

The monthly meeting of the Lower Moreland Township Planning Commission was held on the above date in the meeting room of the Township Municipal Building. Present were Messrs. Hamburger, Chapman, Krebs, Cohen, Mayer, Frey, Mrs. Friedrich Fogel, Mrs. Souder, Planner Gabriel, Engineer Woodrow, Manager Hoffman, Commissioner Kuritz and Clerk Matyas.

Chair Friedrich Fogel called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The minutes of the March 28, 2013 Planning Commission meeting were approved.

**LD 12-07 JERC Partners/Red Lion & Pine Road-Preliminary Plan** presented by Mr. Edward Murphy, developer, and Mr. Bill Reardon, Bohler Engineering. Mr. Murphy talked about last November presenting a sketch plan to the Board of Commissioners and receiving feedback from the Township and neighbors that was used to create the preliminary plan presented tonight. Mr. Murphy noted the property is located at the old Island Green Country Club site at Red Lion Road and Pine Road with about 48 acres of property in Lower Moreland Township. Mr. Murphy explained that they received review letters from the Township Staff and were able to meet with the Township staff to discuss the letters. Mr. Murphy said he has no issues with any comments in the review letter and they will comply.

Mr. Reardon talked about the location of the property, noted it is zoned "M" Residential and the use is a single family detached dwelling cluster designed which is permitted by right by the zoning district. The criteria require a minimum of 50% open space this plan proposes 70% open space along with walking paths and trail that goes through the open space. Mr. Reardon noted that much of the vegetation along the Estates of Huntingdon Valley and Pine Road are remaining. There are three stormwater management basins proposed to meet the Townships and DEPs stormwater requirements. Mr. Reardon explained that the code allows 3 dwelling units per acre and the proposed plan shows 2.3 dwelling units per acre. Mr. Reardon describes the layout of the plan including driveways, cul-de-sacs and secondary access road. Mr. Reardon noted the minimum lot area is 8,000 square feet with an average lot area of 9,600 square feet. Mr. Reardon explained that the proposed development will be serviced by public utilities. Mr. Reardon noted that some of the vegetation along Red Lion Road will be removed during construction and then replaced after the project is complete.

April 25, 2013

Mr. Reardon talked about the Township staff reviewing the proposal and they feel confident all issues can be addressed. Mr. Reardon noted there are waivers being requested for the project that have been presented to the Township.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked about the percentage of open space and Mr. Reardon replied the requirement is 50% and this proposal has 70%. Mr. Hamburger asked how much of the open space is undevelopable due to environmental issues and Mr. Reardon showed on the plan what land is undevelopable and Mr. Hamburger said not 70% but pretty close and Mr. Reardon replied a good portion of the open space is undevelopable.

Mr. Tim Woodrow, Township Engineer, talked about the history of this property including a possibility of the TEVA Corporation building a warehouse facility on the Philadelphia portion of the property that today does not seem is going to happen. Mr. Woodrow noted the property owner has the right to development the Lower Moreland Township portion of the property. Mr. Woodrow talked about the cluster design use allowing for a lot of open space which is more desirable.

Mr. Woodrow discussed his review letter noting that an intentional "T" intersection was provided to help reduce the amount of cut through traffic.

Mr. Woodrow talked about the ownership of the open space, noting with the environmental issues the Township will probably not want to take dedication of that space and a Homeowners Association may have the same concern. This issue would need to be resolved before any final approval is given.

Mr. Woodrow explained that a traffic study was done by the Township's Traffic Engineer, McMahon and Associates, who concluded that this proposal will have no impact on traffic volume since Pine Road and Red Lion Road have a high number of volumes currently this proposal will have no measurable effect on that. There was no need for turn lanes and McMahon said the area should be left alone. Mr. Woodrow talked about the Township ordinance allowing road widening, curbs and sidewalk installation and storm drainage improvements so the Township has asked McMahon to take another look at the area with that ordinance in mind. The Township is awaiting a response from McMahon. Mr. Woodrow does not like arbitrary widening and does not recommend the widening of Pine Road but he feels it wise to see if anything else could be done.

April 25, 2013

Mr. Woodrow noted he and Mr. Steve Woerner, Director of Public Works, are scheduled to go check out this site and look at some possible issues with the roadway and pipes.

