

**REGULAR MEETING / WORK SESSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER – REGULAR MEETING**

The June 1, 2015 Regular meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Sharon Bressler. Members Kate Domico, Bill Steudler, Brian Rater, and Robert Prosek also attended. Staff members present were Doug Erickson, Township Manager; Brent Brubaker, Township Engineer; Ken Soder, Zoning Officer; and Eric Vorwald, CRPA Planner. The audience included Steven Alafazanos, Win Development, Jerry Klodowski, GAI Consultants, Doug Hill, Wooster and Associates, Nick Schaefer, Trans Associates.

**2. ITEMS OF CORRECTION**

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes from the April 6, 2015 combined Regular Meeting and Work Session Meeting were brought before the Planning Commission for approval.

Brian Rater made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Kate Domico. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments at this point in the meeting.

**5. NORTH ATHERTON RETAIL CENTER**

Mr. Vorwald noted that Patton Township received a subdivision plan and land development plan from GAI Consultants on January 27, 2015 for property located at 1910 North Atherton Street. The subject property is approximately 2.3 acres in size and is generally referred to as the former A&P site. The site is currently zoned C-1 (General Commercial) and is located at the intersection of North Atherton Street and Colonnade Way.

The subdivision plan proposes the consolidation of the four existing parcels that make up the site and then re-subdividing them into three lots. The land development plan proposes the establishment of three retail buildings, one on each of the new lots. Building One will contain a restaurant and retail space; Building Two will contain two retail spaces; and Building Three will include a standalone restaurant with a drive-thru. All the proposed uses are permitted by the existing zoning. Since the three parcels will be developed as one project, two waivers have been requested. Both waivers relate to parking and include:

1. A waiver from the shared parking requirements
2. A waiver from the perimeter parking setbacks

Specifically, the first waiver is being requested because the new lots must meet the minimum lot width of 150 feet. In doing so, each individual lot cannot meet all the required parking but can meet the overall parking requirements for the identified uses across the entire project. A reciprocal parking agreement has been drafted to ensure parking is maintained across the entire site for all uses. The second waiver relates to the first in that the reciprocal parking agreement will eliminate the need to have a parking setback. A letter from the applicant requesting these waivers is included with the agenda.

Mr. Rater asked for an explanation of how parking requirements are calculated. Mr. Soder reviewed parking regulations for different land uses and how the parking for this site was calculated. Parking for this site did include the indoor and outdoor seating areas for both restaurants.

Ms. Bressler asked how we can prevent the drive-thru lane from causing excessive backups. Mr. Erickson explained that it is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Erickson indicated that we do not have specific regulations on required lengths of drive-thru lanes. We tend to rely on the developers experience with the needs of specific vendors that will be occupying this space.

Mr. Vorwald explained how typical traffic patterns would enter and exit the site by using either the traffic signal at Colonnade Way, the right in/right out at the northeastern corner of the site or Cornflower Lane.

A question was raised concerning the condition of Cornflower Lane and the amount of new traffic that will be added to the roadway. Mr. Alafazan indicated that WIN Development has agreed to overlay the entire length of Cornflower Lane as part of this project.

Mr. Klodowski discussed all of the landscaping provided on the site and how screening is being provided for residential homes along Cornflower Lane so they do not have to look at the back of the buildings.

Traffic and Transportation:

Mr. Brubaker indicated that in October of 2014, Township staff met with the applicant, their consultant (Wooster & Associates), the Township's consultant (Trans Associates), and PennDOT to identify a scope of work for a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) for this project. During the discussions it was decided to study the following intersections:

- Atherton Street (S.R. 3014) and Colonnade Boulevard
- Atherton Street (S.R. 3014) and Colonnade Way
- Colonnade Way and Colonnade Boulevard
- Atherton Street (S.R. 3014) and 1st Avenue
- Atherton Street (S.R. 3014) and Patriot Way
- Atherton Street (S.R. 3014) and Park Forest Avenue
- Atherton Street (S.R. 3014) and Woodycrest Street

The first phase of the TIS identified that the majority of the traffic (approximately 80%) would access the site from North Atherton Street while traveling in the western direction. To accommodate that movement the applicant proposes a full access driveway at the intersection of North Atherton Street & Colonnade Way with a new 100 foot left turn lane on North Atherton Street.

