

**BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING  
JANUARY 27, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Walker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Harold Levy, Peter Chase, Don Wright, Les Walker, James Daley, Anna Thomas and Dave Wong. Also present were Anthony Tallarida, Township Engineer, Anthony Giovannini, Township Solicitor, Samantha Smith, Community Development Director and Laura Zapata, Recording Secretary.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Walker said the minutes of the November 25, 2024 and December 17, 2024 meetings were not available.

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

There were no comments during courtesy of the floor.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Walker noted the correspondence as listed on the Planning Commission agenda of January 27, 2025 and asked that if there was anything new. Ms. Smith said an updated zoning memo was received for Chrin V-7 conditional use permit.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE ZONING MAP CHANGE**

Ms. Smith the applicant is proposing a zoning map change of the 43-acre “agricultural” property at the southeastern corner of the Northampton Community College campus, known as the East 40 property. The property is located in the Rural Residential Zoning District. The request is made to align with the zoning of the remainder of the campus which is located in the Rural Residential and Institutional Overlay Zoning Districts. Ms. Smith noted that representative from the college were not present at tonight’s meeting. Mr. Walker said applicant made a presentation to this board several meetings back. He said this is a for a small working farm on the campus and the applicant would like to continue working on it.

Mr. Wright made a motion to recommend approval of the Northampton Community College Zoning Map Change request to the Board of Commissioners. The motion was seconded by Mr. Levy and carried unanimously.

- **CHRIN V-7 CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT**

Ms. Smith said the applicant is proposing to develop the property with a garden apartment residential development located at 5218 William Penn Highway. She said garden apartments are a conditional use in the Commercial Enhancement Overlay District. Mark Kaplan, Esquire, indicated the township wants to limit the scope of consideration to the use only and not the design. He said he received two variances from the Zoning Hearing Board: parking from 2.5 spaces to 2 spaces and building height to three stories with a peak roof. Mr. Walker asked, from a conditional use standpoint, if they meet all the criteria. Ms. Smith said any concerns can be addressed through planning.

Mr. Wright asked when they would be able to see the plan. Attorney Kaplan said the plan was already shown and 50% of the engineering was done. He said a scoping application was submitted to PennDOT and the township engineer. They are also working on the NPDES permit. Mr. Daley asked if the commission was only considering the conditional use portion. Attorney Kaplan said yes. Mr. Daley voiced

concern about the northern driveway and said there should be one road access onto Hope Road. Mr. Walker stated that the Planning Commission as a whole has comments on the layout and waiting to discuss would be like a hit in the back of the head. Attorney Kaplan said we've got a history of review, with change to the Bayard Street extension because the Board said "no". PennDOT said the northern access could be full access instead of right-in right-out. Ms. Smith indicated it's okay to discuss the plan, just don't use it in decision-making on the conditional use permit.

Mr. Zak Ruppert, Bowman Consulting, reiterated Attorney Kaplan's remarks that a scoping meeting has been held and they don't object to a full movement onto Hope Road but the developer limited access. Queues on northbound Hope Road and a proposed left-turn lane were discussed. He said they finished the traffic study and for traffic headed northbound on Hope Road there is a right-in and right-out only for the northern driveway. For traffic heading eastbound on William Penn Highway, there may be a right turn lane added. Mr. Wright asked if there will be a dedicated right-turn lane on Hope Road northbound. Mr. Ruppert said no. Mr. Wright asked about buffer of properties on Hope Road. Mr. Gregg Elko, Langan Engineering, said that the plans will be compliant with setbacks plus a 30-foot green area is provided.

Mr. Walker said that he has concerns with the streetscape standards, the buildings being close to the roadways and the lack of parking nearby the buildings, for example Building C. Buildings I/J are an example with lack of proximate parking.

Mr. Wong discussed concerns with air pollution and asked if there would be a dedicated right turn lane. Mr. Walker commented that the proposed right turn lane should be wide when installed, if possible, so check the setback of the building in the corner.