Mr. Woodrow wanted to look at the connectivity of the property as well. There is a possible connection to a former golf path and Mr. Reardon replied they are proposing sidewalk along Pine Road the length of their property. Mr. Woodrow said there is a gap along Pine Road from the Estates of Huntingdon Valley sidewalk and this proposed sidewalk so it may make sense to extend the proposed sidewalk to meet the existing one.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked about all the waivers being requested and Mr. Woodrow replied that a lot of them deal with road improvements and some have to deal with stormwater management; he is ok with most of them.

Mr. Steve Gabriel, Township Planner, noted he agreed that some traffic improvements could help with the traffic, while not improving level of service there might be some safety improvements.

Mr. Gabriel talked about the zoning allowing more homes than proposed so this is a modest development for the property. This plan does respect the natural features on the site in a way that is in line with neighbor and Township concerns particularly when it comes to saving trees along Pine Road.

Mr. Gabriel discussed the access road that loops around some of the units and into the open space is larger than required by the ordinance but he is ok with it since it will help resolve other issues with access around units.

Mr. Gabriel suggested possibly extending the bicycle route that is started in Philadelphia into Lower Moreland Township. Mr. Gabriel noted it could go to Red Lion Road and stop or continue down Pine Road. Mr. Reardon noted that if the Township wanted that striping there would be some road widening needed.

Mr. Frey asked if there are any other bicycle trails in that area this would connect to and Mr. Gabriel talked about the overall vision of the Township being connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists so this could be a piece of an overall vision.

April 25, 2013

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked about the comment in the review letters concerning the basin in the corner being so close to the houses it would preclude the homeowners from using their backyards and Mr. Reardon replied that the basin is outside the building setback requirements so each unit has a full backyard setback as required.

Mr. Cohen asked about on-going monitoring with the environmental issues on the property? A member of JERC partners responded to a bunch of comments made noting they invested 1.2 million dollars for improvements along Red Lion Road, talked about making the "T" intersection to avoid the cut-through traffic and the bicycle path would be worth it if the Township felt that there is a need for it, do a lot of bicyclist use those roads. He continued to talk about the environmental issues noting that DEP was involved and there was proper corrections of any issues found, which was done by the previous property owner. There is no continual monitoring of the property, it has been approved by DEP for recreational and residential use, and there is no risk of exposure.

Mr. Chapman noted that all DEP approvals and paperwork will be needed before any building can begin and the developers agreed.

Mr. Frey asked if the DEP has followed up on the site and the developer replied that a portion has already been approved for recreational and the rest is in the process of being approved for residential, there is no intension of touching the area approved for recreational. Mr. Frey noted that the recreational area cannot be built on and the developer replied yes. Mr. Frey talked about the recreational area being close to the proposed development and the developer replied there are meets and bounds that show exactly where they can and cannot develop.

Mr. Hamburger noted there are sewer issues and other outstanding issues that need to be resolved before a final plan can be approved. Mr. Hamburger does not want to see a final plan with any conditions attached to it; all issues need to be resolved first.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked if there were any thought about the homes being smaller, maybe 2,000 square feet, maybe attract older people. The developer replied that none of the design elements have been decided, they do not even have an architect yet. Mr. Reardon noted that when designing a development you show the largest possible building lot so the biggest impact is accounted for. Mrs.

Souder stated that a lot of older couples with no children would like to stay in the Township but would like a smaller home.

Mrs. Souder talked about the traffic and how rush hour is bad noting Red Lion Road and Pine Road can get very backed up. Mrs. Souder does not like to widen roads but a turning lane should help so there is not a backup with the people trying to get into this development.

Mr. Mayer asked if this proposal was like the Woodmont Development and Mr. Woodrow replied it will be more like the Estates of Huntingdon Valley but much less dense. Mr. Woodrow noted that the Estates of Huntingdon Valley has very little open space where this proposal will have a lot. Mr. Hamburger stated that the amount of open space is because there is no other option for that space but open.

Mr. Mayer asked if the open space is buildable and Mr. Woodrow replied no.

Mr. Chapman asked if the access road in Philadelphia is owned by the developer and the developer replied yes, it is an easement.

