

**MUNICIPALITY OF MT. LEBANON
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY**

DATE: Tuesday, February 16, 2021

TIME: 7 p.m.

PLACE: Mt. Lebanon Municipality – Commission Chambers

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrew George, Dennis Pittman, Clint Rounsfull, David Hornicak, Suzanne Seiber (chair)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Municipal Planner Ian McMeans, Municipal Engineer Dan Deiseroth

AUDIENCE PRESENT: Commissioner Steve Silverman, Matthew Moses (Historic Preservation Board Liaison)

Meeting Procedures and Outline – The Pennsylvania Office of Open Records has advised that to ensure continued compliance with the Sunshine Act, the procedures for online meetings should be stated at the beginning of the meeting. There are three applicants appearing before the board tonight. I will read the agenda item and then the applicant will have the opportunity to make remarks. After that, the Planning Board will provide their comments and feedback followed by members of the public. Finally, we will play and read any public comments related to the application that were received prior to the meeting. Any public comments received not relating to the application before the board will be read at the end of the meeting. The applicants have agreed to these procedures, including conducting the meeting virtually.

1. Meeting Minutes

- a. Approval of minutes from January 19, 2021, meeting. Mr. Rounsfull moved, and Mr. Pittman seconded to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021, Planning Board meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Old Business

- a. Request for recommendation for final approval for a minor subdivision plan. Dr. Ali Melhem owns the neighboring properties located at 824 and 830 Osage Road with lot and block numbers 99-E-60 and 99-E-66. The plan moves the interior property line between the lots by 40.90 feet and conveys 7,357.5 square feet of land (0.169 acres) to the property at 824 Osage Road.

Mr. McMeans said the engineer’s review letter dated February 1, 2021, indicated all of the comments from the previous review letter were addressed by the applicant. There was a comment from Allegheny County Economic Development requesting an additional signature clause be added to the plan.

Mr. Pittman said the response letter from Liadis Engineering, representing the applicant, was concise and addressed all of the comments from the municipal engineer.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Mr. Pitman moved and Mr. Hornicak seconded to recommend final approval to the Melhem Plan of Lots, moving the lot line by 40.90 feet between 830 Osage Road and 824 Osage Road, conditioned upon the applicant addressing the comments in the engineer's review letter dated February 1, 2021, and the review from Allegheny County dated February 1, 2021, and any additional comments from the Planning Board. The motion carried unanimously.

3. New Business

- a. Request for preliminary approval of a land development plan. The Community Builders, Inc has an equitable interest in the property located at 2904 Castlegate Avenue. The developer is proposing a multi-family development with 51 residential units on the parcel. There will be seven structures with residential units along with a building to serve as a management office. The developer will also construct associated parking, utilities, and stormwater management infrastructure to serve the development. The property is zoned R-4 Residential with a Continuing Care overlay.

Mr. Deiseroth read into the record a letter dated February 11, 2021, from Gateway Engineer's into the record.

Vanessa Murphy, project manager, Community Builders, thanked the board for allowing the applicant to provide a presentation this evening. She gave an overview of the presentation with team introductions, an overview of the project, the development proposal, and the site engineering. She talked about the project schedule, where the project started, and where it is headed. She said they are proposing seven residential buildings and a standalone management office, four multi-family rowhouse buildings, two multi-family garden apartment buildings, and one multi-family triplex building. The site is at the DePaul Institute site, which most recently housed the Bradley Center. The entrance is currently at Dorchester and Castlegate avenues, which they are proposing to keep. Dorchester Avenue is in the City of Pittsburgh's Brookline neighborhood, and adjacent to the Salvation Army center, which has its own private access drive, which crosses their parcel, and there is an easement agreement. She showed a map of the site when the senior center, which is located on the lower parcel, was being developed. The map shows three buildings that were on the site but were removed over the summer months. She said there are some changes in the proposed project submitted today then from last July. They moved the management building, which includes a community space to the common green area to activate that area more. This change resulted in an increase in the number of rowhouses in the four buildings. Altogether there are 51 apartments: 11 one-bedroom, 29 two-bedroom, and 11 three-bedroom. The residential structures are two- and three-story buildings; the three-story buildings are situated at the rear of the site. There will be internal drives with 98 parking spaces, and all utilities will be privately owned. There will be a total of seven buildings on the site. There will be six units, with one in the building fronting Dorchester and the balance in the buildings at the back of the site. She showed architectural renditions of the proposed buildings, describing the materials they want to use, adding texture

and off-sets. All units will have either private patios or balconies. They have proposed adding the management/maintenance building to the community center to encourage use of the greenspace and gardens. Ms. Murphy said because of the pandemic access to extended outdoor living space has become important, especially for apartment dwellers, and she feels the design for the “agrihood” will be a tremendous asset and amenity to the neighborhood.

