

PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 31ST, 2009 7:00 PM

PRESENT:

RICK CUTIA, CHAIRMAN
KAREN STEPANOVICH, SECRETARY
ANITA SIMPSON
DAVID KAHLEY
JOHN MUNSCH
JEFF ANZOVINO
LARRY MORRIS
TIM MARUCA, VICE CHAIRMAN

ABSENT:

GEORGE SMITH

ALSO PRESENT: LOU DEROSE, SOLICITOR AND BARBARA J. CIAMPINI,
PLANNING DIRECTOR

- 1.) SITE PLAN-EXCELA HEALTH—PROPOSED PARKING LOT AT THE
INTESECTION OF WEST PITTSBURGH STREET AND SOUTH
WASHINGTON AVENUE
- 2.) SUBDIVISION-FOR WOJCIK PLAN, #1 SAYBROOK VILLAGE PLAN-
9 HOLYOKE AND 4 BRATTLEBORO DRIVE
- 3.) TRANSPORTATION REVITALIZATION INVESTMENT DISTRICT (TRID)

Rick Cutia: Our last meeting was March 30th, 2009 and Barb sent the minutes the
other day through e-mail. Does anybody have any corrections to those minutes? If
not can we have a motion to accept the minutes?

Anita Simpson: I make a motion to accept the minutes.

Karen Stepanovich: I second the motion.

All were in favor.

Rick Cutia: Does anybody have any questions regarding old business? We will move
onto the new business.

ITEM #1 Site Plan –Excelsa Health-Proposed parking lot for the intersection of West Pittsburgh St and South Washington St.

Dan Hoffman: Director of Facilities Planning and Development for Excelsa Health. I am here to present plans for parking for the emergency department. The current parking lot has the capacity of 25 spaces and we've had issues kind of with some growth over the last few years where we are outgrowing the parking capacity. We have plans to expand on the other side of South Washington Avenue, at the corner of Washington and West Pittsburgh St. Essentially we will double the capacity. We will lose some spaces in the existing lot to provide for a couple additional ambulance parking spaces and provide some additional handicapped spaces. We own three (3) properties a vacant house and two houses that will be emptied and vacated and demolished and clear the land for the parking development. I have with me Bryan Clement from HF Lenz that will present the technical aspects for the proposed plan.

Bryan Clement: I am with HF Lenz. We are the Engineers who have put this plan together. As Dan has mentioned, if you look at this plan, this is West Pittsburgh St. coming up and we have South Washington Ave. and the current hospital and the emergency room parking lot is right here in this vicinity. (he is pointing to the plan). What we are proposing to do, we have three properties that the hospital owns across this section here that currently have houses on them and they will be demolished to make room for a new parking lot. The parking lot itself will have 29 spaces. The parking lot will be gated on each end. What we tried to do is Williams Alley here which is in the process of being petitioned to the City of Greensburg to be vacated and that will be the access corridor for the parking lot. Stormwater will be controlled by a series of inlets located at the bottom of the parking lot with an oversized detention pipe, that will go into this little grass stripe here and then eventually discharge as it currently does onto Finrock Way alley down at the bottom. Are there any questions?

Barbara Ciampini: The only comment I have is I think it's commendable that we don't have an exit onto Pittsburgh Street.

Bryan Clement: Yes, one thing that we were concerned about is the safety and specifically the site distance because what this plan doesn't illustrate is this property right here (he is pointing to the plan) the house is fairly close as all the properties are so we want to maintain the existing site distance or make it worse by creating another entrance.

Rick Cutia: The more I see the plan, the entrance is from South Washington through a gated mechanism and the exit is to what is remaining of Williams Way? There are no left turns allowed on Finrock?

Bryan Clement: You will be allowed to make a right hand turn only onto Finfrock.

Rick Cutia: Is that a site plan issue or a City issue with that one way? I looked at that and there is no signage. It's only wide enough for one car.

Bryan Clement: We were going to restrict vehicles by signage with to turn right only since the hospital still owned the property they could at least sign it in that fashion, of course that is not stopping anyone from making a left hand turn but that was our plan to put a sign right down here for right hand turns only.

Rick Cutia: Right turn only or straight through to Williams Way down to Madison and no left. That will be signed as part of this plan?

Bryan Clement: That is correct.

Rick Cutia: I received a call today from a property owner who owns a garage in that alley and doesn't want people making a left turn because as I say it's only wide enough for one car.

Barbara Ciampini: I prefer to see us do it that way than to make the alley one way.

Rick Cutia: If you look on Shearer St there is no sign saying Finfrock is one way nor on Pittsburgh St. Would it be a City issue to install that?

