

**MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
ON-LINE ZOOM MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021**

PRESENT:

Tom Piacentino
Rich Nuttall
Barry Harrison
Keith Auerswald
Joseph Antonelli
Kevin Strouse
Patrick Ennis, Zoning Officer
Jim Esposito, Township Solicitor – Curtin & Heefner
Isaac Kessler, Township Engineer – Remington & Vernick, RVE
Phil Wursta, Township Traffic Engineer – Traffic Planning & Design, TPD

ABSENT

Holly Cunningham

1. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ROLL CALL

- a. Mr. Piacentino called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Mr. Antonelli took roll call with six members present. Misters Ennis, Esposito, Wursta and Kessler were also present.

2. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

- a. Mr. Strouse made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2021 meeting. Mr. Auerswald seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

3. PUBLIC SESSION

- a. **Discussion of Application for Preliminary and Final Land Development for Chick-Fil-A, Langhorne Square, 1501 E. Lincoln Highway, Langhorne, PA 19047, TMP 22-047-011-002, C Commercial Zoning, S/LD 20-70**

Mr. Tyler Prime, the applicant's attorney, introduced the project and the team members. He explained this project would be for a 5200 SF Chick-Fil-A restaurant at 1501 East Lincoln Highway and a 1.88 AC lot would be subdivided out of the existing parcel. The project was before the Zoning Hearing Board in June 2020 and received the necessary variances.

Mr. John Martinez, the Development Manager for Chick-Fil-A explained how this is a prototype store as opposed to the Oxford Valley store which was a converted Crispy Cream Donut store. The store will have a state-of-the-art kitchen, dual drive thru lines which could hold 30+ cars without affecting parking stalls. The hours of operation will be 6:30am – 10:00pm. Dave Heffernan who is the operator of the Oxford Valley store is the potential operator for this proposed store. The building will have a higher parapet to screen mechanical equipment due to how the road is higher than this site. There is no proposed play area due to COVID restrictions. The store will have advanced mobile technology.

Justin Thornton, the applicants engineer, presented a site rendering showing the two drive thru lanes and canopy . He explained there is no loading zone proposed, all deliveries will occur during the night when they are closed. A produce box truck could be the only exception during the day. This truck will be able to park in a standard stall. Site drainage will be improved and the design is in conformance with Middletown's ordinance. Improvements include rate reduction and water quality enhancements. A merge land was designed as recommended by TPD at the egress of the drive thru. Improvements have been made to the directional signage as recommended by TPD. The building will have an all brick façade.

Mr. Piacentino questioned if the new development would tie-in to the underground drainage system in the shopping center. Mr. Thornton explained that the drainage will tie-in to the system and meet the quantity reductions and quality standards which are required.

Mr. Strouse asked about the increased impervious % of the subdivide lots was permitted. Mr. Kessler stated there was an overall decrease in the impervious area. The variance was mandated by subdividing the lots which created two lots which were over the allowable 60% impervious. The drainage has been designed to be an overall improvement to this area of the shopping center.

Mr. Nuttall questioned the day and date of the traffic study and when the counts were done. Ms. Sandy Koza, the applicant's traffic engineer, explained that two methods were used for traffic counts. The first was counts conducted in Sept. 2020 using the three standard peak times. The second method was using street light data which utilized cell phone signals. This used the pre-COVID counts from 2019.

Ms. Koza went on to present the information from her Traffic Impact Study. The trip generation was taken from 3 local Chick-Fil-A sites. The results were a lunchtime peak of 201 trips, an evening 4pm-6pm peak of 120 trips and a lunch 11am-1pm 168 trip peak. This is the new traffic expected to and from the site at the specified times.

Mr. Piacentino questioned if the applicant would place a new traffic light by Dunkin Donuts. Mr. Wursta stated that a contribution of \$100K would be requested along with the Traffic Impact Fee.

Mr. Strouse asked what will happen after the 30-day period of having a traffic director. Ms. Koza stated that the traffic will then be responsibility of the store manager. Mr. Martinez stated that there will be training of employees for traffic management. There will be a meeting planned after 30 days to analyze how the traffic plan can be improved. Mr. Wursta agreed that this meeting is a good idea.

