

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the  
PALMYRA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION**

Wednesday October 28, 2020

Steve Ricker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Palmyra Municipal Building, 325 S. Railroad Street, Palmyra, PA, 17078.

**Attendance:** Jessica Creter, Eric Hoy, Steve Ricker, and Joe Templin were present. Borough Manager Roger Powl and Frank Chlebnikow (Rettew) were also present. Carissa Mellinger was absent.

**Public Comment:**

1. Dave McCloskey (212 E. Ridge Rd): Mr. McCloskey expressed that he is extremely concerned that this is already the second time that the developer has approached the Borough for relief and the official plan has yet to be submitted. He is very concerned about how this development will impact traffic safety in the community.
2. Vinnie Occhiena (49 E. Ridge Road): Mr. Occhiena explained that he routinely observes vehicles traveling at speeds approaching 50 m.p.h. on Ridge Road near the Chestnut Street intersection and is very concerned what will happen to safety when the added traffic of the new development is thrown into the mix.
3. William Garber II (725 N. Grant Street): Mr. Garber explained that the developer has to prove an undue hardship in order to be granted waivers of the subdivision ordinance. He also explained that the subdivision ordinance stipulates that no new road connections should be made on a collector or arterial road within 600-feet of an existing intersection, and there are five streets within 600-feet of the proposed new intersection at N. Lincoln Street. He feels the new intersection at N. Lincoln Street will be very dangerous and the waivers should be denied.

**Approval of Minutes:**

A **Motion** was made by Eric Hoy, seconded by Joe Templin, to approve the August 26, 2019 meeting minutes as written. **Motion Carried.**

**Action & Discussion Items:**

1. East Ridge Road Subdivision (Chimel Property) – Waiver Requests:
  - a. Section 318-26.J – Minimum Street Width (34-feet): Requesting 28-foot width with parking prohibited on one side of the street.
  - b. Section 318-26.L.6 – Clear Sight Triangle: Requesting clear sight triangles to be configured according to the stopping sight distance required by PennDOT since the connection at the intersection of N. Lincoln Street and E. Ridge Rd will require submission and approval of a PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit.

Claudia Shank, Esq of McNeese Wallace & Nurick LLC; Bob Riahi of Millfield Construction, and; Bill Swiernik of David Miller Associates were present. Mr. Swiernik explained the waiver requests. He explained that they wish to comply with PennDOT sight & stopping distance requirements since they will need to obtain PennDOT's approval for the new connection to Ridge Road. He further explained that the existing embankment on the north side of the Ridge Road to the east of the new intersection would need to be removed to establish the appropriate sight distance. Mr. Ricker asked what the sight distance is currently at the existing intersection at N. Lincoln Street and Ridge Road and Mr. Swiernik explained that they did not measure the sight distance on the south leg of the intersection but, they did measure an existing sight distance of 337-feet to the east and 450-feet to the west without any modifications for the new north side leg. Ms. Creter asked why they can't comply with the Borough's site distance triangle requirements, and Mr. Swiernik explained that it would negatively impact the first property to the west by placing a sight distance triangle easement on their property which would restrict what the property owners could place within that easement area so that proper sight distance is maintained, and, they believe that they will be able to comply with the PennDOT requirements for establishing a new intersection there. Mr. Ricker asked Mr. Swiernik if he has reviewed the Borough Engineer's comment letter and if the proposed conditions of approval are acceptable and Mr. Swiernik responded that the Rettew letter was reviewed and the conditions they proposed for approval of the waivers are acceptable. Mr. Hoy asked what the speed limit is on Ridge Road and

Mr. Swiernik responded 35 miles per hour. Mr. Hoy asked if the addition of the development would alter that speed limit and Mr. Swiernik responded that a traffic study would need to show that conditions have changed to the point that warrants would be met to make a speed limit change and he didn't believe that would be the case for this development. Mr. Ricker asked Mr. Powl if the Borough would be maintaining the roads and Mr. Powl responded that Borough Council made the decision to no longer provide winter maintenance to State owned roads except N. Grant Street, and he explained that it is his understanding that the roads for the new development will be constructed according to the Borough's standards for accepting the roads for public dedication, therefore, the Borough will be maintaining the roads in the development. Ms. Creter asked for confirmation that the new road into the development will be immediately adjacent to the property to the west and Mr. Swiernik explained that the new road must line up to existing N. Lincoln Street to meet PennDOT requirements, however, the road widths will not be the same since the new road will be 28-feet and existing N. Lincoln Street is 54-feet. Mr. Hoy asked if the new road will have a left turn lane for turning to the east onto Ridge Road and Mr. Swiernik explained that it will just be a two-lane road because traffic volumes would not support creation of a left turn lane. Mr. Swiernik explained some of the benefits of having a narrower roadway: 1) cheaper to maintain less asphalt in the future 2) less stormwater run-off, and 3) narrower streets act as a traffic calming measure by slowing traffic down. Mr. Ricker asked if sidewalks will be constructed throughout the development and all the way down to Ridge Road and Mr. Swiernik responded in the affirmative. Ms. Creter asked if all the dwelling units will have garages and Mr. Swiernik confirmed that each unit will have a two-car garage. She explained that her street is 29-feet wide and it is sometimes very tight getting in and out of the driveway and for two cars to pass without one stopping to let the other pass where there is no parked car on that side of the street. Mr. Swiernik explained that he believed two cars will be able to pass each other with adequate clearance between both vehicles and a parked car. Mr. Riahi explained that the trend in development is toward narrower streets to keep traffic slow, reduce stormwater run-off, and to provide more green space per each lot so that the residents are not looking at a sea of asphalt out of their front windows. Mr. Ricker asked if there were any other questions from the audience. Mr. McCloskey asked if the developer was seeking a narrower road surface so that they would have additional impervious surface area that could be put toward the size of the dwelling units in order to make more money. Mr. Riahi explained that his company makes money by creating quality of life that people want to live in, not by simply building bigger and bigger homes. Mr. Garber asked why the developer is not using N. Chestnut Street as the main entrance into the new development, and Mr. Riahi explained that the intersection is angled and presents worse sight distance and safety conditions than a new intersection across from N. Lincoln Street.

A **Motion** was made by Joe Templin, seconded by Eric Hoy, to make a recommendation to Borough Council to approve the waiver request for Section 318-26.J to allow for a minimum 28-foot street width, and Section 318-26.L.6 to allow for clear sight distance triangles to be configured based on the stopping sight distance required by PennDOT, conditioned upon: 1) a traffic & engineering study for parking restrictions being provided, and 2) the clear sight triangle area within the proposed right-of-way being reserved. **Motion carried** with Jessica Creter voting in opposition of the motion.

**Communications:** There were no communications.

**Other Business:** There was no other business.

**Adjournment:**

A **Motion** was made by Joe Templin, seconded by Jessica Creter, to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Roger E. Powl  
Borough Manager