PLANNING COMMISSION – MEETING MINUTES
MAY 6, 2024 – 3:30 P.M.

The Borough of Wyomissing Planning Commission held their regular meeting in the Borough of Wyomissing Council Chambers on the above date and time. Commission Chair Ronald Stanko called the meeting to order with the following persons present: Commission members Scott Miller, Michael Herr, John Woodward, and Jana R. Barnett; Borough Solicitor Christopher Hartman, Borough Engineer Jim McCarthy, Borough Manager & Economic Development Coordinator Michele Bare, and Borough Secretary Melissa Miller. The following persons were absent: Committee members Thomas McKeon and Eric Ostimchuk.

Councilmember visitors:
William Jenckes
Jennifer Reimer
Richard Weinhoffer

Visitors:
Patricia M. Way – 115 Valley Green Circle
Lorena Lazarchick – Highlands at Wyomissing
Kristen Santangelo – Highlands at Wyomissing
Carroll "Chip" Fossett – Valley Green
Becky Malsnee Fossett – Valley Green
Joyce Kershner – Valley Green
Donna McDermott – Valley Green
SueAnn Mertz – Valley Green
Aurora Cardi – 1910 Squire Court
Betty Pennypacker – 102 Valley Green
Barbara Cufurello – 48 Woodland Road
Jill Hall – 158 Valley Green
Terrence Henne – 18 Woodland Road
Shelly Michrina – 172 Valley Green
Morgan Jimenez – 16 Woodland Road
U. Farrell– 119 Valley Green
Jim and Anne Martin – 107 Valley Green
Ed Caminos – 176 Valley Green
Jan Varzally – 130 Valley Green
Melissa Walls – 1504 Meadowlark/130 Valley Green
Chuck Frantz – C2C Design/1 Wellington Boulevard
Lisa Coyne, Esq – C2C Design/1 Wellington Boulevard
Heath Mochaven – HNT, LLC./ 1040 North Park Road
Mike Chervanic – 1040 North Park Road
Robert Hain – Berks Surveying and Engineering
Ryan Jennings – Unruh, Turner, Burkes, Freese/ 2205 Ridgewood Road
Adrian Jadic – 48 Cardinal Road

Public Comment:
Borough Solicitor Christopher Hartman addressed the public, reminding those in attendance that proposing to adopt Redevelopment Area Mixed Use Incentive Overlay (RAMUI) Ordinance

1440-2024, is not taking action to approve any one specific project. This creates new regulations to encourage redevelopment as noted in the Ordinance, under a specific set of parameters. Developers considering any type of project would be required to partake in a conditional use hearing in front of Council. Similar to the administrative preparation as a Zoning Hearing Board hearing, the hearing would be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation, the property posted, and mailers sent to adjoining property owners in proximity of the applicant requesting a hearing. The conditional use hearing permits public comment as well as adjoining property owners to enter in party status to provide testimony and cross examine witnesses. Any proposed projects would need to work through the land development process of which the public would have the opportunity to provide comments at the Planning Commission meeting, as well as Council for any motions that Planning Commission recommends to Council. While a project was presented as a conceptual idea, no official application has been received by the Borough for redevelopment within this proposed RAMUI.

Aurora Cardi, 1910 Squire Court provided public comment that a large 6-story apartment complex would bring more vehicular and pedestrian traffic to the area, and cutting through Valley Green Circle.

Jill Hall, 158 Valley Green Circle questioned how residents are contacted for the conditional use hearing process. Borough Manager & Economic Development Coordinator Michele Bare reiterated the public notice requirements for the hearing process.

Pat Way, Valley Green Circle HOA President provided comments based on sinkholes in the HOA's retention pond and the notice of violation received. It was noted this was not the most appropriate committee to address this matter with.

Melissa Walls, 1504 Meadowlark and 130 Valley Green questioned if building could occur without further hearings, and Solicitor Hartman reiterated the hearing and land development process.

Carroll "Chip" Fosset, 127 Valley Green provided public comment to reiterate that Kings Way is a private road leading to Valley Green HOA.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment:

Solicitor Hartman updated the Commission on the proposed RAMUI Zoning Ordinance amendment, sharing that the Berks County Planning Commission (BCPC) has reviewed and provided technical comments that did not alter the goals within the Ordinance. Overall, they indicated the amendment aligns with their 2030 BCPC Comprehensive Plan. There was a formatting revision to use provisions in various subsections.