Mr. Frey stated he assumed the Homeowners Association will be handling the lights and common needs of the area but will they take ownership of the open space and Mr. Murphy replied yes assuming the Township takes Mr. Woodrow's advice and does not take the open space. Mr. Frey noted that the homeowners would be taking the risk of the contamination and he would assume they buyers would be made fully aware of the history of the property and Mr. Murphy replied yes along with the cleanup that has been done.

Mr. Frey asked about the flow of the stormwater and Mr. Reardon showed on the plan how the flows and basins work. Mr. Reardon noted that the water from the recreational area cannot flow to the residents and vice versa due to the cleanup from DEP. Mr. Reardon explained there would be no leeching.

#### Public Comment

Mr. Bonanno, 2450 Pine Road, talked about a similar proposal a couple years ago that was knocked down due to traffic issues and the builder then built across the street in Philadelphia. Mr. Bonanno talked about all the snakes that have taken over this area and the problems it causes. Mr. Bonanno talked about Red Lion Road being a bypass so the traffic funnels from the Boulevard including tracker

April 25, 2013

trailers who don't realize they have entered a residential area. Mr. Bonanno noted that Pine Road gets backed up horribly; the only solution would be to get PennDot to fix it all. Mr. Bonanno asked about a buffer and Mr. Reardon replied that it is a barrier that separates the houses from the street.

Mr. William Howland, 111 Shoemaker Road, asked about the cul-de-sac turning and not going straight out onto Pine Road and Mr. Reardon replied that the cut into the roadway is better there for site distance for traffic. Mr. Howland asked about there being a sidewalk on Pine Road and Mr. Reardon replied there is a proposed sidewalk on Pine Road which would stop at the end of the property but the Township Engineer suggested continuing the sidewalk so it connects to the existing sidewalk on Pine Road.

Mr. Tom Kuzmick, 2488 Pine Road, lives right across the street from the development and has concerns about the stormwater being increased with this development and running to his property. Mr. Kuzmick understands there is a basin proposed at the corner of Red Lion Road and Pine Road that when overflowed will go to a pipe that runs under Pine Road to a dry creek bed on his property. He noted that even with a regular rain the creek bed overflows with water onto his property and neighbors' property. Mr. Kuzmick wants to know how that issue will be resolved. Mr. Kuzmick talked about the grade difference at the old 4<sup>th</sup> hole of the golf course and Mr. Reardon replied that area will be filled. Mr. Kuzmick noted that will now create more runoff with raising that area up. Mr. Kuzmick does not want to see Pine Road widened at all it will invite more speeding and dangerous driving, there are many issues with the right hand turn lane on Pine Road to turn onto Red Lion Road. Mr. Kuzmick talked about the open space ownership and possible liability and he suggested having the developer maintain ownership of the open space.

Mr. Robert Conte, 2524 Pine Road, he is directly across from the development and is concerned about the stormwater issues, it is currently bad and adding more homes will not make it better. Also with the previous proposal a Board member made a comment about not sure if he wanted the first thing someone sees in Lower Moreland Township is a stormwater basin, they don't look nice. Mr. Conte talked about the traffic being bad and either Pine Road is a raceway or a parking lot. Mr. Conte talked about the driveway out of the development across from Shoemaker Road will not be able to see with the hill there.

April 25, 2013

Mr. Andrew Berardi, 128 Red Lion Road, talked about the potential widening of the roads and how it would encroach onto homeowner's properties and possibly devalue the home. Mr. Berardi noted that widening the road will turn the roads into highways. Mrs. Berardi talked about the traffic issues and the damage to the roads from it; she showed pictures to the Commission. Mrs. Berardi talked about losing part of her property to Estates development to put in a turning lane. Mrs. Berardi talked about the condition of the property with overgrown weeds, shrubs and high grass. Mrs. Berardi talked about how difficult it is to get in and out of her driveway due to the traffic. Mrs. Berardi talked about the flooding issues in that area. Mr. Berardi asked the Commission to think about what value this development would bring to the Township. Mrs. Berardi noted all the open space and foreclosed homes in the Township that no one is buying now so who will buy these 55+ houses.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel talked about making a motion to be voted on and noted there are a lot of unresolved issues and concerns. Mrs. Friedrich Fogel wasn't sure if she wanted a dead-end bicycle trail from the city.

