OLOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes of December 15, 2021

Present:Craig Melograno, Chairman
Michael Twersky, Vice-Chair
Danielle Porreca
Rich Valiga
Maureen Nunn
Stephen Paccione
Rusty Beardsley

Ken Amey, Zoning Officer Patty Furber, B&Z Administrator Ed Brown, Gilmore & Associates Brian Jones, McMahon & Assoc.

Absent: Joel Mayor

Call to Order:

The meeting of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes: October 20, 2021

A motion was made by Ms. Porreca and seconded by Mr. Twersky to approve the minutes of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission meeting of October 20, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

Subdivision/Land Development:

1612 N. Bethlehem Pike Precision Watches #21-03LD

Roman Murat, owner of Precision Watches, appeared along with his attorney, Christen Pionzio and his engineer, Tim Woodrow. Ms. Pionzio began by showing the board architectural renderings of the proposed building. The store will sell high-end watches such as Rolex, Cartier, Omega and Tudor. Ms. Pionzio explained that there would be a shared parking arrangement with Ron Gross, owner of Gwynedd Gate, for the 10 parking spaces that are located on his property. There will also be a cross-easement for access through Mr. Gross' property. Ms. Pionzio explained that all access from Welsh Road would be through the Gwynedd Gate site, with right in only off of 309. Mr. Melograno asked about the variances that were granted by the Zoning Hearing Board. Ms. Pionzio explained that relief was needed for the retail use, impervious cover, building height, gross building area, parking setback from front property line, and signage area.

Mr. Twersky asked about the easement agreement, and Ms. Pionzio said that it was drafted and would be executed before settlement.

Mr. Melograno asked about the stormwater. Mr. Woodrow explained that stormwater management is proposed as an underground basin beneath the parking lot that will discharge into the PennDOT inlets on 309.

Mr. Melograno asked about the tree waiver. The applicant is asking to install 34 shrubs and 27 perennials in-lieu of 18 trees. Mr. Twersky agreed with this waiver, stating that planting trees could be a problem on such a tight site.

Mr. Twersky asked the applicant about the waiver for the loading area. Mr. Murat explained that all of his shipments are delivered by UPS and there would be no need to provide for large trucks.

Mr. Woodrow said that the sprinkler connection would be through the Horsham system and the building would be fully sprinklered. The applicant stated he will comply with all of the Fire Marshal's comments.

Mr. Valiga asked if any consideration had been given to extending the Welsh Road turning lane. Mr. Woodrow stated that the access to the property from Welsh Road would be shared with Gwynedd Gate and would be subject to PennDOT review. Brian Jones from McMahon said that the current plan should be acceptable.

Mr. Melograno made a motion to recommend Preliminary/Final Land Development approval to the Board of Supervisors subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Cross-easement for circulation, parking, access, sewer connection and remote fire department connection (if necessary) to be in approval resolution;
- 2) Add signage in the parking lot to help with circulation;
- 3) The board supports the tree waiver; the applicant is providing significantly more shrubs & perennials in lieu of trees;
- 4) Plans shall comply with the review letters from Gilmore, McMahon and Al Comly;
- 5) Applicant to investigate lengthening the westbound turning lane on Welsh Rd. with PennDOT;
- 6) The architectural renderings will not substantially change.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Valiga and passed with an 7-0 vote.

Mark McLaughlin, Steve Dolan, and Fr. Pat Brody appeared for St. Charles Seminary. The Seminary was represented by their attorney, Christen Pionzio, and their engineer, George Hartman. Also present was Steve Freeman from Gwynedd Mercy University. Ms. Pionzio stated that St. Charles Seminary is moving from their current Wynnewood location to Gwynedd Mercy University's campus. She said that they hope to start construction in 2023. She also noted that they have previously presented the concept to the Building & Zoning Subcommittee and have reached out to neighbors in the surrounding area.

The seminary is purchasing approximately 12 acres at the rear of the GMU campus, including the existing Alexandra Hall dormitory. The proposal involves constructing a new dormitory, a student life center, administrative offices, and a chapel. Future plans include a gymnasium and a maintenance facility. The existing stormwater basin will be supplemented with new surface and underground systems.

Ms. Pionzio said that the existing buffers at the property lines will remain. Mr. Beardsley noted that there is an existing berm in this area and suggested that it could be incorporated into the buffer. Ms. Pionzio agreed to investigate this possibility. Mr. Melograno said that the board would like to visit the site, but due to security policies during the pandemic, the campus is closed. Ms. Pionzio will work with university security to provide access to planning commission members who would like to view the site.

Mr. Melograno asked about the zoning, and Ms. Pionzio stated that the parcel is zoned "A-Residential." The plan is to merge all of the GMU parcels and then create a condominium unit for the seminary.

Ms. Pionzio noted that there would be an entrance sign on Evans Road.

Mr. Beardsley pointed out that lighting and buffering are the biggest concerns for the neighbors.

Mr. Melograno asked about the traffic study. Ms. Pionzio said that TPD did submit a traffic study to the township, and it is being reviewed by McMahon Associates. The two traffic engineers will meet to resolve outstanding comments.

Mr. Melograno brought up the tree waiver. Ms. Pionzio stated that they are requesting a partial waiver of the 876 required replacement trees. Ms. Pionzio said that they would be creative about planting more trees, particularly along the neighbors' property line, with the hope of reducing the waiver request.

Mr. Hartman said that they are currently working on their NPDES permit and will most likely return to the planning commission in February.

The applicant will return once the revisions have been made to the plans.

Lower Gwynedd Township:

Property Maintenance Ordinance

The board decided to table the discussion for a future meeting.

Other:

Mr. Paccione congratulated Mr. Twersky on becoming a Supervisor and Mr. Amey on his upcoming retirement. The board members thanked them both.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 P.M. Respectfully submitted, Patty Furber, Secretary