

**MUNICIPALITY OF MT. LEBANON
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

DATE: Tuesday, October 22, 2013

TIME: 7 p.m.

PLACE: Mt. Lebanon Municipality – Commission Chambers

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dennis Pittman, Carolyn Byham, Jackie Dunn, Bill Pope

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Municipal Planner Keith McGill, Municipal Engineer Dan Deiseroth

Agenda Items

Minutes of the August 27, 2013 Planning Board meeting. Mr. Pope moved and Mrs. Byham seconded to approve the August 27, 2013, Planning Board minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Preliminary Consideration

WPBH, LLC owns property located at the corner of Bower Hill Road and Washington Road that also has frontage on Kenmont Avenue. The developer previously received approval from the municipality for the Washington Park Condominium Residence Plan on September 24, 2007, but subsequently withdrew that project by letter dated March 22, 2010.

At this time the property owner would like the opportunity to present their current proposed project informally to the board and public to get comment and feedback before submitting a formal land development application for consideration.

Mr. David Martens, representing Zamagias Properties, gave a presentation of the development proposal and an explanation that the market did not support the previous project. They feel this concept provides the best opportunities for the community and for the developer. This project provides a combination of space and urban feel, with approximately 26-27 townhouse units being proposed. The site is fairly challenging to build on due to a number of issues. The site engineer has done background research regarding storm water and sanitary sewers, and has spent time with utility companies determining what will be needed for utilities. The site elevation will be taken down by approximately five feet. This allows them to tie in with the grades from Oak Way and Kenmont, and allows the first floor of the units facing Washington Road to be about five feet above the street providing for a nice streetscape. They are working with JMAC Architects on the project. Mr. Martens provided a fly-over perspective of how the units would fit in with the nearby residences. He said the units would be very high-end with high ceilings, taller doors, larger windows and be highly energy efficient. They are trying to meet the marketplace by providing for some larger units. The end units could have up to 3,000 square feet of space, including a bonus room and built up basement, and an elevator option. The center units along Washington Road would have close to 2,400 square feet. They feel this location provides an opportunity for residents to be able to walk in downtown Mt. Lebanon, and also access to the

“T” and other public transportation. All units will have three bedrooms. The concepts along Oak Way and Bower Hill are still in preliminary planning stages and may be modified, based on additional market research. He provided drawings of different perspectives and possible designs for the units. The initial feedback from the market regarding this concept has been very positive. They are currently working with the site engineer – having put out for bid site costs – architectural perspective, as well as looking into zoning variances that might be needed.

Mr. Pope asked how real the project is.

Mr. Martens said they feel this project is very feasible; they have spent a lot of time and money on the project. They want to put a project in place that will have a positive impact in the community. They feel this project fits that criterion.

Mr. Pope asked what the property is currently zoned.

Mr. Martens said it is R-7; not specifically zoned for townhomes.

Mr. Pope asked about the time frame.

Mr. Martens said they probably won't be ready to break ground until mid-summer 2014. They do plan to pre-market.

Mrs. Byham asked what the price range is for these townhomes.

Mr. Martens said the properties along Kenmont would be in the low \$300,000, while the ones along Washington Road would be in the high \$300,000 to upper \$400,000.

Ms. Dunn asked how the units would need to be pre-sold.

Mr. Martens said they would be done in phases but expect to have half of the units pre-sold. They feel confident they can do that. The first phase would be two units on Bower Hill Road and then proceed along Washington Road with another four or five units.

Ms. Dunn asked if there were other plans for the property if only the first phase of the project could be built.

Mr. Martens said they have done enough upfront homework to hopefully ensure that won't be a problem.

Mr. Pope asked about the proposed parking.

Mr. Martens said as part of the agreement with the Parking Authority for the property they were to provide 18 public spaces. They are on Washington Road; they also are providing for an easement for a future turning lane on Bower Hill Road.

Mr. McGill asked if they are not successful in obtaining a use variance from the Zoning Hearing Board is there another possible project.

Mr. Martens said because of the size of the property it would be very challenging. The property is only 1.8 acres and does not allow for sufficient parking spacing for retail, office, or high-density apartments. Parking would have to be within any building, and that increases the cost of any project.

Mr. Pope asked if this design is within the confines of the newly adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. McGill said this project is a lower density use than the Comprehensive Plan suggests for this property.

Mr. Pope asked about the traffic issues with Oak Way.

Mr. Martens said they need to study Oak Way more to ensure safe traffic flow. They expect the main ingress and egress of the property to be on Kenmont.

Mrs. Byham asked about the exterior design of the building.

Mr. Martens said the front and side facades would be brick with a limestone fenestration, but they are still working through the details.

Mr. McGill said there are design guidelines and specifications that the developer would be required to meet. He asked about the public plaza that is on one drawing but not another and if it's planned or not.

Mr. Martens said it will depend on the cost of the project.

Mrs. Byham asked about the bus stop at the corner of Washington and Bower Hill roads.

Mr. Pittman asked if there would be a homeowners association, and if the developer would stay involved with it.

Mr. Martens said initially the developer would run the homeowners association, but then would pass it over to the homeowners.

Citizen Comments

Steve Apke, 427 Kenmont Avenue, voiced concerns about the size of the project, the increase in traffic, and parking on Washington Road. He's not sure this project is appropriate for this property. He is concerned it is too small to be profitable. He also questioned whether T.I.F. money is being used for this property.

Mr. McGill said TIF is not part of this project, but provided general background. The previous project did receive TIF money that was state-backed, and funds were expended. That TIF loan went into default; the state stepped in and is now holding that loan. Based on conversations with Mr. Martens, the developer is not intending to pursue additional TIF funding for this project.

Mr. Martens addressed the traffic concerns for Kenmont. This is a lower-density project with fewer added vehicles. Because of the location of this project it encourages people to walk more

in the community. The proposed 18 public parking spaces will be out of the traffic lanes and will not interfere with traffic.

Tim Rogers, 10 Oak Way, voiced concerns regarding traffic access off of Oak Way.

Mr. Martens said there would be an access from Oak Way to the back of the property.

Mr. McGill said the municipal traffic engineer will look at traffic patterns as part of the planning process.

Mr. Rogers is concerned with traffic congestion on Oak Way.

Susan Greguld, St. Bernard's church, expressed concern with traffic issues and when the project could be started.

Mr. Martens said this is the lowest-density proposed project; any other project would be higher density and increase traffic issues.

Old Business

None

New Business

Bragdon Plan of Lots – a request for preliminary approval and a recommendation for final approval for a subdivision plan for a revision of an internal lot line between an existing adjacent lot located on Longuevue Drive.

The property owner of 80 Longuevue Drive is requesting a lot line adjustment between the properties. No new lots are being created.

Mr. Deiseroth gave an overview of the revision. It is a lot line revision requesting to move a lot line to increase one property and decrease another property. He read into the record a letter dated October 16, 2013, from Gateway Engineers. The rear portion of the dividing line is all that is changing.

Ms. Dunn moved and Mr. Pope seconded to grant preliminary approval and recommend final approval for the Bragdon Plan of Lots subdivision application conditioned on the engineer's review comments in a letter dated October 16, 2013. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Next Meeting - The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Mt. Lebanon Planning Board is **Tuesday, November 26, 2013**, at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.