

Upper Gwynedd Township

Planning Commission

P. O. BOX #1 ● WEST POINT, PA. 19486

September 6, 2017

The September 6, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm. In attendance were:

Sam Miller	Chairman
John Lancaster	Vice Chairman
John Tierney	Member
Gilbert Silverman	Member
Scott Bachman	Member
Chris Carroll	Member
Kathryn Carlson	Member
E. Van Rieker	Zoning Officer
Colleen Tronoski	Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

The September 6, 2017 Planning Commission was called to order by Mr. Miller at 7:30 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes of August 7, 2017

Mr. Miller asked for any questions relative to the Minutes of August 7, 2017, which had been circulated by email. Mr. Silverman made a motion to approve the Minutes. Mr. Carroll seconded and the motion was unanimously passed to approve the Minutes of August 7, 2017.

3. Report of Commissioners Meetings

Mr. Santi reported that the Board appointed a new committee called the Upper Gwynedd Community Association. There are currently 4 members, it requires 5 according to code. This committee establishes a 537-charitable fund separate from the Township finances which allows for tax exempt contributions. Mr. Santi noted that the playground was built with contributions. Moving forward, this plan could be used for other projects. The two appointed members from the Board are Ken Kroberger and Claire Edelmayer. Mike Zumpino is also a member, he's from the Park & Rec Board. There are two residents to be appointed: one was Gil Silverman and the other slot is still open. Mr. Santi noted that possible members are being interviewed. The Board passed a motion to approve the advertisement for the Ordinance 2017-07 which is the growing, processing and dispensing of medical marijuana. The Board also approved the advertisement of an ordinance that adopts a new definition of family in the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Miller noted that there was no Old Business on the agenda tonight and asked if there was any old business that needed to be brought before the Board tonight. Hearing none, he proceeded to New Business.

4. New Business

A. Gwynedd Ridge (Martin Tract) Preliminary Subdivision Plan

Mr. Silverman stated that he needed to recuse himself from this agenda item, noting a conflict of interest on this matter.

Mark Jonas, council for the applicant, stated that Gwynedd Ridge proposes a 27-single family detached lot home subdivision. He noted that there are no zoning issues. He also stated that there have been some preliminary meetings with staff at the pre-application phase and to talk about broad issues. He also noted appearing in front of the Township's PRC Committee. They have received several review letters from the County, Township Engineer, and E. Van Rieker.

The meeting was handed over to the project Engineer, Tim Woodrow. Mr. Woodrow briefly explained the plan, noting the current streets, park areas, & home sites. He noted that each lot is a minimum of 17,400 sq. ft. Most of the lots are a little larger. There is an open space component. The area along Allentown Road is being preserved as best as possible with some new landscaping. There is also a strip of open space and a walking path that runs from Allentown Road and connects into Whites Road Park. They have met with Lansdale Borough and discussed what interest if any they would have in this connection, they were supportive, at staff level, of this concept of connection to the park.

Mr. Woodrow moved onto the Township Engineer's review letter. He noted that the letter requested more design detail of the plan. They usually don't get into that kind of detail until the Planning Commission and elected officials agree with the general layout and design. Mr. Woodrow spoke about storm water management. He pointed out two large detention basins down on the right corner of the plan and a smaller detention basin/rain garden up in the northeast corner of the site. He noted elevation changes across the plan. He pointed out where the runoff will be caught and filtered and treated so when it leaves the property it is clean of such things as lawn fertilizer and road salt. To the left of Green Street there is a low area/swale where water has run through for many years. The Township recently put some storm sewer in Green street that may have changed this drainage pattern but water has always gathered in this area. There is a culvert under Allentown Road which will be the eventual point of discharge from their storm water system. Public sanitary sewer will be tied into Green Street with the sewer system. Water will be provided by the North Penn Water Authority.

Mr. Miller asked about item 1, storm water management, for elevation for the existing inlet on the Borneman property. The 2nd item is the reference to the spill way and basin discharge pipe going into open space instead of onto the Leonard property.