Barbara Ciampini: I don't think we are asking it to be one way. If they sign in the parking facility itself then I think that will solve the problem. Pretty much every alley in the City is two ways. It's a matter of courtesy to pull over I guess. I don't see that as a big issue.

Rick Cutia: That is the other question; there should never be a left turn out of the parking lot.

Barbara Ciampini: Yes, that's what I am saying, they will sign it accordingly. There should be no problem.

Rick Cutia: Bryan you were talking about storm water management to particular inlets and infiltration trench?

Bryan Clement: Yes.

Rick Cutia: Did you receive the comments from Gibson Thomas?

Bryan Clement: Yes I have and really the second comment has more to do with our calculations so we will take care of the calculations the way Mr. Siler indicated. His first comment addresses the grading and the storm water runoff from Williams Ave

and also this parking lot here. What Mr. Siler's suggestion was that we grade this area here and capture some more of this run off in this area here, but in speaking with him probably what we would propose would actually be a better solution to catch more of the storm water, which is to install a trench drain in this vicinity right across from Williams Way. Not only do we pick up all of this run off from the parking lot but also from run off from Williams Way. That will be directed through a detention system. So not only will we capture post development run off from Williams but also current run off that currently goes down Williams Way to be directed into our storm water facility. In a sense we should currently elevate the water coming down this intersection.

Rick Cutia: The plan that is going to be acted on and if it's presented then to City Council for action will have that on it?

Bryan Clement: That is correct.

Barbara Ciampini: Whatever we do here tonight I would prefer that you make all those corrections on or before September 8th.

Bryan Clement: No problem.

David Kahley: I have a few questions about the plan. My question is the pedestrian and auto conflicts, particular the crosswalk, at least the way it is drawn. If you have people use those series of steps and crosswalks, when they get on the east side of the street what they are confronted with is sidewalk but no access in essence across the grass strip or if they choose to they will walk out into the ambulance. If they head south bound onto the sidewalk they will get down to where the hospital sign is and there really is no strong pedestrian corridor there to suggest where they should walk. Do you follow what I am saying?

Bryan Clement: You're just basically saying once they get on this side there is really no place for them to go?

David Kahley: Yes, basically they are saying where should I go? Most people will take the first line of resistance and they will walk across your shrubbery or into the ambulance area. I was just curious about that. The other thing is- and I know that. you've gone to the extent of designing it- and I am not suggesting any changes; but I didn't know if storm water would require that but with the vacation of Williams Way why did you choose to unload the lot into Finrock and not come back onto South Washington which has a light and you can kind of control traffic then. Where Williams Ave is you could in essence gather all that parking that you would lose on this side. I was curious as to your decision why you didn't have entrance and exit on South Washington?

Bryan Clement: Onto South Washington?

David Kahley: Yes.

Bryan Clement: Your question is why the entrance wasn't down here?

David Kahley: Yes. If you're going to vacate why not get that alley way and then you can save yourself basically some retaining walls and enter and exit the traffic basically together in an 90 degree angle which is usually safer. It's a traditional parking layout.

Bryan Clement: It's what our thought process was. This parking lot is designed to be for the Emergency Room Department so what we are thinking is when someone needs emergency care they get dropped off here at the emergency room and they will proceed this way out and they can simply cross the street and go into the parking lot here. The other possibility that we looked at is having this a two way here.

Barbara Ciampini: I think that is what Dave is talking about. That back exit out onto Finrock you can make it come both ways from Washington?

David Kahley: You've avoid the conflict on Finrock and the truth is anybody turning off West Pittsburgh St. because of that building on the corner they really can't see oncoming traffic. So you would avoid that, the other thing is that people especially, transients that aren't used to a parking lot. You're entering them one way and now you're taking them out into an area that they do not know. They are Greensburg visitors and now your forcing them out into another way that they are not used to. Especially in a crisis situation coming into an emergency room. If you bring them in the same way you take them out, they tend to be less disoriented. Again you spent a lot of money and time, it just seems to be loading and unloading in the same entrance.

Bryan Clement: From a technical standpoint I can add this, because we did take a look at making this an entrance actually two way entrance and exit, to do that we would have had to expand this from roughly about 15 feet to about 26 feet to accomplish that. This is a ten scale plan that pretty much doubles this area. So with the throughway for the traffic pattern coming in here we would probably lose some parking here and I guess if we would have shifted this, the hillside is pretty steep and that is why we have those steps. When we worked the plans out this is the plan that actually maximized the parking spaces. I have to be honest, when I first looked at this that was my first comment also but you have to look at the plan and all the grading and things like that. It turned out that this is the plan that actually optimized the parking.