Mr. Strouse asked if the E Lincoln Highway is left turn out not a right turn only. Could a signal help this situation? Mr. Wursta stated that people are inclined to use lights for turns, he will review this application with PennDOT. This exit could be right turn only.

Mr. Wursta went on to state that a deceleration lane is a safety requirement for right turns in by the Starbucks drive entrance.

Mr. Nuttall suggested the traffic study should focus on Highland Park as well as the shopping center. He also asked if Amazon vans were included in counts. Ms. Koza stated that the vans were included. Mr. Piacentino also noted that Amazon vans are directed to Lincoln Highway.

Mr. Wursta stated the Middletown Police are doing a speed study in the Highland Park neighborhood. Mr. Nuttall stated that improvements are needed now.

Mr. Kessler noted that a loading area was not on the plans. Mr. Thornton stated that all loading will be done at night during hours when the store is closed. Mr. Esposito requested a note be placed on the plans stating the method of deliveries.

Mr. Wursta also stated that walkability and bike routes to Chick-Fil-A are needed to guide the neighborhood to the store. A traffic improvement plan on township roads could be required as part of the traffic study. Deceleration lanes at the entrance of Lincoln Highway are a safety issue.

Public Comment:

Mr. Sam Hellings, 11 Hybrid Road, has issues with the south driveway near Heartwood Road and how it is a cut through of all Levittown. The alignment of the road with the driveway at Bob's and Goodyear is not straight. He also stated that the landscaping in the shopping center needs to be maintained better, specifically by Wendy's.

Kim Young, 76 Handy Road, has concerns about trucks at Restaurant Depot and Highland Park Way. With additional traffic the semi-trucks could block the road. Ms. Koza responded that trucks are not specifically in movement counts. A 4-way stop could help improve this intersection.

Shane Young, 76 Handy Road, concerned about traffic getting worse by development.

Michael Gay, 51 Hemlock Road, concerned about traffic back-up at Bob's & Goodyear from the people cutting through from Trenton Road. There are problems now with Floor & Décor Trucks. Trash from stores blows into the neighborhood. Concerned about what will happen at Chick-Fil-a after the 30-day period of traffic control.

Bob Feathers, 96 Highland Park Way, concerned about the changes that have taken place with the shopping center since 1989 and since Redner's moved in. There is no Landscaped buffer from the shopping center. Trucks at Redner's are noisy in the evening and night hours. Asked about Chick-Fil-A sales projections. Also asked if no Trucks signs can be placed down Highland Park Way. The water pressure in the Highland Park section has been reduced and getting worse.

Mr. Kessler responded that a noise study was conducted at Redner's at several different times with a noise meter and it was documented that the noise did not exceed the ordinance limits.

Mark Moore, 6 Hemlock Road, requested the traffic studies be finished and come up with a solution to the problems out there before more traffic is added. He also asked if the Ruby Tuesday site could be a possible alternative to this site.

End of Public Comment:

Mr. Nuttall stated that with the cut through at Heartwood Road not in the Traffic Study it would be best to continue this hearing until the Study can be updated.

Mr. Strouse agreed that the traffic study needs more focus and should incorporate the concerns of the Township Traffic Engineer. They should also explore ways to discourage the cut through from Heartwood Road.

Mr. Martinez commented that Chick-Fil-A will do what they can and contribute their fair share to the improvements. The residents have brought up good points and they will revise the traffic study to address the concerns.

Mr. Piacentino asked if they would look at the Ruby Tuesday site across Lincoln Highway. Mr. Martinez stated they will investigate this site.

Mr. Nuttall made a motion to continue preliminary and final approval of the land development until further traffic studies were provided. Mr. Auerswald seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

4. ZONING ISSUES

Mr. Ennis two upcoming zoning appeals for Wawa on E Lincoln Highway and a storage facility with a quick service restaurant drive thru at the location of the closed Aldi store.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion of an upcoming hearings for Pennswood Village and a Subdivision on Durham Road.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Strouse made a motion for adjournment. Mr. Nuttall seconded. The motion passed 6-0. The time of the adjournment was 9:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Patrick J. Ennis, PE
Director of Building & Zoning

cc: Planning Commission
Township Manager