Mr. Woodrow stated that since they received the letter both topics have been discussed with Mr. Benner. He believes they will be able to address his concerns with minor plan adjustments. Mr. Miller noted that there's a concern that you are not going to increase any water runoff onto those two properties. Mr. Woodrow reassured that storm water management is held to a high obligation to assure that they are not adversely impacting neighbors and roadways from the past. They will need to prove to the Township Engineer and to DEP that these hurdles are met.

Mr. Woodrow spoke of some of the waivers that were in the T&M review letter. He stated that the first six waivers are about storm water management. Most of them deal with the rain garden. He explained that rain gardens are smaller installations that are meant to deal with water quality as much as they are meant to deal with storm water management and peak runoff continuation. They aren't typical detention basins.

Mr. Woodrow noted that the next two waivers have to do with the proposed road. The main road being proposed that connects the signalized intersection at Allentown Road with Green Street is required in SALDO to be 30-foot curb to curb. They are suggesting a 28-foot cart way width. The only reason being, is to make the road appear to be a residential street and hopefully discourage through traffic. There will be parking on one side of the street and abide with restrictions that the Township has for parking. They also see the 28 feet vs. 30 feet street width as a traffic calming measure.

Mr. Woodrow stated the second portion of that waiver has to do with sidewalk. They have sidewalk on one side of the street only. They do connect along Allentown Road west of the signal and through the cul-de-sac and out to

Green Street. The applicant feels that sidewalk on one side is more anesthetic. There is no sidewalk on Allentown Road east of the signal down to Green Street. They are asking for a waiver for curbing along Allentown Road east of the signal, because it appears that the storm water in this area is the width of the road, and the condition of the

highway is sufficient for what purpose it serves. He noted that they hired McMann & Associates, Traffic Engineers, to work with the township engineer to look at the signalized intersection. There have been several meetings with PENNDOT to discuss this signal and intersection redesign. Making sure that the traffic patterns exiting are not in conflict and that signals allow for pedestrian crossings, are handicap accessible and that the tapers and the turn lanes all match up.

Mr. Woodrow noted new landscaping along Green Street and along the new developments perimeter.

Mr. Miller asked if the curbs would be made from another material other than concrete. Mr. Woodrow mentioned that the applicant would like to build Belgium block curbs, so he did propose using Belgium block curbing and have the HOA be responsible for the Belgium block curbing. Mr. Rieker mentioned that this could work if they are private streets.

Mr. Tierney stated that the site review group walked the land on August 29, 2017. The nature trail has a boarder with shrubbery or buffer but along one property by Allentown Road it is thin. H said trying to create a buffer of some kind with this property owner would be appropriate. There is a historic mile marker long Allentown Road. This needs to be preserved at the property as well.

Mr. Woodrow stated that the plan does preserve the Martin home.

Mrs. Carlson asked why a sidewalk would not be placed on Allentown Road towards Broad Street. Mr. Woodrow noted that at the end of the site, there is private land. It wasn't in the plan to connect into Green Street. Currently on Green Street there is no sidewalk to connect onto.

Mr. Miller noted that things need to be worked out with the Township Engineer before the next meeting.

B. Gwynedd Ridge Public Comments

Tom Borneman - 722 Green Street - noted that his property is the first lot of the North end of the site. He stated that the plan shows a tree line buffer along Green Street and Allentown Road. Is it possible to get one across the end of his property which borders the site property line? Mr. Woodrow stated that he believes this is one of the comments in McClosky and Fabers letter, to make the buffering thicker along the perimeter. Rennie Settanni, with Pulte Homes introduced himself. He stated that they are willing to work with the residents to provide sufficient buffering to the entire site.

Tricia Dickson – 712 Green Street – stated that her property backs up to the park. Her property along with her neighbors have runoff from the park every time there is a heavy rain. Is there something that can be done to correct this? Mr. Miller noted that Upper Gwynedd does not own the park. Ms. Dickson asked if Lansdale Borough and Upper Gwynedd Township can address this problem together? Mr. Borneman stated that a swale was cut along the property lines but it wasn't cut deep enough. Is it possible to deepen the swale? Mr. Miller asked Mr. Rieker if the Township could get involved with that. Mr. Rieker stated the Township would look into it.