Mr. Mayer asked if they would hear back on the possible suggestions from McMahan on any traffic improvements and Mr. Woodrow replied yes and reiterated that he did not want to see arbitrary widening because it does create a speeding situation. Mrs. Friedrich Fogel does not want to see any widening on Pine Road. Mr. Woodrow clarified that there is no proposal to take any property from anyone besides the applicants.

The developer talked about not being opposed to road improvements but they were following the recommendation of the Township's Traffic Engineer who did not require any improvements but they are open to possible suggestions to help improve traffic. The developer noted that a complete traffic study was done by the Township's Traffic Engineer, not the developers and there was no noticeable impact with the addition of this development.

Mr. Mayer asked about the stormwater on the property and if the basins in place will catch all the water and Mr. Reardon replied yes, the law requires that the stormwater be the same as it was before the development. Mrs. Berardi asked if trees are being removed and Mr. Reardon replied yes and Mrs. Berardi said well that will add to stormwater. Mr. Berardi asked who maintains those basins when they fill with water and attract mosquitos and the developer replied that the Homeowners Association will be responsible.

Mr. Chapman noted that it is a by-right use and they are not asking for much variation from that but there are issues that need to be resolved.

Mr. Berardi asks again what value this development brings to the Township.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel talked about how the use is by-right so it is allowed as long as certain criteria is met they are allowed to develop the property, they have met the criteria but there are issues that need to be resolved before they can move ahead.

Mr. Kevin O'Dare, 2532 Pine Road, understands that this development has met the criteria of the Township but what about the traffic congestion, the value of his home and the issue of the entrance/exit points on the development and any potential problems with them.

Mr. Kuzmick noted he is not aware of all the ordinance the Township has but his understanding with building a cluster development and dedicated open space that someone needs to who that open space who will that be. How can a preliminary plan pass for approval when the issue of ownership of the open space has not been decided? Mr. Kuzmick once again suggested the developer take ownership of the open space.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel made a motion for recommendation that the Board of Commissioners approve the plan with the conditions that all review letters are complied with. The motion was seconded by Mr. Krebs and Mr. Chapman, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Frey and Mrs. Souder voted aye. Mr. Mayer and Mr. Hamburger voted nay. The motion was carried as stated.

**LD 13-01 LMTSD/Modular Classroom-Parking (Zoning Amendment)** presented by Mr. Gabriel who talked about the Lower Moreland Township School project presented last month and how this zoning amendment would allow schools as a by-right use. Mr. Gabriel noted that this amendment would affect schools in the "L" residential zoning district.

Mr. Hamburger made a motion for recommendation that the Board of Commissioners approve the zoning amendment as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Krebs and Mr. Mayer, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Frey, Mr. Chapman, Mrs. Friedrich Fogel and Mrs. Souder voted aye. The motion was carried as stated.

**Zoning Code Update** presented by Mr. Gabriel who provided a new proposed zoning map for the Planning Commission. Mr. Gabriel talked about the zoning code including hospital use and mixed uses.

Mr. Gabriel wanted to discuss 3 or 4 more items that were talked about in the past to make sure that everyone was on the same page and comfortable with the proposal.

Mr. Gabriel talked about the residential office district and noted that some larger single family homes that are on busy streets and mixed in with non-residential uses would benefit with the residential office district by allowing more uses besides single family use. Mr. Gabriel provided a list of all the permitted uses in this area. Mrs. Souder asked if this area included the section between Red Lion Road and Buck Road and Mr. Gabriel replied it is the west side of Huntingdon Pike. Mrs. Souder asked what the other side of Huntingdon Pike was and Mr. Gabriel replied that is an extension of the Village district. Mrs. Souder asked how this zoning change affects the value of homes there and Mr. Woodrow noted it would have a positive effect by allowing more uses.

Mr. Gabriel gave the Commission paperwork that included the design standards for the Residential Office district, the purpose statement and a chart of uses, lot area, setbacks, etc. Mr. Gabriel compared what is allowed in the current zoning code to what is proposed.

Mr. Gabriel talked about parking for the different uses and noting that since offices would need more parking, the lot coverage has been increased.

Mr. Chapman asked what the coverage is in lot coverage and Mr. Gabriel replied it means impervious coverage which includes the building. Mr. Gabriel talked more about lot details including building heights and setbacks.

