behalf of Mark Tuttle was Rick Mast, P.E. of RCMA.; he was joined by Realtor Terry Derstine. Two review letters were prepared, one by Michele Fountain, P.E. of CKS Engineers, dated 10/17/2023 and one by Stephanie Butler of McMahan/Bowman dated 10/17/2023.

Mr. Mast recapped, stating that he was before the Planning Commission back in August and has returned tonight to discuss the revisions made to the plan. Addressing the CKS letter, Mr. Mast noted that the zoning items are "will comply" including adding streetlights. Regarding the subdivision and land development items, a discussion ensued regarding the replacement of trees. Mr. Mast is requesting a deferral for the replacement of trees until the time of the issuance of the building permit; this request is based on the disturbance being less than 25%.

Mr. Mast requested, under the guidance of Ms. Fountain, a waiver from a full survey of existing trees. It was agreed that a sample area of 100'x100' will be acceptable and will include quantity, caliper, and broad species.

Regarding the request for a deferral for the installation of improvements, Mr. Mast submitted a conceptual plan as requested by Ms. Fountain.

The waiver regarding depth to width ratio of the flag lots was discussed as well as the applicant being allowed to use existing trees and shrubs he has already planted to be counted for the required 11 trees along the frontage.

Mr. McHugh stated that he supports the waivers but noted that the Board must agree. Addressing the McMahon letter, Mr. Mast noted that most items are “will comply.” Mr. Harwanko opened a brief discussion regarding Fire Company ladder truck access. After a brief review of the items just discussed, it was agreed upon that the applicant must comply with the CKS letter date 10/17/2023, the McMahon letter dated 10/17/2023, the sample tree count, and the Board's decision regarding the existing trees; a motion was then made by Mr. Landis and seconded by Mr. Goodman.

Motion 7 Yes; 0 No

531 Main Street/Clemens Mills Subdivision

Present to review the application on behalf of the applicant was Rick Mast, P.E. of RCMA. Two review letters were prepared, one by Michele Fountain, P.E. of CKS Engineers, dated 10/19/2023 and one by Stephanie Butler of McMahon/Bowman dated 10/18/2023.

Mr. Mast presented a brief background on this application stating that it was first submitted approximately 15 years ago, predating both Ms. Fountain and Ms. Butler; however, Mr. Mast has been part of this project from conception. Mr. Mast stated that since this project was last before the Planning Commission, additional properties have been acquired and the configuration has changed as well as the density. This proposal includes 6 buildings of two units each, a total of 12 single family dwellings (twins).

The application proposes a single private access drive from Main Street shared with the John Garis Homes office. A PennDOT permit was previously acquired but has expired; Mr. Mast has already met with PennDOT to resolve this issue and an easement has been obtained from John Garis for the shared driveway access.

Addressing the CKS review letter, the existing tree along the frontage was discussed. It is Mr. Mast's opinion that the tree is in the right-of-way and must be removed to install the sidewalk.

The waiver request regarding the steep 1:1 slope was discussed. Ms. Fountain suggested a tree terrace be installed. Mr. McHugh questioned the slope of the driveway and a brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Mast addressed the turning template stating that the access is a driveway not a public street and that its dimensions are adequate for fire and trash trucks.

Mr. Mast suggests the speed limit for the access driveway be limited to 10mph after testing speeds in similar developments. The driveway slope changes from 2% to flat to 8% to flat again. Mr. Mast stated that he would work with Ms. Butler on the driveway slope issue if necessary.

Mr. Mast noted that both Salford Lea and Smiths corner both have 10% grades. It was also noted that the driveway (private roadway) will be privately owned and maintained and there will be no allowable on-street parking.

Mr. Bamford inquired about the possibility of future connections, asking if neighboring properties were to be redeveloped in the future, could additional connections be made. A brief discussion followed that included the area stream, the Pioneer Circle trail, and the depth and slopes of the neighboring properties.

Mr. McHugh, recalling this project from the previous submission, brought up some issues that needed to be addressed years ago with the first submission such as the slope of the driveway access, the length of the driveway, and overflow parking. Mr. Mast said he hoped to work out all those issues this evening.

Mr. Harwanko pointed out that Mr. Mast used the dimensions of a smaller firetruck, and that the calculations should be based on the ladder truck. Ms. Fountain will provide Mr. Mast with the ladder truck specs. The proposed driveway plans were displayed, reviewed, and discussed further.

Mr. Mast agreed with Mr. McHugh that this is a challenging site, adding that they made changes to the footprint that will help with the site distances.

Mr. Goodman asked about the culvert, bridge, and trail connection to Pioneer Circle. Mr. Mast noted that approximately 15 years ago this was discussed with the then Assistant Township Manager, Mary West, and the then Director of Public Works, Arcky DeRocco. Mr. Mast said he would need assistance from the township when reaching out to some of the Pioneer Circle residents as there appears to be some encroachment with fences.

Mr. Kennedy noted that he has a concern regarding the two existing homes and asked Mr. Mast if the applicant would enter a deed restriction for no further development. Mr. Mast feels the applicant would be agreeable to that request as it is a reasonable request.

Ms. Fountain stated that on-street parking would not be allowed due to the depressed curb.

Each unit would have parking for two cars and no other parking is proposed.

Mr. McHugh asked Mr. Mast to confirm that this is now a full interconnection; that was confirmed.

A discussion took place regarding the waiver request to permit the proposed sidewalks along Main Street to slope away from the curb toward the front yards rather than toward the street and to be 6" lower than the top of curb elevation.

The waiver request where replacement trees would be exchanged for the path was also discussed. The trees will not fit on the site and the path is quite a sizable expense and exceeds the cost of the trees. Trees are proposed for along the path.

Mr. Harwanko inquired about the bollards proposed for the path.

Ms. Butler asked Mr. Mast to provide more information on the horizontal geometry of the driveway.

Mr. Mast stated that 10mph is appropriate for this driveway.

Mr. Beuke displayed an aerial view of the property and measured the connection area at approximately 25.99.'

Cluster mailboxes will be placed between units 7 and 8 and a pedestrian crossing is proposed to be aligned with the path.

Mr. Mast would like to discuss the waivers with the Board at their next meeting. Mr. Beuke informed him that the Planning Commission must give their recommendation before the applicant appears before the Board and noted that if this were a new project it would have gone before the B&Z committee.

Mr. Mast asked for any other concerns the PC has and assured he would get the firetruck turning details worked out.

Mr. Kennedy would like Mr. Mast to gather the replacement trees versus the path cost and details.

Mr. McHugh congratulated the applicant on the change, but he would like to see the plan again.

County Plan Reviews

Claire Warner stated that there are no updates this evening as Mr. Freimuth is reviewing the final edits. Ms. Warner will be working with Mr. Beuke on the design work and plans to have a visual presentation prepared for December or January.

There being no public comment, Mr. Bowe made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Harwanko seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the meeting adjourned at 9:12pm.

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for 7:30pm on Wednesday December 13, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Reimel, Administrative Assistant