Eileen McKeron – 705 Green Street - stated that the traffic on Green street is a problem as it exists now. It's a cut through from Whites Road to Allentown Road. She asked if a traffic study was done for Green Street. Now there will be additional homes. There are many children on Green Street and there are no sidewalks or stop signs.

Mike Pio - 805 Green Street – asked if the utilities for the new homes are going to be underground. Mr. Woodrow noted that the utilities are all to be under ground. Mr. Pio also supports the tree line surrounding the site property.

Donna Gill – 915 Allentown Road - asked if there was going to be fence where the nature trail is? What's the plan for the Martin house? Who will shovel the sidewalks when it snows? Mr. Woodrow answered, the Martin home will stay and be sold. The sidewalks will be maintained by the HOA along with the open space areas, detention basin and trail area. Currently there is no fence in the trail plan. But there will be fencing or landscaping placed. Mr. Rieker asked if a fence of some kind could be placed to separate the boundaries. He suggested to meet with neighbors about what is wanted at least on the northern end. Ms. Gill asked what the success was with rain gardens. Mr. Woodrow stated that he would be happy to meet with her. Mr. Woodrow explained that a rain garden is a depression in the ground and fitted with very porous soils such as sand, peat moss and mulch. Its then planted with plants that like wet feet. They are meant to hold storm water for a while then be absorbed into the ground.

Richard Casavecchia – 803 Green Street – asked about the price of the new houses. Mr. Settanni stated that the houses will be sold in the 600's. Mr. Casavecchias is concerned that his property value will go down. Mr. Settanni stated that he believes the opposite will happen and current residents home value will go higher.

Marc Schneyder – 716 Green Street – stated that the park is over ridden with deer currently and would like to know where are the deer are supposed to go. He also asked where the kids in the new houses going to go to school noting that the school district is already overcrowded. Mr. Schneyder is also concerned with the rise in crime since the new houses will be have more expensive houses. Mr. Miller stated that the overcrowded schools is up to the North Penn School District. Mr. Miller also stated that the current neighborhood and the new neighborhood will receive the same level of police protection as everyone else gets.

Linda Grisdale – 703 Rosemont Avenue – stated that she was not notified by the Township of the meeting. Her neighbor let her know about it. Mr. Rieker stated that the Township notifies 500 feet of the property boundary. He also stated that if anyone who was not notified and would like to be notified of upcoming meetings, to please see him at the end of the meeting or email him. Mr. Rieker stated that this agenda item most likely will not be acted on until a few more meetings. Mr. Miller added that all Planning Commission Meetings are listed on the Township website.

Ed Sweeney – Lehigh Valley Dairies – wanted to remind the people building that the dairy runs 24 hours a day with trucks going up and down Allentown Road 24 hours a day and he hopes they tell the people who are buying these new houses of this situation.

James Hare – 709 Rosemont Avenue – asked what the zoning is for the tract of land and has it already been changed to residential? Also, if there were any traffic evaluations done, possibly on Allentown Road since the traffic builds up in the morning and afternoon, is there going to be a synchronization of lights on Allentown Road? This backing up is the cause for cut throughs on Green Street and Rosemont Avenue. Mr. Rieker stated that the zoning is R2-Residential. This zoning has been in place for about 40 years and that the applicants have prepared the plan under the PSRD option. Mr. Rieker stated that the Township Traffic consultant will be looking into the impact of new traffic signal, traffic mitigation, speed mitigation.

Jason James – 704 Rosemont Avenue – what does the new intersection, coming off Green Street look like? If there a

stop sign? How much of the current topography of the land will be altered according to the new plan in relation to Green Street. Are there going to be signage for the new homes and what are the size of the new homes? Mr. Woodrow answered these questions. He stated that the new road coming onto Green street is to have a stop sign. There will be some regrading coming into Green Street. The sizes of the homes will be approximately 2700 sq. feet. Mr. James asked if gas will be run down Green Street. Mr. Woodrow stated that more in-depth conversations with utilities are coming up in the next month, so he could not answer that question yet.

