



Township of Northampton
55 Township Road
Richboro, PA 18954

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF
APRIL 9, 2024
MINUTES

Members Present

Steve Saddlemire
Mark Shapiro
Pat McGuigan
Mike Enz
Janet Kifolo

Others Present

Amanda Fuller, PE, Township Engineer
Michael T. Solomon, Director of Planning and Zoning

Mr. Saddlemire called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. There was also a moment of silence for those in our armed forces.

Minutes

A motion (Shapiro/Enz) was made to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2024 meeting.

Approved - 5-0

Consideration of Preliminary/Final Plan of Subdivision and Land Development, Mill Race Inn, SLD 23-2, Buck Road

Heath Dumack, PE and Doug Maloney, Esq. were present on behalf of the project along with the applicant, Mike Costigan. Mr. Maloney provided an overview of the project and stated this is a challenging, irregular site. It encompasses not only the creek, but also steep slopes and development constraints. He noted the location of the project along the eastern side of Buck Road, southeast of its intersection with Chinquapin Road.

The proposal is to construct two, four-story condominiums consisting of 39 units. The site consists of two parcels, TMP 31-26-59-2 and 31-26-59-4 consisting of 100,944 and 44,320 square feet respectively. One of the proposed buildings crosses both parcels by utilizing a development easement on TMP 31-26-59-4. The proposal includes redeveloping a portion of the original Mill Race Inn building into a 2,050 square foot office.

Mr. Maloney discussed the access to the proposed development, including the emergency access. He noted that the plans will be revised before consideration by the Board of Supervisors and that the applicant will comply with the review letters.

At this point, Mr. Dumack gave a power point of the project showing an aerial of the site. In his presentation, he identified the floodplain, showed access points, and the parking and stormwater management systems. He noted that the buildings will be sprinklered from a fire protection standpoint. In addition, he showed an architectural rendering identifying how the condominiums will look. There will be one and two-bedroom units that range between 850 and 980 square feet with garages.

Mr. Saddlemire noted that the comments from the Planning Commission are advisory to the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Fuller noted that there are items that need to be worked out with respect to details, but there is a path moving forward. She noted the location of the proposed sewer main on the subject property, which impacts the development.

Ms. Kifolo stated that the units will be desirable. She did raise concern with respect to tree removal and Mr. Dumack stated that it will only impact one side of the property. Given the topography, Ms. Kifolo stated that the height will not be problematic. Mr. Dumack noted that it will appear as a two-story building from the street.

Ms. Kifolo also raised concerns with respect to the retaining walls on the site. Mr. Dumack noted that the one retaining wall is on the neighboring property and that he would be happy to speak with the adjacent property owner although the wall has not been evaluated. Ms. Kifolo added that she is pleased that the units are age-restricted.

With respect to access and walkability, Mr. Dumack stated that PennDOT will have the final approval with respect to Buck Road. It has also been reviewed by the Township's traffic consultant. He was doubtful that a cross walk will be permitted at the access, but the issue will be evaluated.

Mr. Saddlemire stated that there should be discussion with the neighboring property owners and Mr. Dumack was amenable to having these discussions. In addition, Ms. Fuller noted the waiver request should be modified for tree removal as it relates to the northern side of the property.

Mr. Shapiro stated that there is a concern with respect to parking. Mr. Dumack identified industry standards that state that 1.5 parking spaces per unit is sufficient. In addition, parking will be regulated by the homeowners' association.

Mr. Shapiro also inquired about the left turn restriction out of the site. Mr. Dumack stated that this will ultimately be PennDOT's determination, but noted that the bridge project and demolition of the additions to the Mill Race Inn will improve sight distance.

Mr. Saddlemire inquired if the parking standards were geographically located. Mr. Dumack noted that these are national standards and there was extensive discussion on this matter.

Mr. Saddlemire inquired if there have been conversations with respect to a traffic light with PennDOT. Mr. Dumack noted that there have been informal conversations on traffic, but nothing formal.

In response to Mr. Saddlemire, Mr. Dumack explained the topography on the site as it relates to the retaining walls. As a follow-up to traffic circulation comments, Mr. Enz discussed the right turn out of the site and the circulation pattern for those looking to turn around. Mr. Saddlemire followed up on the topography of the site as it relates to the emergency access and sight lines.

Mr. McGuigan noted that he was happy for the redevelopment of the property. He discussed the Holland Master Plan as it relates to walkability and how this will be accomplished. Mr. Dumack noted that the steep slopes are problematic, but Mr. Dumack will look at potential options if possible.

Mr. Saddlemire noted that the project will enhance Holland and was pleased that the site will be redeveloped.

At this point, being no comment from the public, the Planning Commission made the following motion:

I move that we recommend to the Board of Supervisors Preliminary/Final approval of the Mill Race Inn Redevelopment, SLD 23-2, subject to compliance with the Township Engineer's review letter dated February 15, 2024 and the Township Traffic Engineer's review letter dated February 15, 2024. It is also recommended that the requested waivers be granted and that the Board of Supervisors evaluate the amount of parking, access to the site, pedestrian connectivity, topography, and the project as it relates to the floodplain.

**Motion - Kifolo Second – Shapiro
Approved – 4-0-1 (McGuigan abstained)**

Consideration of Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Blighted Waterfront Redevelopment Area

Mr. Solomon provided an overview that the purpose of the Blighted Waterfront Redevelopment Area is to amend the Zoning Ordinance to advance the purpose and objectives of the Village Overlay District as follows:

1. To redevelop blighted properties to promote economic development, provide varied residential housing options, increase property values, and improve the visual aesthetics of the district;
2. To promote key Township environmental features such as Mill Creek for future generations; and,
3. To protect locally historic structures through integrated and compatible redevelopment.

In addition, the proposed amendment amends the ordinance as it relates to permitted uses, setbacks, parking and building height.

As required by the MPC, Mr. Solomon stated that this ordinance is being forwarded to the Planning Commission for review.

At this point, being no comment from the public, the Planning Commission made the following motion:

I move to recommend to the Board of Supervisors an amendment to the Northampton Township Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 27, for the purpose of creating the Blighted Waterfront Redevelopment Area.

**Motion - McGuigan Second – Shapiro
Approved – 5-0**

Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Michael T. Solomon
Director of Planning and Zoning