Further analysis of the TIS indicated that during the Saturday peak hour, traffic queue's for the new left turn lane would exceed the capacity by approximately ½ a vehicle length. The applicant has proposed to stripe the existing left turn lane for the Animal Medical Center as a combination left turn lane, similar to the left turn access approach at Colonnade Boulevard in front of the Park Forest Center and Chic-fil-A. This would allow

for a longer queue length than 100 feet and help avoid congestion in the through lanes of North Atherton Street.

Three sketches were included with the agenda to further illustrate the proposed lane configuration. Sketch 1 shows the proposed North Atherton Retail Center with the lane configurations as they are today. Sketch 2 shows the proposed lane configuration as discussed above. Sketch 3 is a current aerial view of the approach to Colonnade Boulevard which is similar to the proposed lane configuration.

In order for this change to occur the property owner of the Animal Medical Center will need to sign an access agreement with PennDOT and the owner of the North Atherton Retail Center. This would be resolved during the PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) process. Township staff and Trans Associates have reviewed this solution and agree with the concept. PennDOT is still reviewing this issue.

Mr. Erickson indicated to the Planning Commission that the approval of the proposed lane configuration would need to ultimately be approved by PADOT since North Atherton Street is a state roadway.

Mr. Alafanzanos provided a history of the efforts made by the developer to study all feasible access points into the site. As a result of those efforts the proposed scenario provided the best solution for the site.

Mr. Rater commented that it does not appear that the properties of Chic-fil-A, the proposed site and Denny's do not seem to be connected very well. Mr. Brubaker explained the grade difference between Chic-fil-A and the proposed site would make that connection not feasible. Mr. Alafanzanos further explained the efforts made by the developer to create a direct connection to Denny's. However, those efforts were unsuccessful. Mr. Brubaker indicated that while there is no direct connection from Denny's to the site motorist can access the North Atherton Retail site from Denny's by exiting from the rear and then entering the proposed site via Cornflower Lane.

Currently, discussions are on-going between Wooster & Associates and PennDOT to finalize any remaining issues with traffic, traffic mitigation, or traffic assignment that were identified in the TIS. Township staff has a few outstanding minor/technical comments that need to be resolved in the TIS as well. One of the outstanding comments relates to the proposed mitigation at the intersection of Park Forest Avenue and North Atherton Street.

Mr. Erickson explained one final issue with respect to the TIS. The TIS indicates that traffic impacts occur at this intersection and the recommended mitigation is to prohibit left turns from Park Forest Avenue to North Atherton Street. During the approval process of Trader Joe's Plaza, a decision was made to continue to study crash data on left turns at this intersection after the plaza was opened. If the crash data met the warrants for prohibiting the left turns, the Patton Township Board of Supervisors was ready to proceed with the prohibition to protect the safety of motorists at this intersection.

Since September of 2012, only four angle crashes (i.e. those attributed to left turns from Park Forest Avenue onto North Atherton Street) have occurred at this intersection to date. PennDOT typically recognizes the occurrence of 5 or more crashes that could be correctible by a change in traffic control within a continuous 12-month period as a

pattern requiring further examination. Based on this, staff does not agree with the recommendation in the TIS to prohibit left turns in this location. The impact identified in the TIS is an increase in the delay for left turning vehicles. Staff believes that motorists will begin to use Cornflower Lane as access to the new full access signalized intersection at Colonnade Way where left turns will be easier to make. This stresses the importance of staff's Land Development Review comments number 18 and 26. Mr. Erickson wanted the Planning Commission to know about the issue and that the Township will continue to monitor the crashes however, we believe that this recommendation in the TIS should not be made. We are unsure of how PADOT will handle that particular issue.

Mr. Rater brought up a concern that the traffic waiting in the drive-thru lane might block access into the site at the first access point from Cornflower Lane. Mr. Alafazan agreed to widen the second access point from Cornflower Lane to accommodate incoming traffic in the event that drive-thru traffic blocks that access point.

Items for Further Consideration:

Mr. Vorwald identified two items for further consideration on the land development plan. These two items are related to comments 20 and 26 involving Cornflower Lane which is a private alley that runs behind the proposed site. Cornflower Lane also provides access to the rear of several homes in the Park Forest Village Subdivision and serves as the egress point to Park Forest Avenue from the Denny's Restaurant. The specific staff comments and responses are:

Staff Comment #20:

"Extend the proposed bicycle lane to connect with Cornflower Lane. This will provide bicycle access to Park Forest Avenue via Cornflower Lane."