Suzanne Cole – 704 Green Street – is there any reason there has to be a connection to Green Street? Maybe make a

cul-de-sac? Mr. Settanni stated that this potential was looked at. It was better planning to have a connection for the community. Therefore, there's a lot of focus on the intersection at Allentown Road and working with PENNDOT to make some improvements.

Tracey O'Neill – 709 Green Street – asked if it's possible to close off the connection between Green and Allentown Roads because of the speeding. Mr. Miller answered, he stated that PENNDOT controls Allentown Road and they would have to approve this change, just a feeling that they would say no.

Nelson Rivera – 733 Rosemont Avenue – would also like to see Green Street/Allentown closed off.

Joyce Ricker – 712 Green Street – Concerned with the kids waiting for the bus on the street. There's no sidewalks on Green Street. Possibly make Green Street a one-way Street. Mr. Rieker stated that these are all good questions that will be looked at and hopes to take some steps to help with the speeding possibly with signage or speed corrective measures.

George Heath – 912 Breezewood Lane – concerned with storm water management. There's a creek that goes through his yard now, when it rains it rises. He believes this tract of land now absorbs some of the water so now this runoff water will be coming his way. Traffic is a problem now, adding more cars is just going to make things worse. Concerned with new house raising taxes plus the school district having to expand more. Mr. Woodrow noted that there is a full report, computer models run, calculations done about how much water is going into the ground and how much is running off and this report is reviewed by Mr. Benner and DEP and will share this document.

Rick Yost – 801 Green Street – also asked about having the new neighborhood street be a cul-de- sac instead of running into Green Street. Mr. Settanni, reminded the group that they are working with PENNDOT and believes most of the traffic will be exiting through the improved intersection. Mr. Yost asked what kind of landscaping would be at the new entrance of Green Street. Mr. Settanni stated that there would be evergreens and the entire property would be landscaped. Mr. Yost asked what kind of street lights will be put in new streets. Mr. Settanni stated that currently the plan shows four pole lights at the intersections.

Mark O'Neill – 709 Green Street – stated that on the 700 block of Green Street there are 7 bus stops with kids from kindergarten to 13 years old and he's concerned with cars speeding down Green Street.

Tricia Dickson – 712 Green Street – asked if 3-way stops are not permitted in Upper Gwynedd Township. If it is how can it be changed. Mr. Rieker asked Mr. Santi who stated that PENNDOT does not allow 3-way stop signs. Mr. Woodrow added that there have been some instances when 3-way stop signs have been approved but certain warrants must be met. He suggests speaking with Mr. Heinrich and McMahon Associates to look at different protocols.

Ray Ridge – 720 Green Street – stated that there was a PENNDOT study done in 2010, it deemed Green Street a hazardous walkway for students. He is Tom Bornemans neighbor, water flows form Green down to Allentown Road. Is there a guarantee that if these houses are built where it doesn't create a dam effect and water will back up into the

backyards of current residents? Do the basins guarantee that? Mr. Woodrow stated that the basins and the grading will prevent this.

Joyce Ricker – 712 Green Street – asked if the sewer lines of the new homes will be connected to the existing homes on Green Street because every year they have sewer backups? Mr. Woodrow stated that Merck has a separate system on Green Street that the new houses will not be tied in to.

Mr. Lancaster suggested maybe a one-way street at certain times on Green Street.

Mr. Carroll asked if the applicant has been contacted by the Township regarding emergency vehicle use and the narrower

road? Mr. Woodrow noted that he does not believe the fire marshal has commented on that yet.

Mrs. Carlson asked if sidewalks on both sides would help the kids with standing for school buses.

Mr. Miller asked for a motion to table this item until next month, Mr. Lancaster made a motion and it was seconded by Mrs. Carlson.

5. Adjournment

Mr. Miller noted that next month's meeting will be held on Monday October 2nd and he adjourned the meeting at 9:00PM.

Respectfully submitted



John Klein
Secretary