David Kahley: If you wanted to keep the existing curb cut at Williams I can see that I didn't know if you matched it across the other 60 degree angle going in. You matched it a crossed that you lose spaces like 28 and 29 you pick them up near 11 and

12 and then you can put some between 1 and 24. Again you did the design and this is just a thought.

Bryan Clement: That is our thought process.

David Kahley: I still think you can have a conflict when you cross. I think you need to do something to suggest where people should cross.

Dan Hoffman: There is an existing sidewalk but it's not on the drawing and we can put railing there to help.

David Kahley: I see a sidewalk right there, how do they get from there to over to here?

Bryan Clement: There are two slanted lines on the plan that is sidewalk, it's just not labeled.

David Kahley: Is that an ambulance parking area?

Bryan Clement: Yes.

Karen Stepanovich: Well, basically it goes into an open parking lot where your ambulances pull in. I think that is the thing, how people are supposed to go past your ambulances and get into the emergency room in a safe manner, especially at nights? I think you should shuttle people to a traffic light where they are supposed to cross a street.

Dan Hoffman: A sidewalk with a railing.

Karen Stepanovich: That is fine about the sidewalk but then you are walking through your ambulance entrance. Don't you foresee a problem with that? That is where your pedestrians are going to be walking where the ambulances come in at? It's not on the plan. It's your existing parking lot. Right now you're shuffling all these people right across into that ambulance parking area.

Barbara Ciampini: The ambulance entrance is further to the south of where that crosswalk is.

Karen Stepanovich: Yes, but then where do they go when they get there? They get into the ambulance parking lot area.

Barbara Ciampini: Yes. Maybe you can eliminate that through the parking lot area.

Dan Hoffman: Just by putting a crosswalk through the parking lot?

Barbara Ciampini: Exactly.

Bryan Clement: What Dan brought up, I think we can easily put a sidewalk here and just have them empty out to the striping that is already there. But your concern is from here over to the building?

Barbara Ciampini: Yes.

Karen Stepanovich: That is kind of no man's land right there. It's just an open parking lot and quite frankly it's not very well lit back there. If you didn't know where you are going I think it would be difficult to make your way there late at night around there.

David Kahley: For instance you can use that handicapped zone that is striped. When you put a pad across the grass and walk into that handicapped zone when they get there where do they cross? You're basically forcing them out into the parking lot because on the other side is a concrete curb but it shows you having landscaping throughout that section. You're pushing people into the parking lot. The question is do you want to find a way to separate the pedestrian movement from the traffic? People would be walking through the lot with ambulances coming in and out. It's kind of a wild mess there. The other pedestrian problem that there is a lot of flow, say you park in spaces 25 through 29, the only way you're going to be able to do that, you don't have crossing there. Those people are going to have to walk over to the steps or duck underneath your electric bar.

Bryan Clement: Chances are they are going to go the pathway resistance which is this way. (he is pointing to the plan)

David Kahley: People are going to do what they want anyway.

Barbara Ciampini: That is a valid point to delineate where you are sending them through. You can find the right way to do it. I agree with Dave, I think we need to take a closer look at this.

David Kahley: It looks like you have a Penn Dot turn around block which would be at the west or is it the north edge of the lot? Is that what it is? Right there at the top.

Bryan Clement: That serves two purposes; one for people to back out and it gives the maintenance people to be able to push snow as well.

Karen Stepanovich: Okay, your landscape plan, you're not planting any Red Oaks?

Bryan Clement: At one point we were and now we are not planting any Red Oaks.

Karen Stepanovich: And you're not putting any ornamental grass?

Bryan Clement: Actually we are. Since we updated the plans since we submitted it. What we are going to do is put some of the ornamental grass right near the intersection. (he is pointing to the plan)

Karen Stepanovich: Are you still going to plant burning bushes?

Bryan Clement: Yes that is correct. I think it shows up on your plan as plantings along down here. (he is pointing to the plan)

Karen Stepanovich: Probably in the near future they are going to be labeled as an invasive species and they really shouldn't be intergraded into the land. I know the parks have been asked not to plant them anymore. Personally I would like to see you put more color in because you are in our Gateway to Greensburg and I would like to see you put more perennials and day lilies and color. The hospital really doesn't do a very good job with landscaping and showing off. I don't think they do a very good job with any of your landscaping. I think you can do better. Don't get me started about your air conditioning too! I think you can do better with the selections of your perennials. I'd like to see you get rid of the burning bushes, I'd like to see more grasses and day lilies, some other kind of perennials in there that give you some color all summer instead of the green shrubs. I would like to see that updated. You are in the Gateway. The plum trees are fine I like the periwinkle, the burning bush I think if we can avoid using it, it would be better. Other than that, I don't have a problem with it. I do think you are going to have problems with pedestrians coming across there into that parking lot.