Mr. Tallarida said he had a concern with traffic entering the northern driveway and conflict with the limited throat length into the parking lot.

Mr. Wright suggested Building B be split between other buildings for parking between buildings. He mentioned emergency access onto William Penn Highway. Attorney Kaplan said emergency access is not going to work. Mr. Wong raised his concerns with fire access to buildings, parallel parking, loading zones and requested a storage garage.

Mr. Levy said he would like to see their plans to mitigate traffic on Hope Road and direct to William Penn Highway and estimated potential vehicles added. Attorney Kaplan stated the development would create problems in weekday peak only and the number of trips was following ITE and PennDOT criteria. Mr. Ruppert said that peak trips are 7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m. weekdays and Saturday from 12-1 p.m.. He explained the ITE manual and that there are 105 a.m. peak trips weekdays, 134 p.m., and 108 Saturday. Mr. Levy mentioned concern with families on Hope Road. Attorney Kaplan said the estimated trips added is 2 cars per minute and only a percentage are going to make a right turn.

Mr. Wright asked about the traffic impact study (TIS) table and said he believes there's more traffic than current PennDOT counts. Mr. Ruppert explained how to read the table to assist in understanding. Mr. Wright stated he thinks there is more tractor trailer trips.

Ms. Thomas reiterated suggestion of combining area of Building B into A and C, and Building I into H and J.

Mr. Wong restated concern with distance of buildings to parking and mentioned trash collection.

Mr. Walker reminded the Planning Commission members and public that the Commission is only talking about the use tonight and asked for public comment.

#### Tom Keefer, 3803 Carter Road

Mr. Keefer said no left turn onto William Penn Highway unless there is a traffic light and stated that he is not ready to see apartments before seeing homes off the highway.

Barry Roth, 4323 Chetwin Terrace

Mr. Roth said the township needs to talk to PennDOT about traffic. Also, the intersection should be widened to allow for 10-foot trucks to plow. He also said he would like to see the building moved farther back. Mr. Roth is against the idea of a three-story building and has repeated stormwater concerns.

Mr. Daley asked the Township to clarify stormwater regulations. Mr. Tallarida said that no matter what, runoff from the property after development has to be less than it is now. Mr. Walker explained the requirement further. Mr. Daley mentioned how retention basins work.

Mr. Giovannini stated for the record the next step is a public hearing at the Board of Commissioners for the conditional use request.

Mr. Daley made a motion to recommend moving the Chrin V-7 conditional use permit application to the Board of Commissioners, stating that the action pertains solely and only to the conditional use request. The motion was seconded by Mr. Chase. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

• **FIELDS AT FARMERSVILLE PRELIMINARY**

Mr. Walker made a motion to deny the Fields at Farmersville preliminary plan unless a time extension is received. The motion was seconded by Mr. Daley and carried unanimously.

• **FIELDS AT FARMERSVILLE PRD**

Mr. Walker made a motion to deny the Fields at Farmersville PRD unless a time extension is received. The motion was seconded by Mr. Daley and carried unanimously.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT MEMO**

Mr. Glenn Krier, 3942 Kenrick Drive

Mr. Krier asked if a hand mic can be used during presentations so the public can hear everyone.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW**

- **4167 GREEN POND ROAD BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT (NO SUBMISSION MADE)**
- **BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP SELF STORAGE EXPANSION #2 LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CONSIDERATION TABLED)**
- **FIELDS AT FARMERSVILLE PRD (NO SUBMISSION MADE) – 2/28/25 DEADLINE**
- **FIELDS AT FARMERSVILLE – PRELIMINARY (NO SUBMISSION MADE) – 2/28/25 DEADLINE**
- **PAXOS MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT (WAWA) – PRELIMINARY/FINAL (NO SUBMISSION MADE)**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Daley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wong and carried unanimously.

**NEXT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, February 24, 2025 – Regular Public Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura G. Zapata  
Recording Secretary

Samantha Smith  
Community Development Director