Bernie Lamm, civil engineer, said they did receive the engineer’s review letter, and submitted a revised geotechnical report. He said they have not been able to address the issues with the retaining walls due to the current weather conditions, but he feels they have addressed all of the issues with the stormwater plan. For the final submittal they will include the profiles of the utilities. He said the entrance to the site will be aligned with Castlegate across Dorchester. The first building on the left of the entrance is the highpoint of the site, with the rest of the dropping. There are three proposed retaining walls: the one on the side of the property next to the Salvation Army site is high on the right side; the lower wall towards the back of the site is high on the site where the drive is, and low as it goes towards the property line, and the last wall is closest to Dorchester. All of the buildings were designed to ADA access to at least one entrance of the buildings. The greenspace area will provide play space, as well as common green, with opportunity for residents to manage and grow gardens, and a rain garden. There will also be an area of raised garden beds which will be ADA accessible. All of the retaining walls will have fencing behind them, and their will be a guiderail near the drive at the back of the site. They would like to create a pedestrian connection to Brookline and propose crosswalks Dorchester and Castlegate. There are also many crosswalks within the site. There will be a centralized area for mail, with a package kiosk; dumpsters will be decentralized and enclosed. The internal drives meet the fire department’s specs to allow access by fire trucks. They are working with the City of Pittsburgh to widen Dorchester Avenue, allowing for parallel parking, sidewalks, and streetscapes.

Mr. Pittman said there is a small sidewalk area at the corner of Dorchester and Midland, which is in the City of Pittsburgh’s area, and asked if they would be improving and connecting their sidewalk to that sidewalk.

Mr. Lamm said they would be incorporating that portion of the sidewalk. He said they are working with Pennsylvania American Water Co for water connection, with PWSA for storm sewer connection in Midland, and a sanitary sewer connection in Dorchester. They are working with Duquesne Light to bring power from a pole then go underground throughout the site, with six to seven transformers. All the sewers and the water lines will be private. They are proposing a loop system for the water, and three internal fire hydrants. The three garden buildings will have sprinklers.

Yoko Tai, clarified that all of the buildings have sprinkler systems, but different types, such as domestic style in the rowhouses.

Mr. Lamm said there are separate storm and sanitary for all of the units. He said they have a lot of plantings around the site, some specifically to provide buffering.

Mr. McMeans said he received questions from the Brookline area residents wondering where the stormwater and sanitary sewer connections are located, and asked Mr. Lamm to point it out on the map.

Mr. Lamm said most of the site was directed to the sewer line on Castlegate, which caused flooding. They are eliminating that connection and adding one to the corner of the property on Dorchester. They have designed the system to meet the township ordinances. Overland flow to the southern part of Dorchester Avenue has been reduced, and all piped flow to the combined sewer in Castlegate has been eliminated. Per NPDES permit requirements and the municipal requirements they reduced the amount of run-off from the site by approximately 5,700 cubic feet. With the systems they have designed they are reducing run-off by almost 18,000 cubic feet. They will be putting in sidewalks on their side of the street, and will have it connect to Midland, and they also have been asked to connect it to the Salvation Army easement.

Mr. Pittman asked if the designated handicapped spaces are generic enough, they could be moved from building to building based on need.

Mr. Lamm said Building 4 is an ADA unit so it has one designated handicap spot, there are two dedicated to the management building, buildings 3 and 5 have five ADA units between them and there are five spaces designated for those units. There are sidewalks with ADA routes that connect all of the buildings.

Mr. Hornicak said he has concerns with the retaining walls and the interaction with the soils that are on site, and how that interacts with the stormwater management. He is concerned about retain 18,000 cubic feet of water on site and how that will saturate the on-site soils. He asked for clarification regarding the geotechnical conditions.

Mr. Lamm said the systems in the center of the site and on the east side of the site are situated so they are not on any fill, but on native soils, which is where they took the data for the infiltration rates. They placed the systems high on the site and away from the retaining walls on Dorchester and on the south end of the property. The systems on the east side are already low. These systems are below the footings for the buildings and are far removed from the structures above. They have a way to monitor the systems to make sure they are function as designed.

Mr. Hornicak asked if the area on the east and south are saturated areas.

Mr. Lamm said they are.

Mr. Hornicak said the photometric plans and traffic studies are very important for the board to understand the impact of this development to the community. He commented that with one entrance in and out of the property, if there were an accident at that intersection it would shut down access to and from this area.