Bryan Clement: We will upgrade the plan to show a sidewalk coming across here and the whole way over to the hospital.

Rick Cutia: Are there any other comments or questions from the members of the Planning Commission?

Barbara Ciampini: If we are going to make a recommendation in any way shape or form again, City Council meets on the 8th of September and if you can get me plans before that. Of course that would include any comments that Gibson Thomas has made. We don't have comments yet from the Conservation District, I don't know if you've touched base with them for not

Bryan Clement: No I have not. That was submitted about a week and a half ago.

Barbara Ciampini: Then if you can follow up with that, any comments or reviews. I've already petitioned to abandon Williams Way to Mayor and Council and that will be on the agenda for September 14th for introduction. And then depending on what the Planning Commission does.

Dan Hoffman: We will make those changes to the landscaping as well. We do appreciate those comments.

Barbara Ciampini: Also the signage in their parking facility in regards to the no left onto Finrock. I don't think we want to make Finrock one way. I prefer to keep it two ways. If they limit the users of their parking lot from making the left and make them make the right I think we will be okay. Or straight. We will see how it works. If it doesn't work we can always look at it again.

Lou DeRose: Are you suggesting that should be part of the motion.

Barbara Ciampini: Yes make that part of the motion. Most of the City's alleys are two ways; it's just a matter of courtesy. If there is a problem we can look at it at a future date. I just don't think 25 cars coming and going from there, unless they all go at the same time and that would never happen.

David Kahley: It will be gated in both directions?

Dan Hoffman: Correct.

David Kahley: So if someone comes in to use it, the space, if it's gated how are they going to get in?

Bryan Clement: It will be free entrance in and to get out you either swipe a card or are given a token.

David Kahley: Okay. So that is keeping unauthorized use out?

Bryan Clement: Yes.

Rick Cutia: Can we have a motion to either recommend approval or recommend non approval of this site plan? With the motion you must include revisions according to *Gibson Thomas* and any future comments from the *Westmoreland Conservation District*, the parking lot signage, the landscaping issues and the pedestrian delineate.

Lou DeRose: There are really three (3) changes and one subject to approval.

Karen Stepanovich: I make a motion to recommend to City Council approval of this site plan contingent upon the changes of *Gibson Thomas*, and comments from *Westmoreland Conservation District*, and that it has to have the signage about the left turn and the updated landscaping and the pedestrian delineate.

John Munsch: I second the motion.

All were in favor.

Item #2 Subdivision for Wojcik Plan, #1 in the Saybrook Village Plan, 9 Holyoke and 4 Brattleboro Drive.

Gary Baird: I am with Lennon, Smith and Souleret Engineering. What this subdivision tends to is just a simple side lot addition. The property is located at the corner of Brattleboro and Holyoke Drive. Basically this is a transaction from mother and son. The mother lives on the corner lot and the son lives on the lot behind her. The son would like to purchase a piece of ground on the corner from the mother and attach it to his property. There are no new buildable lots, no sewage taps, nothing of that nature.

Barbara Ciampini: I see no problems with the request.

Rick Cutia: There's no question about separate utilities.

Barbara Ciampini: They don't plan on building on it.

Rick Cutia: Any questions by any members of the Planning Commission? If not can I have a motion to accept or non accept the subdivision.

Karen Stepanovich: I make a motion to recommend to City Council approval of the subdivision as presented.

Jeff Anzovino: I second the motion.

All were in favor.

Item #3 Transportation Revitalization Investment District (TRID)

Barbara Ciampini: I have one last thing to present and that is in regards to the *TRID* study. Larry was on the *TRID Steering Committee* and we thought it would only be 6 months and it's more like 2 years putting forth the effort to study only to end up in the economic climate that we are in. To put together a *TRID* district you have to ask for the three taxing bodies to forgo taxes in a specific area. No one wants to talk about taxes right now and since we did spend a considerable amount of time on it and in our partnership the *Westmoreland County Transit Authority* that Larry also heads we felt that this *TRID* Study it's a very worthwhile study. I would request that at this point that the Planning Commission recommend that we amend the Multi Municipal Plan from 2005 to include the *TRID* study. If we do get to a point that we want to do something, for example a hotel comes to fruition downtown hopefully we can start the *TRID* District at that time with those new taxes and then grab it and use the study for that purpose. But for now I would like it to be amended to include the *TRID*.

Larry Morris: I make a motion to amend the *Multi Municipal Plan* to include the *TRID* study.

Rick Cutia: Can I have a second to that motion?

Karen Stepanovich: I second the motion.

All were in favor.

Larry Morris: I make a motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM

