

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 11, 2018 – 4:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL**

Present: Commission Members Mr. Malozi, Mr. Barker, Mr. Stellato and Ms. Cohen; Staff included Darlene Heller and Tracy Samuelson of the Planning and Zoning Bureau, Matt Dorner and Tiffany Wells representing the Engineering Bureau and Attorney Edmund Healy, Solicitor to the Commission. Also in attendance were Kyle MacGeorge with Langan Engineering, Atty. Steve Boell with Fitzpatrick Lentz & Bubba, Vinicius Gorgati with Sasaki, and Brent Stringfellow with Lehigh University. Representing the press were Nicole Radzевич of the Morning Call and Louis Gombocz of WFMZ.

Mr. Malozi, Vice Chairman, chaired the meeting in Chairman Melosky's absence.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 13, 2018

Mr. Stellato made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2018 Planning Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cohen and passed with a 3 – 0 vote with Mr. Barker abstaining.

2. LAND DEVELOPMENTS AND SUBDIVISIONS

- a. (18-008LD) – #18080097 – LEHIGH UNIVERSITY BRIDGE WEST LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 68 University Drive, Ward 2, Zoned I, Plans dated June 29, 2018 and last revised September 19, 2018

The developer proposes to demolish existing buildings and construct two residence halls along University Drive on a 10.68 acre site. The south cluster includes approximately 406 beds and the north cluster includes approximately 316 beds. The number of stories varies but generally range from three to five floors.

Kyle MacGeorge with Langan Engineering presented the plan on behalf of Lehigh University. He stated representatives from Lehigh University were present with their counsel and Sasaki, the architect for the project. He indicated the renderings on the easels show the project is internal to the campus and located in two primary locations. One is the existing Trembley complex on the north side of University Drive, which will be demolished and replaced with a new residential facility. He noted that University Drive divides the project in half and the south side of University Drive is where the other building for the project will be located. That area is currently an abandoned sorority (Delta Gamma) and parking lot. He noted the project will be built in multiple stages; with the first stage being the south side site, and as space becomes available they will move across the street to the Trembley site. The closest public street is 200' from the building where Brodhead ends. He noted all the streets in the complex are privately owned by Lehigh University. The total disturbance for the project will be 10 acres and the project site is all zoned Institutional.

Mr. MacGeorge continued that there will be a change in circulation and explained currently University Drive is 2 way until it gets to Sayre Drive, then it is one way between Sayre and Taylor. Proceeding in the other direction one drives along Trembley Drive to reach University Drive. He noted part of the project will be to convert Trembley Drive into a designated pedestrian and service vehicle area.

He noted the drainage is from south to north and the utilities have already been relocated.

He referenced the colored site plan noting the project is approximately 55,000 sq. ft. divided

between the 2 buildings, which vary in height because of the steep terrain. He noted the traffic study is completed and was submitted to the City's Traffic Engineer who approved the submission. Trembley Drive has been converted to a pedestrian only area and there will also be a new sidewalk along University Drive for safer pedestrian traffic. Crosswalks will also be improved that exist along University Drive along with traffic calming measures, which include speed bumps.

Mr. MacGeorge referenced the Lehigh University storm sewer system, which ties into the City of Bethlehem's system downstream and then to the Lehigh River. There will be a reduction in impervious area. He noted there is a 16" water main which is owned by the City and the water services will be off of that line. Hydrants and Fire Department connections are being coordinated with the City's Fire department.

Mr. MacGeorge noted the 1st phase of the project includes the widening of University Drive and the 2nd part is the north side of the site which will be built in the near future.

Ms. Samuelson asked Mr. MacGeorge to describe the project. Mr. MacGeorge deferred the question to Mr. Gorgati of Sasaki. Mr. Gorgati explained the project is a residence hall for sophomore/junior students with semi-suites of 2 bedrooms with a bathroom. It will have approximately 30 students per floor with lounges for socialization & study. He indicated that within the site are steep slopes which create a series of engagement spaces for the students. He noted there is potential for a fitness room and conference rooms. He showed the connection to the other buildings. He remarked how the existing buildings create open space which invites the students to be outdoors. He noted Phase 1 has a square courtyard and views of the Lehigh Valley. Phase 2 will have an entry courtyard with a 2 story open gathering space inside the building which opens to a lawn area.

Mr. Stellato remarked the project consists of 2 resident halls on 10 acres of land. Mr. Gorgati agreed. Mr. Stellato asked if they were demolishing anything. Mr. MacGeorge stated the Trembley development would be removed before the project is built.

