

ATTENDANCE

Planning Commission

Richard Schmidt, Chair- (in person)
William Burnett, Vice Chair- via zoom
Jim Payne, Secretary- (in person)
Ellen Foreman, Alt. Secretary- (in person)
Sharon Collins- (in person)
Debbie Scitti- (in person)
Brian Peterka-(via zoom)

Township Staff

Amy Farkas, Township Manager- (in person)
Ken Soder, Director of Public Works - (absent)
Nicole Harter, Zoning Officer- (in person)
Leslie Warriner, CRPA – Senior Planner - (in person)
Valerie Good, PW Administrative Asst- (in person)

Audience

C-Net
Troy Knecht – HFL
Chad Stafford – HFL
Steve Kirsch – HRG
Steve Foard – Emmanuel Lutheran Church
John & Carol Razem
Dorothy Derge
Gai Catalano
Karen Henry
Brenda Reed
Larry Parko
David & Kathy Derr
Robert Probst
Gerald & Sue Herr
John & Marcy Thayer
John & Louisa Shawver
Judy Orzolek
Logan Wilmoth
Sandra Lyle
Lisa & Lance Oldt
Beth Royer
Jen Colwell

****Meeting was Hybrid**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The August 7, 2023, Planning Commission regular meeting was called to order at 4:30PM by Chair Mr. Schmidt.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting minutes from the July 10, 2023, regular meeting were brought before the Planning Commission for approval. Mr. Payne made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as submitted. Ms. Foreman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comment at this point in the meeting

4. **SKETCH PLAN FOR STEVENSON ROAD PROPERTY/EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Steve Kirsch - HRG, Inc. and Steve Foard representing Emmanuel Lutheran Church have submitted a sketch plan showing the proposed development of parcel 18-003-047A, at the corner of Stevenson Road and North Atherton Street. The proposed sketch plans show the development of a church and future childcare facility. Mr. Foard noted the property is in the I-99 overlay district and a conditional use. There is no public water so any development would require a water well on the property. There is no public sewer at this time. Therefore, any development would require an on-site sewage disposal system. HRG suggested they would need to obtain a driveway permit. Mr. Foard noted that there is an intermittent stream on the property, but no regulated wetlands. A geotechnical investigation was conducted for the site. The resulting geotechnical report indicated 13 test pits were utilized and that no problematic fill from the I-99 construction exists on the site.

The Planning Commission discussed the sketch plan for the Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Overall, the comments were positive. Ms. Collins asked how far the driveway is located from the intersection with North Atherton Street. Mr. Foard noted the driveway was approximately 600- 700 feet away. Mr. Payne noted he would like to see the building location shown in Concept #1 which has the building set further back on the property. Mr. Peterka noted he would like to see the parking lot behind the church. Mr. Foard also inquired about the letter UAJA sent to the property owner in April of 2023, indicating that they are considering running a sewer line across the property along the stream. Ms. Farkas noted that in order to extend the sewer line outside of the Regional Growth Boundary (RGB) it must go through the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) process to request an expansion of the RGB and Sewer Service Area (SSA) It is typically a 6-month process, if not more. Mr. Foard did inquire about having a picnic or holding a service on the property after grass cutting, clearing the property of brush, and improving access to the property. Mrs. Harter noted that would not be permitted from a Zoning standpoint as there is no Land Development Plan. A Highway Occupancy Permit would need to be obtained from PennDOT to put in the driveway entrance. Since the proposal is a sketch plan, no formal action was taken by the Planning Commission. The sketch plan will be on the August 16, 2023, BOS Agenda.

5. **160 CLEARVIEW AVENUE-REZONING REQUEST**

Patton Township received a request from HFL Corporation to rezone 160 West Clearview Avenue from R-2 Low-Density Residential District to R-3 Medium-Density Residential District. The property is currently owned by Seven Mountains Media, LLC. HFL Corporation has a purchase agreement in place and intends to develop a 31-unit, 55+ affordable housing apartment complex on the property.

*Reference Resolution 2022-008: Policy for Adding items to Published Agendas in Accordance with Act 65 of 2021.

The requested change would require an amendment to § 175-8 Zoning Map.

At the June 21st, 2023, BOS meeting, the Supervisors referred the request to the Planning Commission for analysis and recommendation. At the July 10th, 2023, Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Commission referred the request to staff to complete an analysis for the rezoning request.

The request to consider rezoning 160 Clearview Avenue should take the following into consideration:

- public purpose
- consistency with adopted plans and policies (ex. Comprehensive Plan)
- existing conditions, context, and impacts of keeping the existing Zoning vs. the proposed zoning
- impacts to the community, township, and county

Rezoning impacts must be evaluated in their entirety and should be considered with all potential outcomes. Once a property is rezoned, the owner can propose any use or combination of uses permitted in the underlying zoning district, regardless of what was suggested, presented, or discussed during the rezoning process.

Mrs. Warriner provided a slide show and overview of the Rezoning Analysis to the Planning Commission.