Mr. Lamm said there have been preliminary counts that have been shared with the municipality and the City of Pittsburgh. The counts appeared to be fairly low. He said the municipality should have the photometric plans by the end of the week.

Mr. Hornicak asked if there would be wall-mounted lighting fixtures on the buildings.

Mr. Lamm said there would be a combination with a security aspect to the project, and to provide adequate lighting for camera viewing.

Mr. Hornicak asked if there would be a grading easement permit issued for the area closest to the Salvation Army site.

Mr. Lamm said they are able to do grading without crossing the property line.

Mr. Hornicak asked about the status with DOMI and NPDES.

Mr. Lamm said the traffic engineer is working on submitting the plan, and they have had some preliminary meetings.

Mr. George asked if Mt. Lebanon has an ordinance indicating how high masonry needs to be. He suggested it would be wise to run the masonry up a couple feet at least to protect from deterioration.

Ms Murphy said there is only one building that stands above grade.

Ms Tai said the block is only for the foundation; the block does not extend above grade. If there should be a cement panel coming down, there is a trim board at the bottom that would not be affected by moisture. Most of the time there will be a base around the building in brick, although there is not always a brick face. Because of the grading around the building being visible almost all of the building is covered up to the first-floor level. The only places that may be exposed is where the grade drops down quickly. The triplex comes down to the ground with a small amount of exposure of the foundation, perhaps about eight inches.

Mr. George asked for Mr. Deiseroth's input regarding the municipality ordinances.

Mr. Deiseroth said the design standards call to the type of materials that can be used, they do not specify dimensions in terms of how far they come out of the ground or how far they come up to a certain level. That is dictated more by the building code. The municipality still asks the architect to provide a narrative on how the project meets Mt. Lebanon's design guidelines. The applicant has submitted elevations, and materials, now they need to put that in narrative form and describe how they comply. He is not aware of any specifics on how far a building has to have brick to grade, or brick above grade; it only specifies types of materials. Cement board is within the allowable list of materials.

Mr. George asked if they would need to submit a maintenance plan for maintaining siding or painting.

Mr. Deiseroth said not as a part of the land development package. That is handled by Mt. Lebanon's property maintenance code, through the building inspection's department.

Mr. McMeans said the code enforcement office has specific Mt. Lebanon ordinances that they enforce, that are different than the International Property Maintenance Codes.

Citizen Comments

Mr. McMeans said there were no public comments received via mail or email related to this agenda item.

Mr. Pittman gave an overview of what transpired over the past four years when this property was first brought before the planning board. He said the original subdivision of the property divided it into two parcels, B-1 and B-2, both parcels being owned by Residential Resources. The development of parcel 1 was developed into a senior building owned by Residential Resources and managed by the Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA). Residential Resources has since turned the management of that property over to ACHA. At that time, it was hoped that Parcel B-2 would be developed into 12-14 single-family units. Parcel 2 has since been sold by Residential Resources to ACHA for \$875,000. ACHA then entered into an option with the current developers for \$600,000, paid in advance. The land is still owned by ACHA, which means it is tax exempt. The current project was funded in part by low-income housing tax credits. He is concerned about the financial ramifications and the change in ownership of the building below, however legal, needs to be made available to the Commission and to Mt. Lebanon residents.

Mr. Hornicak moved and Mr. Rounsfull seconded to table the Castlegate Green Land Development Plan in order to give the developer the opportunity to address the comments in the engineer's review letter dated February 11, 2021, and any additional comments from the Planning Board. The motion carried unanimously.

- b. Request for the extension of a preliminary approval. At the March 17, 2020, Planning Board meeting, the board granted a preliminary approval to a site plan for Primanti Brothers at 1539 Washington Road. The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance enables the municipality to grant an extension of a preliminary approval for a six-month period upon request of the applicant. Primanti Brothers has requested the preliminary approval for their site plan to extend until September 2021.

Mr. Pittman asked the letter from Primanti Brothers be read into the record.

Mr. McMeans said because of delays due to the pandemic they have paused construction plans for their submitted application. In 2020 the planning board gave preliminary approval and recommended final approval, but Primanti's never submitted their application to the Commission for final approval. They are requesting the preliminary approval be extended so that they may go before the Commission to request final approval within the next six months.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments submitted.

Mr. Pittman moved and Mr. George seconded to grant an extension to the preliminary approval of the Primanti Brothers site plan originally approved on March 17, 2020, with the extension lasting until September 17, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments submitted.

5. Next Meeting — The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Mt. Lebanon Planning Board is **Tuesday, March 16, 2021**, at 7:00 p.m.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.