

SWATARA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
March 5, 2024

The Swatara Township Planning Commission regular meeting was called to order by Chairman Chad Martin at 7:00 pm at the Swatara Township Municipal building, 599 Eisenhower Boulevard, Harrisburg, PA. The call to order was followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Members of the Commission present:

Chad Martin, Chairman	Karen Bear
Chuck Bowser, Vice Chairman	Mark Caruso
Katie Ibberson	

Also Present: Robert Ihlein, Township Director of Planning and Zoning and Secretary for the Commission, Stephen Cordaro, P.E., Dawood Engineering, and Karen Dixon, planner with Dauphin County Planning Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Ibberson made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2024, meeting. Mr. Bowser seconded the motion. The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS, INCLUDING STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Linda Cline of Bridge Road spoke about the proposed Wawa land development. She lives directly across the street from the entrance to Hoss's restaurant. Many mornings it is difficult to turn out of her driveway with all the traffic there is now. A new convenience store would make it even more difficult. She is also concerned about impacts to visitors to Schiavonni Park, and that the site has been impacted by flooding in the past.

Commissioner Tom Connolly of N. Harrisburg Street expressed concerns about news he heard that Dauphin County Drug and Alcohol Services was going to be leasing space in the former Millers Mutual offices that are part of the large building in Tecport that was owned by Capital Blue Cross. He had also heard that Dauphin County was considering the purchase of an office building in Tecport for the purpose of consolidating county offices and services. If purchased by the County, the property would become exempt from pay property taxes to the Township.

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Scott Kocivar, owner of the Cycle Gear shop on Bridge Road, also expressed concerns regarding the proposed Wawa convenience store on the site of Hoss's restaurant. The site is in a flood zone. Also, there is poor drainage at the intersection of Pleasant View Road and Bridge Road that causes a large pond to form in the roadway when there is heavy rain. During peak travel times in the morning vehicles coming down Pleasant View Road have to wait in line to make a turn onto Bridge Road. Many drivers will cut through the back of his parking lot to avoid the intersection.

Jim Davis, owner of properties on Bridge Road, also expressed concerns regarding the proposed Wawa convenience store. There is a constant stream of traffic on westbound Route 322. The proposed convenience store will make it difficult for vehicles to get off and on the highway from Bridge Road. He is also concerned that noise and lights from a 24 hour a day, 365 days a year operation will affect the residents that live near there.

Shirley Davis echoed the concerns of her husband. She is also concerned about environmental impacts on the Swatara Creek, stormwater runoff, flooding of the site, and having fuel tanks in a flood zone.

OLD BUSINESS - SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS:

**a. Plan No. 2023-10C: "Preliminary / Final Land Development Plan for Proposed Trailer Drop Lot", dated 09/26/2023**

Project: Re-develop an 11.32-acre former quarry site for use as a "drop lot" for the storage of shipping containers and hauling chasses

Applicant: JB Hunt Transport, Inc.

Location: 2224 Paxton Street

*PLAN STATUS: Accepted for review on 10/03/2023; BOC ACTION BY (90 days)*

*EXTENSION GRANTED BY APPLICANT TO 04/30/2024*

WAIVER REQUESTS: (new ones added)

- >1. Section 253.10A - 11 requiring the submission of a Preliminary Plan
- >2. MODIFICATION OF SECTION 253.10A(1)(b)[5] REQUIRING PLANS TO BE DRAWN AT A SCALE OF 1 INCH = 100 FEET
- >3. SECTION 253-16M(3)(a) REQUIRING THE CONSTRUCTION OF CURBS ALONGSIDE OF DRIVEWAYS

The applicant was represented by Greg Holzman, P.E. of BL Companies. The revised plans recently submitted show significant changes to the stormwater facilities. They had to be re-designed because PennDOT would not allow water to be discharged to the I-83 ROW. The new design utilizes a feature on the site that would be constructed to allow overflow stormwater to pass through filtering system in a hole that goes down to bedrock. This was shown on their plan

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as a “sinkhole”. Micheal Hess, P.E. of HRG noted this in his review of the plans and thought this would require a DEP “Class 5 Injection Well Permit”. Mr. Holzman stated this feature is not a sinkhole and that he has had conversations with the County Conservation District. An injection well permit would not be needed. He will obtain a letter from the District verifying there is no need for this permit. After some discussion about this point, Mr. Ihlein stated that there are 2 outside agencies that need to approve permits: the County Conservation District for stormwater control and PennDOT for a Highway Occupancy Permit. These are normal conditions of plan approval. Mr. Holzman asked the Commission to consider recommending plan approval with these conditions. Mr. Martin asked if there was any discussion on the waivers. There was a consensus to recommend approval of the waivers. Mrs. Ibberson made a motion to recommend approval of the land development plans with conditions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bowser, and the motion passed unanimously.

**b. Plan No. 2023-12C: “Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan for Swatara Paxton Developers LLC – Proposed Wawa Food Market and Fueling Station”, dated 11/21/2023**

Project: proposing to redevelop the current Hoss’s Restaurant site on the corner of Route 322 and Bridge Road to a Wawa store and fueling station

Location: 9009 Bridge Road

*PLAN STATUS: Accepted for review on ; BOC ACTION BY (90 days), EXTENSION GRANTED BY APPLICANT TO MARCH 31, 2024*

Applicant: Swatara Paxton Developers, LLC

WAIVER REQUESTS:

*ACTION: The applicant was not present. The plans were tabled. Mr. Ihlein noted that he had been in touch with the applicant’s attorney with regard to granting an extension for the review.*

NEW BUSINESS - SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS

**a. Plan No. 2024-01C: “Preliminary / Final Land Development Plan for Steelton Terminal for Equity Development Partners”, dated 02/16/2024**

Project: proposing to construct 3 warehouse / truck terminal buildings that will mainly be located in Lower Swatara Township and Steelton Borough; entrance will be in Swatara.