The conclusions were presented as follows:

The neighborhood context is sensitive. The parcel does not match the surrounding parcels in size, layout, or use. There are no significant neighborhood constraints that would limit the use of this property for R-2 or R-3 development. However, the site location in proximity to commercial and office space, transportation corridors and public amenities, and the fact that it is adjacent to other medium density housing, lends to an optimized use as medium density residential.

The Physical features, specifically the swale, steep incline and guide rail propose a challenge to accommodate a sidewalk and stormwater infrastructure adjacent to Waddle Road. However, there are no significant physical constraints that would limit the use of this property for R-2 or R-3 development.

The site is well serviced by existing infrastructure. Utilities all have the capacity to service additional units at this location. There are no significant infrastructure constraints that would limit the use of this property for R-2 or R-3 development.*

*Sewer would require an upgrade. A TIS would be required along with the implementation of any recommendations or requirements from that study. A sidewalk would be required along Waddle Road. All site improvements would need to comply with Patton Township §Chapter 153 Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and §Chapter 175 Zoning, as well as any other applicable sections of the Patton Township code.

*Reference Resolution 2022-008: Policy for Adding items to Published Agendas in Accordance with Act 65 of 2021.

The site is well served by the existing Township, regional, and county services. CATA would be moderately impacted in a positive way with the addition of a medium density use at this location. There are no significant constraints to services that would limit the use of this property for R-2 or R-3 development.

The Zoning District R-3, medium density residential abuts this property. The uses of C-1 across the street and the variety of uses along the Waddle Road Corridor lend to a medium density use to “buffer” between Commercial Districts and low-density residential districts as indicated in the Purpose Statement of the R-3 zoning district. The proposal to rezone 160 West Clearview Avenue is consistent with the zoning patterns in the area.

The proposed rezoning complies with multiple comprehensive plan objectives in land use, transportation, and housing.

The Centre Region 2013 Comprehensive Plan shows the projected future land use for each municipality. The future land use for this property in Patton Township is commercial/office. The Zoning and the future land use map contradict each other. The proposed rezoning of 160 West Clearview Avenue to R-3 medium density residential is not consistent with the future land use map from the 2013 comprehensive plan. However, the current zoning of R-2, low density residential is also not consistent with the future land use map.

Staff recommendation: There is no significant impact to the neighborhood, physical site, infrastructure, services, or township if this property was rezoned to R-3, medium density residential. The purpose statement of R-3 matches the site better than R-2 and any impacts could be mitigated through sound site planning. An increased density at this location would provide opportunity and access to public services, access to jobs, healthcare, recreation, and amenities. Based on the analysis as presented, staff recommends approval of the rezoning request to rezone 160 West Clearview Avenue to R-3, medium density residential.

The Planning Commission had further discussion on building height, traffic, sidewalks, stormwater, and CATA Service. Ms. Collins raised concern about the maximum building height in the area and asked how tall is the Bryn. Mrs. Warriner noted new development in the R-3 Zoning District could be up to 60 ft depending on the type of dwelling and that she would inquire about the actual height of the adjacent apartment complex, the Bryn. Ms. Foreman requested clarification on the definition of “sensitive”. Mrs. Warriner noted “Sensitive” is one of the criteria triggering the TIS. She said it’s a mix of uses in an established neighborhood, and we should be sensitive to the context of the way the streetscape and the houses are laid out. Mrs. Warriner continued however, when we go about this site, that we are sensitive to the way the neighborhood is now versus how this project/rezoning could change it. Ms. Scitti inquired if we are also looking at the Toftrees project as far as traffic is concerned. Mrs. Warriner noted that anytime Toftrees submits a new plan, they are responsible for their own Traffic Impact Analysis. Ms. Farkas also noted that staff can meet with the developer to decide what intersections we want or need to study during each Traffic Impact Analysis.

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After the staff presentation and recommendation, the meeting was opened for Public Comment.

Sue Herr inquired about the meaning of an essential service. Mrs. Harter noted an essential service is a utility, such as gas, water, sewer, electric and cable.

Lisa & Lance Oldt noted their concerns with the proposed rezoning, including the amount of traffic generated, the impact to the on-street walkability of the existing neighborhood and the change in dynamic to the neighborhood character. They requested to simply add single family homes.

Larry Parko raised concerns of traffic as a very long-time resident of the neighborhood. Mr. Parko is concerned that a change in zoning to the property would create a negative ambiance to the community and would generate more traffic. He requested single family homes on the site. He is opposed to the proposal to rezone and requests that the rezoning be denied.

Robert Probst requested clarification on the reportable accident data. Mrs. Warriner responded that reportable accidents are based on police reports filed. Mr. Probst voiced that there are more accidents than the presented data suggests. He also raised concerns with stormwater that collects on the back portion of the site and that any development would further impact the stormwater issue. He also raised concerns with pedestrians crossing and the need for sidewalks.

Karen Henry voiced concerns of a possible decrease in property value and the destruction of an established neighborhood. She also stressed the site is in a bad location.

Mike Lebo spoke on his biggest concern, which is the traffic. He expressed that something would need to be widened. He also conveyed the need for sidewalks for any increase in people to that area. He is opposed to the proposal to rezone.