Applicant Response:

"The bicycle lane has been extended to Cornflower Lane along the rear of the property."

Question for Consideration:

*Should the bicycle lane be extended and connect directly to Cornflower Lane instead of continuing through the site and accessing Cornflower Lane between Buildings 1 and 2?*

Mr. Vorwald and Mr. Brubaker explained that the developer looked at this in further detail prior to the meeting tonight. Mr. Klodowski explained that due to grade issues they were unable to extend the bike lane as requested in comment #20. Patton Township staff reviewed the information and agreed with the developer response and find that the bike lane in its current configuration is acceptable.

Mr. Klodowski indicated that a second access point to Cornflower Lane was added after reviewing this comment more closely and indicated that they will widen this access point for easier ingress and egress of larger vehicles or truck traffic.

Staff Comment #26:

“Consideration should be given to acquiring Cornflower Lane which is a private road. This would allow for incorporation of Cornflower Lane into the site and eliminate the need to have a separate access drive behind the buildings and create a more desirable circulation pattern“

Applicant Response:

“Consideration was given at the beginning of the project; however, discussions with the Township led us to believe that acquiring Cornflower from the single family residences would be met with resistance and therefore moved away from that option.”

Question for Consideration:

*Should the applicant make improvements to Cornflower Lane as part of this land development plan to anticipate additional traffic using this roadway to access the left turn lane at the intersection of North Atherton Street and Colonnade Way?*

Township staff discussed both of these items with the applicant. While there is no specific ordinance requirement for connecting the bicycle lane or to connect the roadway to Cornflower Lane, the applicant has generally agreed to take these items into consideration when developing the site. One of the concerns for the applicant is that a retaining wall exists where staff suggests making the connection therefore additional grading or earth moving would be required. Staff understands this situation and feels comfortable that the developer will provide a connection that is safe and effective to meet the needs of the site and the request of the Township.

In light of this, staff suggested that the applicant consider providing minor upgrades to Cornflower Lane such as resurfacing and raising utility inlets. Staff is not interested in requiring the developer to widen, install curbing, or perform any other significant upgrades to Cornflower Lane at this time. Since Cornflower Lane will act as a primary access point for this site, the applicant has generally agreed to perform some level of improvements to Cornflower Lane.

Options to Move Forward:

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Vorwald indicated that the Planning Commission should consider one of the following action items:

1. Recommend denial of the land development plan due to outstanding issues related to staff's comments or the Traffic Impact Study.
2. Table the land development plan until issues related to the Traffic Impact Study have been resolved and staff's comments have been addressed. It should be noted that if this option is considered a time extension from the applicant will be required as the current time extension will expire before the July Board of Supervisors meeting.

3. Approve the subdivision and land development plan with the following conditions:
  1. Completion of all minor/technical items on the staff comment letters for subdivision plan and the land development plan
  2. Resolution of minor/technical items related to Trans Associates' review of the Traffic Impact Study
  3. Approval of the Traffic Impact Study by PennDOT
  4. Resolution of Items for Further Consideration

Mr. Steudler made a motion to recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors with the following conditions:

1. Completion of all minor/technical items on the staff comment letters for subdivision plan and the land development plan
2. Resolution of minor/technical items related to Trans Associates' review of the Traffic Impact Study
3. Approval of the Traffic Impact Study by PennDOT
4. Widening of the second access point off Cornflower Lane.
5. Provide a pavement overlay of the entire length of Cornflower Lane.
6. The granting of both requested parking waivers.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Rater, motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

The following items were included with the agenda:

1. A location map for the property
2. An 11"x17" copy of the subdivision and lot consolidation plan
3. An 11"x17" copy of the land development plan
4. A waiver request for shared parking and perimeter parking setbacks
5. A marked up copy of staff's comment letter for the subdivision
6. A marked up copy of staff's comment letter for the land development plan
7. 3 Sketches associated with traffic discussion

**8. STATUS ON PENDING ITEMS**

There were no comments from the Planning Commission on the pending work task items.

**9. REPORTS**

Ms. Bressler reminded the Planning Commission members of the Peer-to-Peer training on Thursday beginning at 5:30 PM.

**10. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business brought before the Planning Commission.

**11. ADJOURN – REGULAR MEETING**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM.