

SCHUYLKILL TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: APRIL 19, 2023

Curt English called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Members in attendance were: Peter Bigelow, Barbara Cohen, David Demey, Andrew Jacob, and Michael Pellegrino and Tom Gresko. Michael Bauer and alternate Michael Walker was absent. Township Engineer Paul Boettinger, and Township Solicitor Bill Brennan were also present. Curt English announced the meeting would have a hard stop if needed and all public comment is limited to one 3 minute period per person. B. Cohen made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 15, 2023 meeting. M. Pellegrino seconded, all approved.

Todd Pohlig was in front of the Commission to discuss the proposed Reeves Tract/Sedgley Farm development. Revised plans were submitted to the Township on April 18, 2023. Without having time to review, they will mainly be focusing on traffic reports tonight. Greg Richardson, of Traffic Planning & Design was present on behalf of T. Pohlig/Reeves and Joe Fiocca of SAFE Highway was present on behalf of the Township to discuss traffic concerns. G. Richardson advised that they will need to comply with all PennDot requirements, turn lanes, deceleration lanes, limited left turns, etc. The original PennDot H.O.P. expired, they will be renewing it. P. Bigelow asked if the traffic from this development was presumed to exit at the two exit points, East Philip and Route 23. G. Richardson stated yes, they have planned for two exit points. M. Pellegrino asked is the E. Philip Drive connection required by ordinance or is just preference. G. Richardson said it's good planning to have the connection. B. Cohen stated that it is important to have that second access. Joe Fiocca, SAFE Highway, reviewed traffic plans on behalf of the Township. His report states that it is good planning to have connections between developments, however they do not recommend the proposed connection to East Philip Drive. Their letter stated that Township ordinance says that existing single access streets can not be extended. Pellegrino said that Pohlig would need a variance to extend East Philip. Pohlig stated that this ordinance they refer to does not apply to this plan, as the ordinance was enacted after the plan was submitted. M. Pellegrino asked G. Richardson if they are planning to limit left turns out of the development onto Route 23, as SAFE Highway recommends. G. Richardson said that there is nothing now saying they have to do that, he feels PennDot will limit the left turns during peak hours. J. Fiocca stated that if left turns are prohibited, the cars will turn right on to Route 23, then left into the Moorehall development and loop back around to Whitehorse road to get to the light. Discussion ensued about turn lanes, decel lanes, etc. G. Richardson said they can only widen roadways that are on their property. They can't widen roadways that aren't theirs to widen. PennDot requires 125' for a left turn lane, they only have 55', PennDot approved previously with the 55' they have. G. Richardson responded to the concerns about sight distance exiting East Philip Drive onto Whitehorse Road. There is a utility pole there, but doesn't feel that is an obstruction. If sight distance is a concern, the property owner on the corner will need to remove any bushes or trees in the line of sight. In 11 years, there has only been one reportable crash in that area. D. Demey asked if a traffic signal could be installed at the entrance on Route 23. J. Fiocca replied that installing a 4 way stop or a traffic signal would ultimately make traffic worse on Route 23. P. Boettinger asked about the relocation of an existing driveway exiting on to Route 23, to have it now exit onto the new entrance. It is shown crossing over land that is not owned by the existing homeowner or by Pohlig/Reeves property. It is a paper street "Belmont Terrace" that is not owned by the Township, and is in ownership limbo. They can not cross property that they don't own. M. Pellegrino spoke about

limiting traffic through the development. Using E. Philip makes sense, but it's disrupting the neighborhood and he emphasizes with those residents. He suggested Pohlig update the road (E. Philip) with sidewalks, providing access to the development and use of clubhouse, if there will be one, to the residents of E. Philip Drive. Pohlig said the connection could be private access if cut thru traffic was the main concern.

Public Comment

F. Mercurio Spruce Grove Lane – Disagreed with the traffic study that TPD said 4 or 5 cars per hour during peak hour onto E. Philip Drive.

E. Jantzen Galway Lane – Concerned about the environmental impact of development, the water levels, chemicals from the yards going into the reservoir, increased traffic, more accidents, more incidents, the amount of impervious coverage. P. Bigelow advised the EAC review letter is available for her to review at the Township building.

J. Rosenfeld E Philip Drive – Opposed to opening the cul-de-sac, feels it would set a terrible precedent. Gated access would be a good idea, but it's not permanent. Asked why Township can't write a new ordinance to say that anything prior to this has to comply.

J. Kiernan Wesley Lane – Concerned with the many flaws in the plan. Opposed to opening the cul-de-sac for access. Said it's not just a sight distance at E. Philip & Whitehorse from shrubs, there's a crown in Whitehorse that hinders view of oncoming cars.

M. Welding Whitehorse Road – Opposed to opening the cul-de-sac. People are going to buy the homes no matter if it has one or two access points. They will be beautiful homes on beautiful lots in an area close to everything. The crown in Whitehorse Road hinders the view of oncoming cars. Invited the Commission members to come down E Philip Drive and then try to turn out of Whitehorse to see for themselves. Asked them to consider the neighborhood that already exists.

McKnight Banty Lane – Concerned with the increased traffic of this development and the proposed Wawa on 23 & Whitehorse, has that been thought of in these studies. The school district won't stop buses at E Philip and Whitehorse because they deem it dangerous.

J. Mraz Meadowbrook Lane – If there are no left turns out of the development, how are the kids going to be bussed. They will be on busses longer.

M. Busia E Philip Drive – Opposed to opening the cul-de-sac. Wants Township to follow ordinances and not allow a property to get waivers to allow an access road through it. Feels like we are defaulting to PennDot and catering to the developer instead of having the developer go to PennDot first.

Mary Ellen Stratta(?) – Concerned with the entrance on Route 23 and how close it is to the entrance to Dorchester, it's not safe. J. Fiocca said there is a minimum distance required. G. Richardson said they're approximately 240 feet away from each other. Has concerns with school capacity, safety issues, and wants the Commission to do what is right for the current residents.

J. Stamatakos E Philip Drive – He's a new resident to the street, wouldn't want sidewalks installed. He moved there for how it is now. Concerned about opening cul-de-sac.

S. Arensfield Valley Park Road – Concerned about the sight distance and crown in roadway at Whitehorse and E Philip Drive and the increased number of cars this development would bring. Questioned whether less homes could be considered.

At 9:10pm with no further public comments, C. English said that due to revised plans being submitted yesterday by Pohlig builders, they will reconvene and discuss the revised plans at the next scheduled Planning Commission, which is May 17, 2023 at 7:30pm. B. Cohen made the motion to adjourn the meeting. M. Pellegrino seconded. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Kimberly Yocom Valyo in black ink.

Kimberly Yocom Valyo

Zoning Officer

Next Meeting Date: May 17, 2023