Based on discussion at the March 2024 Economic Development committee meeting, State Hill Craft Cocktails & Kitchen, 1 Wellington Boulevard, provided a plan to add parking to their newly acquired property at 5 Wellington Boulevard, by razing the current residence. As this project will be addressed further in this meeting, the current concern is that the residence is not zoned C-1 like the current zoning for the business. The zoning map that was provided with the proposed RAMUI Ordinance, has been revised to include 5 Wellington Boulevard in the C-1 zoning district. The Commission was lastly reminded that the Ordinance provides for mixed use

along State Hill Road in the C-1 zoning district, using the conditional use approval and complying with the regulations set forth including parking, setbacks, and height requirements.

The Commission discussed the comments from the BCPC review letter which addressed breaking the Ordinance up into smaller pieces, and providing a chart to determine what zoning district a property falls into. There was a question as to why a property has to have a mixed use component, and it was clarified that a property can be strictly residential, however the goal of the RAMUI is to provide a live, work, play setting. There was concern that screening and parking requirements are not mentioned in each RAMUI location, as well as the requirement to submit renderings. The requirement of screening and parking was added to the State Hill Road overlay regulations due to residential properties boarding potential redevelopment areas, whereas other locations do not have bordering residential.

Discussion continued with concerns that 5 Wellington Boulevard should not be included in the overlay due to potential disruptions to 9 Wellington Boulevard with vehicle lights and general noise. A question arose as to any discussions that have taken place with the property owners of 9 Wellington Boulevard and the owner of State Hill Road Craft Cocktail & Kitchen, and it was noted that discussions have occurred. Another question arose as to creating inconsistencies to not include two properties along Vista Road. It was noted that the two residential properties along Vista Road do not have commercial properties in front of them along State Hill Road, whereas 5 Wellington Boulevard is flanked by commercial properties on State Hill Road.

> ***Scott Miller made a motion, seconded by Michael Herr to recommend Council authorize advertisement and adoption of Ordinance No. 1440-2024 and the updated zoning map, motion carries 4-1, Jana Barnett opposed.***

1 Wellington Boulevard – State Hill Craft Cocktails and Kitchen – Preliminary Plan Land Development Submission:

Chuck Frantz of C2C Design Group representing 1 Wellington Boulevard, noted the commercial property is currently in the C-1 zoning district, and the recently purchased 5 Wellington Boulevard is in the R-1A zoning district. The business owner would like to be able to consolidate both properties into C-1 zoning which would allow the additional proposed parking to be permitted by right. He briefly reviewed that the proposed parking would encompass 33 additional spaces and relocates the parking lot entrance to align with Abington Drive to improve the flow of traffic entering and exiting the business. He further discussed with the committee the proposed idea for double vegetation buffer between the proposed parking and 9 Wellington Boulevard, and noted ongoing discussions with the business owner and adjoining residential property owner regarding fence improvements. The Commission recommended moving the fence from 9 Wellington Boulevard to 5 Wellington Boulevard. The plan has been submitted to the BCPC and received standard comments in response, and the plan was sent to the Berks County Conservation District with technical comments being received in response. There were also a few review comments as noted on the May 2, 2024 McCarthy Engineering review letter.

There was continued concern of disruption to the neighbors if the parking is expanded, noting that the vegetation buffer will serve as a visual buffer but not a noise buffer. Furthermore, a four-seasons room was proposed of which could bring the restaurant noise closer to the residence. A question arose as to the residents on the corner of Abington being made aware of the project, and it was mentioned that at this time no contact was made with them. There was also brief

discussion about the parking lot lights, of which a lighting plan has not been submitted yet, but was part of the McCarthy Engineering review letter. The Commission was reminded that the Borough Ordinance indicates lighting may not cast out onto the street or onto adjacent properties.

> ***Michael Herr made a motion, seconded by John Woodward to recommend Council grant conditional preliminary land development plan approval for 1 Wellington Boulevard, subject to all items in McCarthy Engineering's review letter, as well as the plan scale waiver request and the Redevelopment Mixed Use Incentive overly map for State Hill Road being approved by Council, motion carries 4-1, Jana Barnett opposed.***

2205 Ridgewood Road – Request from Waiver of Formal Land Development Submission Requirements:

Ryan Jennings, legal counsel representing 2205 Ridgewood Road, shared with the Commission that he submitted a land development waiver request for a portion of the Berks Technical Institute. Occupancy needs have diminished for this facility, prompting the opportunity to utilize the additional space for a healthcare facility for children with daily needs, and a daycare facility, Light Bridge Academy. The land development waiver request is for two minor modifications in the vestibule to improve safety, and curb and ramp improvements. There is also a modification to add an outdoor play area.