Mr. MacGeorge introduced Atty. Steve Boell representing Lehigh University. Atty. Boell noted the project is in 2 phases with the south side of the project being 1st and the north side of the project being deferred for a not yet determined time, given the Path of Prominence Plan. He noted Lehigh University has a request of the City of Bethlehem in the Developer's Agreement for the deferral of phase 2 of the project. Lehigh University requests to be allowed to defer the security and the payment of sewer tapping fee for that portion of the project until the time of earthmoving activities on that phase. He noted Lehigh University would pay security and all fees for the immediate phase. Mr. Stellato asked how long the deferral would be. Atty. Boell remarked the time period is not yet defined and added not more than a few years. Lehigh would only want to defer the security for the 2nd phase. They would submit 2 sets of cost estimates for approval. Atty. Healy mentioned they are formally proposing 2 separate phases. Atty. Boell remarked the City is more comfortable calling the project a phase in order to facilitate the development, but today Lehigh University is seeking full approvals; getting the NPDES and everything associated with it in at one time. Mr. Dorner noted one thing the City wanted was to make sure it is clearly identified on the plan what is part of Phase 1 and what is part of Phase 2. Mr. Dorner added the City does not have a problem with separating the security and separating the sewer tapping fees. Atty. Healy agreed as long as it is being done by a clear statement of Phase 1 and Phase 2. Atty. Boell added the developer will submit a plan which will definitely show the difference between the 2 Phases.

Mr. Malozi asked if, with regard to the issue on deferring the fees, there is a formula to divide the calculations. Mr. Dorner replied the buildings would be calculated separately.

Atty. Healy asked if all the residential units would be constructed as part of Phase 2. Atty. Boell

remarked the entire project is 100% residential. Mr. Dorner added the City would not issue building permits for the 2nd phase until the security is posted.

Mr. Malozi asked Ms. Samuelson to address the City's comments. Ms. Samuelson remarked the City's letter is brief and the 2 submissions were reviewed. She referenced the Traffic Bureau and the response to the Pete Terry letter dated September 28, 2018. Question #2 (regarding the site distance) in Pete Terry's letter will need to be a condition of approval. The developer has agreed to comply with Pete Terry's comments and the crosswalks and signs shall be added to the plans and be included in the Developers Agreement indicating that Lehigh University is responsible for maintaining these crosswalk markings in thermoplastic. She referred to the Fire comment #3 regarding the 26' wide access road, where the plan only indicates 24', but Lehigh had discussed with the Fire Marshall the other material along the side to make it 26' wide. Ms. Samuelson asked Mr. MacGeorge if that has happened. Mr. MacGeorge replied it has happened and remarked the Fire Department wanted more detail which they have provided. He added they will comply with all the Fire comments.

Ms. Samuelson advised the City always sends the plans to LANTA and the City received a letter regarding potential sidewalk in the future. She noted Lehigh has agreed to keep lines of communication open in regards to the potential sidewalk where the bus stops would be located. Mr. MacGeorge indicated where the sidewalk would be located on University Drive. Ms. Samuelson asked if LANTA buses use Sayre Drive. Mr. MacGeorge remarked LANTA does not use Sayre Drive and in fact they are not using University Drive at this time. Ms. Samuelson added in the future LANTA will be using University Drive.

Ms. Samuelson stated based upon the City's October 2, 2018 letter and the Benchmark September 28, 2018 letter conditional approval of this plan is recommended.

Mr. Stellato asked for clarification of the conditional approval. Ms. Samuelson replied the conditions of the comments in both the City's and Pete Terry's letters would need to be met.

Mr. Barker asked how the developer will meet the 26' wide roadway. Mr. MacGeorge replied there will be the 24' road and in addition to that, the curb and sidewalk will be structurally designed on either side of University Drive and Trembley to handle the Fire truck weight which will be part of the 26' roadway.

Ms. Cohen asked if pedestrian road work would be part of the 1st phase, including the conversion of University Drive to 2 lanes and the conversion into a pedestrian drive. Mr. MacGeorge replied the pedestrian road would be part of the 2nd phase. She added in the interim if there would be a 2 way road on University Drive and a 1 way road on Trembley. Mr. MacGeorge concurred.

Mr. Barker asked how many units there will be. Mr. MacGeorge remarked there will be 720 beds and some suites with about 560 beds taken away, which was calculated in the sewer calculations.

Ms. Cohen inquired if the construction of the new buildings would be brick. Mr. Gorgati remarked the building will be mostly brick with zinc coloration to give it a slate look. Mr. Barker asked if the whole building would be the same color. Mr. Gorgati referred to the plans and noted there are several mock-ups that are being discussed to see what would work best.

Mr. Stellato asked if there is a need for additional parking. Mr. MacGeorge reported this was part of the parking study submitted to the City previously for a different project which is being handled as a campus wide study. Mr. Stellato asked if Lehigh would be busing the students. Mr. MacGeorge replied it's a very comprehensive study which looks at all different kinds of zones where students might eventually park. Ms. Samuelson added the City has had meetings with Lehigh's traffic committee to go over their Path of Prominence Plan which allows a shuttle

system to be used along with incentive plans for students. Mr. MacGeorge noted there will be new bus stops along University Drive. Mr. Malozi remarked when mentioning buses are they mixing LANTA versus shuttles internal to the campus. Mr. MacGeorge replied currently it is all shuttles internal to the campus with LANTA still being discussed.