Location: Quarry Road and Harrisburg Street

WAIVER REQUESTS:

1. Section 253-10A - 11 requiring the submission of a Preliminary Plan
2. Section 253-32 – requiring the construction of sidewalks
3. ADDED: .MODIFICATION OF SECTION 253.10A(1)(b)[5] REQUIRING PLANS TO BE DRAWN AT A SCALE OF 1 INCH = 100 FEET

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Mr. Jeramy Bittinger, P.E. of Landworks Civil Design present the plan. The applicant owns several parcels that are located in 3 municipalities. The largest warehouse building is located in Steelton. Only small portions of 2 buildings are in Swatara. The primary entrance will be from Harrisburg Street and Quarry Road off Eisenhower Boulevard.

*ACTION: Mrs. Ibberson made a motion to accept plans for review. Mr. Bowser seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**b. Plan No. 2024-02C: “Final Land Development Plan for Stephen & Linda L. Lenkevich – 7841 & 7901 Witmer Drive”, dated 02/20/2024**

Project: minor land development and lot consolidation to construct an addition on to an existing commercial building

Location: 7901 Witmer Drive

**WAIVER REQUESTS:**

1. Section 253-10A - 11 requiring the submission of a Preliminary Plan

Mr. Joe Burgett, P.E. presented the plan for the applicant / owner. The Zoning Hearing Board granted waivers for the building setback requirements. This project will be for an addition to a building for an existing business.

*ACTION: Mrs. Ibberson made a motion to accept plans for review. Mr. Caruso seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**c. Plan No. 2024-03C: “Preliminary / Final Land Development Plan for Swatara Exchange”, dated 02/27/2024**

Project: re-development of the Harrisburg Mall property with retail and flex space buildings and outparcels for related uses.

Location: 3501 Paxton Street

**WAIVER REQUESTS:**

1. Section 253-10A - 11 requiring the submission of a Preliminary Plan
2. Section 253-32 – requiring the construction of sidewalks in specific locations.
3. ADDED: 253.19.B.3 – regulating the subdivision and land development of properties that front on a limited access highway.

Joshua Hoffman, P.E. of Pennonni Associates presented the plans. With him was Karen Watsic, Vice President of Development with St. John Properties, representing the owner. They are looking forward to the evolution of the mall property that will feature a new mix of retail, restaurants, a convenience store, and light industrial uses.

*ACTION: Mrs. Ibberson made a motion to accept plans for review. Mr. Bowser seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

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OLD BUSINESS – PLANNING INFORMATION, ISSUES AND ORDINANCES

*Discussion regarding land use and zoning issues selected by the Commission that may be addressed and recommended to the Board of Commissioners:*

This list submitted in January 2024 for suggested clarifications and corrections to the zoning ordinance:

- a. Improved definitions of lots and yards with new graphics
- b. Minimum lot sizes for dwelling units in the Commercial zoning districts (see “Attachment 2” from ordinance)
- c. “Home Occupation” – the wording used in the definition section is different than that used in additional regulations 2095-96.D(9) – “minor” vs “light”, etc.
- d. “Night Club” – no definition, plus the Use Table H indicates there are additional requirements in 295-39, but there are none
- e. Commercial Fences – no distinction in the zoning ordinance made between residential and commercial uses. The current maximum height for all fences is 6 feet.

*F. (NEW THIS MONTH) – industrial scale food & beverage processing including beer brewing, alcohol distilling, vinegar & pickling of foods, sugar refining.*

Mr. Ihlein stated that he would like to add these uses to the list after speaking with a realtor who had a client looking for a space to process farm foods and make pickles. These uses are not mentioned in the Township zoning ordinance. Harrisburg City places these specific uses in the industrial areas because of the possible odors that could be generated.

Mr. Ihlein shared a presentation regarding item b, minimum lot sizes for dwelling units in the Commercial zoning districts. There are a handful of townhouse and apartment developments that are located in commercial zoning districts. There are also a handful of approved land development plans on undeveloped parcels in the commercial zoning districts. The approved densities range from 4 units up to 18 units per acre. There is no maximum density regulation. With creative site design even more density is possible on lots that are undeveloped. He will look at other local ordinances to make a comparison. Ms. Dixon stated that County Planning has references that could be provided for this research.

OTHER BUSINESS – PLANNING INFORMATION, ISSUES AND ORDINANCES

- a. Review draft of the “Planning Commission Annual Report for 2023”

Mr. Martin asked if there was a motion to recommend submitted the report to the Board of Commissioners. The members were in agreement, with no objections.

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b. “Keeping of Chickens” draft ordinance to be presented to the Board of Commissioners on March 13<sup>th</sup> by Mr. Ihlein.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

a. TCRPC annual luncheon to be May 9, 2024, at the Marriott Hotel on Lindle Road

b. **Next meeting – April 2, 2024**

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Martin suggested that a list be started with the most commonly requested waivers. Perhaps the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance could be modified to make them optional instead of required.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Ibberson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Bear seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Ihlein