Ms. Scitti inquired about any study conducted on wetlands and retention ponds. Mrs. Warriner noted the site was developed in the 1960's so there anywhere very different requirements and there was no formalized stormwater. Currently, there is a low spot in the front of the building, but the majority of the water drains to the low area behind the building. There is a significant amount of water that runs off those developments. There are three storm water basins that carry a majority of the stormwater load in that area for the newer developments.

Beth Royer noted her concerns with existing stormwater problems and traffic issues in the neighborhood.

Ms. Collins asked where all the Stormwater collects. Mrs. Warriner noted the inlets on Clearview and Waddle Road, but no other formalized stormwater collection systems exist on the site.

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Jen Colwell noted traffic concerns. She asked the Planning Commission to consider the impact with the traffic light and that sitting three cars deep cannot make that signal. It takes her one minute 20 seconds to get through the light, daily. She asked to consider all traffic corridors as part of the Waddle Road Traffic Impact Study including the Tofrees development.

Mr. Schmidt noted whether this stays R-2 or R-3 there are traffic and stormwater issues that need to be addressed. Ms. Farkas noted that the ordinance contains language when there is sensitive nature to the neighborhood, a traffic impact study could be required as a part of the land development plan process.

Ms. Farkas continued that regardless of this rezoning request, the Township and the Planning Commission can look into solutions for the problems that were voiced during the public comment, including the traffic, stormwater, and pedestrian circulation.

John Razem voiced his concern of the terrible conditions at the Waddle/Clearview intersection. He continued that making a right turn from Waddle into Clearview is very tight and that a majority of vehicles do not stop. The entire intersection would need to be redesigned to accommodate the general traffic problems.

David Derr is the Patton Township UAJA Representative. He spoke as a resident of Patton Township. Mr. Derr expressed concerns of residents walking in the evening without lights on the roadway. The Patton Township police department regularly is assigned speed patrol in the neighborhood. Waddle Road is an obvious problem and that in his opinion, not one more car should go through there.

Cathy Derr spoke of concerns with general traffic issues caused by additional cars and potentially 72 parking spaces. She expressed concerns of people choosing alternate routes to avoid the intersection.

Lance Oldt stated that people cut through Clearview Avenue when they are going east, and that Patton Crossing will make it worse. Traffic already gets backed up. He also expressed concerns with low-income housing going in, if they cannot do the proposed development and how traffic will be clogged, and property values will decrease, and the neighborhood will not be attractive.

Chad Stafford from HFL responded to the assumptions mentioned by residents. He listed multiple opportunities that HFL is exploring. He expressed that all of the items and issues mentioned would be addressed during the land development planning process. HFL has a good quality product and that they are committed to improve the property and neighborhood as a whole.

Troy Knecht mentioned that they have brought more affordable housing units to market in the Centre Region than any other developer. Rents are typically no more than 30% of the average median income of the unit. These units would be geared towards people earning up to 60% of the average income in Patton Township. The Waddle Road corridor wants to be something else and there is an opportunity for a lower carbon footprint, close to public transit and close to shopping. It is an ideal location

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from an urban planning perspective because the site is walkable with direct access to public transportation and could be a great addition.

Chad Stafford mentioned that the ideal investment would be an apartment building, if rezoned to R-3, based on the available land, maximum footprint allowed, and maximum use permitted on the site.

Fedor Sinev supports the request but inquired if a reduction in parking could be made to alleviate traffic issues.

Troy Knecht mentioned that there will be studies and they have done studies based on actual use and proximity to CATA stops. Chad Stafford mentioned College Township has an ordinance for work force housing to reduce parking, but they require a separate area to be set aside in case a future use would require additional parking.

Robert Probst mentioned the Bryn is only three stories tall and that a 60' tall building would be out of place with adjacent buildings.

The Planning Commission continued to discuss possible solutions and how to address the traffic issues. Ms. Farkas expressed the need for the Township to look into solutions for the problems mentioned.

The Planning Commission unanimously agreed to table the 160 West Clearview Rezoning until the September 11, 2023, Planning Commission meeting.

6. STATUS REPORT ON PENDING ITEMS

None

7. OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Highlights from the CRPC Meeting on July 3rd, 2023
 - 1. Final Draft of the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area Implementation Agreement
 - 2. Draft Model EV Charging Infrastructure Ordinance and EV Readiness Guide
 - 3. 2020 Census Results Update

- b) Action taken by the Patton Township Board of Supervisors -July 19th, 2023.
 - 1. Adoption of the proposed Ordinance 2023-630: Centre Region Property Maintenance and Fire Code
 - 2. Approved Resolution 2023-13
 Filmore Store Sewage Planning Module for a holding tank

*Reference Resolution 2022-008: Policy for Adding items to Published Agendas in Accordance with Act 65 of 2021.

3. Approved the temporary use permit for the Acres Project
4. Appointed Ms. Michelle Merrow, Alder Run Engineering as Patton Township's Consulting Engineer

Mrs. Harter noted that Ms. Scitti is unable to attend the October 11th BOS meeting and asked if another Planning Commission member could fill in. Ms. Foreman volunteered.

8. ADJOURN

Ms. Collins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Scitti seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.

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