Mr. Malozi asked what drives the project; the need for a net 500 plus beds. Mr. Stringfellow replied the Path of Prominence, which is a plan initiated a year ago, is looking to add a new College of Health and adding 1000 students over the next 8 years. Mr. Malozi questioned the timing for the 2nd Phase to take place, based on the plans and establishment of the 5th college and undergraduate expansion. Mr. Stringfellow replied the timing could be summer 2019 or summer of 2020 due to operational issues.

Mr. Malozi mentioned the Commissioners have not seen the parking study which might be of concern regarding what happens beyond the borders with Taylor and Brodhead. He wondered if things could spill over, and has that issue been addressed. Mr. Stringfellow remarked it is a very comprehensive parking plan which accounts for these projects and other building projects on campus which are moving forward. Mr. Stringfellow added it looks at new policies for parking. Lehigh has a very open policy in terms of parking and with a parking pass for Lehigh, you can park anywhere. He noted Lehigh is adding 2 more buses to their transit system in January and is pushing to have a more robust service. He stated this project should not have a significant impact because of its proximity to the center part of campus, which is not in a zone where students would be driving from one location to another. He noted the location would house freshman and sophomore students, with freshman students not permitted to have cars on campus. Mr. Barker remarked freshman students are allowed to park outside of the campus. Mr. Stringfellow agreed the freshman students may park as citizens.

Mr. Malozi invited interested parties from the public to ask questions or address the Commission. Mr. Ed Gallagher of 49 W. Greenwich Street introduced himself. He noted the issue of parking was raised and it is what he wanted to raise a bit of concern about. He remarked he is a retired Lehigh Professor of 2 years and was with the English Department for almost 50 years. He stated the Path to Prominence is breathtaking, building a new college, 1500 more students, with an undergraduate student body of 5000 and adding another 1000 undergraduate students results in a 20% gain in a short period of time. He noted Lehigh's reputation is sterling. He remarked his confusion in the process in which pieces of the construction with a parking element at each of the construction sites. He added parking will be lost with the Bridge West project, but a lot of parking is lost with Southside Commons and a lot of parking will be lost with the College of Health. He noted he has attended the meetings and asked where one gets to see the total picture of parking and the impact it might have on the City. With each approval parking is lost, and if his tally is right, Lehigh is losing over 800 parking spaces as a result of this project. He referenced the parking study, which deals with the loss of parking spaces and was surprised to learn of the parking on the north side in the lot on Lehigh Street. He questioned if it is a good decision for the City, what core of Lehigh staff would be asked to park across the bridge on the north side of the City. He added in order to make up for the loss of the 800 parking spaces, Lehigh is crossing the river into the north side and a decision has been made to lease the lot for 150 parking spaces. Mr. Barker asked which lot Mr. Gallagher was referencing. Mr. Gallagher stated the lot adjacent to the Wooden Match going into Sand Island. He added there is a plan for a bus to pick people up, come across the bridge, and bring them to Farrington Square. He stated the lot would be a free lot and noted it is \$500 a year for a faculty member to park on campus. He remarked the people who would use the free lot would be the lower wage earners at Lehigh, Bethlehem citizens, and they would walk across the bridge or take the bus across the bridge adding 1½ hours to their work day. He noted he has attended meetings where people have inquired why the lot leased to Lehigh is not being utilized.

Mr. Malozi thanked Mr. Gallagher for his comments.

Mr. Stellato remarked Ms. Heller made a comment about seeing the parking study. Ms. Heller replied there was a parking study the City did review as far as the number of parking spaces which are required by the zoning ordinance and the City is satisfied. Mr. Stellato asked if Ms. Heller was aware of the parking space on the north side. Ms. Heller replied it was not included in the parking study.

Mr. Stringfellow noted there is a goal to have a 10 minute gap between buses on campus and they are getting closer to matching the convenience of having an automobile.

Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the Lehigh University Bridge West land development plan contingent upon meeting the conditions set in the October 2, 2018 review letter from the City and also all of the comments from the September 28, 2018 letter from Benchmark Engineering, particularly comment #4. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stellato and passed with a 4 – 0 vote.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Ms. Heller reported that at the LVPC Awards Ceremony the previous evening the City was very successful. She noted that the Bethlehem Blight Betterment Initiative won an award. She added projects which were honored were the Nitschmann School, Moravian College's Health Science Building, the Hispanic Center, the reconstruction of the Fahy Bridge and the South Side Arts District.

Ms. Samuelson informed the Commission that the SALDO is moving forward. Mr. Malozi asked if URDC is working with the SALDO revisions. Ms. Samuelson said yes.

Mr. Malozi noted he received a letter regarding being reappointed to the Blighted Review Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

ATTEST:

Darlene Heller, Commission Secretary