Mr. Gabriel talked about the Revitalization district (REV) and the allowable density, currently the ordinance allows for up to 15 dwelling units per acre if you are proposing buildings that are all residential, if the proposal is for residential/non-residential mix it goes up to 25 dwelling units per acre and if that proposal is on 10 acres or more the dwelling units go up to 28. Mr. Gabriel stated the units per acre sound large but after land is subtracted for right of ways, easements,

floodplain and open space on Philmont Avenue that could mean a 50% reduction in buildable site area which would be a 50% reduction in the allowable density.

Mr. Gabriel explained that the Zoning Committee discussed the density especially after the apartment proposal that was presented for Tomlinson Road and Philmont Avenue. Mr. Gabriel talked about trying to moderate the residential activity and residential uses in most of the REV but focus residential use in those areas closest to the train stations. Mr. Gabriel noted the concept of transit-oriented development, where it makes sense to have high density residential close to the train stations so their commuting no longer involves a car. Mr. Gabriel explained there would be an overlay district within the REV within a quarter mile of the two train stations, the rest of the REV would stay the same.

Mr. Gabriel talked about the REV mimicking the Single Family Attached district (SFA) where there is a lot of single family attached townhouses type development. Currently the limit is 6 units per acre and the proposal would be the same unless the proposal is on a large parcel, 10 acres or larger, which would be 8 units per acre. Mr. Gabriel noted there is a 33% limit on residential for the overall project and the remaining must be non-residential. The Transit-oriented district (TOD) would allow 66% residential and 33% would be non-residential, the density would be higher, residential would be 12 units per acre and for larger parcels up to 15 units per acre.

Mr. Gabriel talked about developers saying the density is still not enough to make a project viable given all the costs related to a Philmont Avenue property with clean-up and renovations. Mr. Gabriel had talked to some developers and they want at least 250 dwelling units that might be on a minimum of 10 acres or more land. Mr. Gabriel noted that developers have said they need 10 acres for the residential and then another 10 acres for the non-residential to make a complete project.

Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked why as a Township we want this kind of density and Mr. Gabriel explained there are major obstacles with developing along Philmont Avenue including floodplain, traffic and the physical property themselves. That leads to higher initial costs that the developer tries to recover through the development itself.

Mr. Woodrow noted that the fundamental question for the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners is what does Lower Moreland Township want

April 25, 2013

Philmont Avenue to be? If everyone is ok with what it is today then wait for the commercial/retail to become viable. Mr. Woodrow talked about what will it take to attract developers, is it high densities, maybe but if the empty industrial property stay there is no help with taxes. Mrs. Friedrich Fogel asked if the Township is selling itself short just to get development along Philmont Avenue, it has looked like that forever. Mrs. Friedrich Fogel talked about the school tax issue and how that will scare away older or younger people with no children from living in Lower Moreland Township. Mrs. Friedrich Fogel does not feel having high density apartments will help with the taxes but rather commercial/retail will be needed. Mr. Gabriel noted that in the REV developers are required to provide 2/3 non-residential before they can get up to 1/3 of residential use. Mr. Gabriel talked about a friend who lives near a train station so he can get into the city whenever he wants but does not have to live in the city with the high costs.

Mrs. Souder talked about a development that she saw in San Diego, CA that had commercial on the bottom and residential on top, at first glance you could not even tell there were apartments are the top, all in one building. Mr. Gabriel replied that the REV tries to promote that type of development. Mrs. Souder noted it was modern construction like what is at Fairway Plaza in Jenkintown.

Mr. Cohen talked about Fairway Plaza development and noted that it is very busy there but Jenkintown has every storefront vacant due to lack of parking.

Mr. Gabriel asked if the Planning Commission is ok with the proposed density and Mr. Frey talked about thinking short term and getting Philmont Avenue cleaned up the developer would dictate the density but long term thought would be waiting for commercial/retail to come in and not allow the higher density.

There was a discussion about a property on Philmont Avenue that is being taken by the bank and will be empty soon.

Mr. Gabriel talked about the extension of the REV to the post office, Elkins Park and Lieberman Drive area.

### **Legislative Review**

Mr. Woodrow noted there was nothing going on right now.

### **New/Old Business**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 23, 2013.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, a unanimous vote for adjournment was in order at 9:30 P.M.

Linda Friedrich Fogel  
Linda Friedrich Fogel, Chair