Overall, the McCarthy Engineering review was supportive of the project with no objections, and noting that zoning and building permitting would be required rather than the land development process as long as an ESPC Plan be approved by the Berks County Conservation District if the Limits of Disturbance is greater than 5,000 square feet, that ADA compliant ramps be installed along the property frontage, that a queue/stacking analysis be submitted, and that all zoning requirements be met. Ryan did not feel that a stacking analysis was necessary, as the facility will not have a "loading and unloading" zone for students. Parents will park and walk their children into the facility. There is plenty of parking for both intended uses, there is adequate sewer capacity, and it was noted that impervious coverage will be reduce.

Solicitor Hartman questioned if the recent Zoning Hearing for 2205 Ridgewood Road included testimony regarding student pick up and drop off areas, and it was noted that the Zoning Hearing Board questioned the same item, and were not opposed to the use as long as parking was being utilized with no drop off area. There were no busses intended to utilize the parking lot, however the Commission questioned if the Berks County Intermediate Unit would be providing any transportation services for their HeadStart program. This was unknown at the time.

> ***Jana Barnett made a motion, seconded by Scott Miller to recommend Council grant a waiver from the formal land development submission requirements for the interior and exterior modifications to 2205 Ridgewood Road, subject to the McCarthy Engineer review letter dated May 2, 2024, and legal counsel representing 2205 Ridgewood Road submitting a letter indicating that queuing/stacking are not concerns for the project, thus the request omit a queuing/stacking analysis, all in favor.***

1040 North Park Road – Sketch Subdivision Plan and Conditional Use Application:

Lisa Marie Coyne, legal counsel representing 1040 North Park Road requested the Commission focus only on items D and E on the agenda. A sketch plan was provided to show the current and

proposed structures, noting that the D and E wings of the building will eventually be subdivided to their own lot in the future. Furthermore, a multi-story mixed use tower is being proposed to accommodate approximately 260 apartments, as well as a second building featuring mixed use including 300 apartments. One concern that arose was that geotechnical tests have shown that stormwater is going to be a concern with zero infiltration at the site of the proposed towers.

It was shared that the E wing currently has an occupancy permit, and the D wing was thought to have a past occupancy permit, however was determined the prior owner did not seek the necessary permits to operate the wing as apartments. The goal is to renovate the D and E wings to be used as apartments and not mixed use, noting that capacity for water usage will be equivalent and connect into the main at Spring Street. Based on McCarthy Engineering's review letter dated May 2, 2024, the developer for 1040 North Park Road would be required to partake in a conditional use hearing to seek relief from the mixed use portion of the overlay regulations. This hearing has been scheduled for June 6, 2024 at 9:30 am. The developer would also be required to retain the occupancy permits for preexisting use as apartments. The Commission was not opposed to Council granting relief from the mixed use component of the overlay regulations as current topography would make it challenging to do first floor mixed use. The Commission also pointed out that the proposed mixed use in the subsequent phased redevelopment would meet the requirements for mixed use on the premise.

> ***Jana Barnett made a motion, seconded by John Woodward to recommend Council grant conditional use approval to allow the existing D and E buildings to operate as apartments buildings without providing a ground floor retail or commercial use, subject to conditions of the McCarthy Engineering review letter dated May 2, 2024, all in favor.***

Planning Modules:

Borough Engineer Jim McCarthy indicated that the Borough needs to execute portions of the planning module required for the Boiler House Island project, the Inn at Reading re-development project and the Apartments on Van Reed project. This is related to the current capacity concerns with the 4th and Oley and Wynnewood pump stations. The above mentioned proposed projects would exceed the available capacity of the current pump stations, requiring a redesign and construction of new pump stations. The Commission was reminded that this action gives authorization to the Borough Manager to complete and sign the modules, not approve any projects as the modules would need to come back to the Borough after review and a Resolution be prepared to adopt at Council.

> ***Michael Herr made a motion, seconded by Jana Barnett to authorize the Borough Manager to execute the planning module for the Boiler House Island, Inn at Reading and Apartments on Van Reed projects, indicating the Planning Commission has reviewed the Municipal Planning section of the module, all in favor.***

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission will be held on Monday, June 3, 2024 at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Miller

Melissa Miller
Borough Secretary