LAND PLANNING COMMITTEE

June 1 2015

Present: L. Bradshaw, S. Galloway, C. Quinn, B. Clark

Review of Preliminary Draft of Pedestrian Connection Plan - Baltimore Pike/S. Middletown Road with Mall Site - Comitta Associates

Tom Comitta and Erin from Tom Comitta Associates were present to discuss the preliminary draft of the pedestrian connection plan for Baltimore Pike/South Middletown Road with the Granite Run Mall site. Mr. Comitta stated that he and Erin, along with Ms. Bradshaw and Mr. Clark, met with Mr. Wolff to look at the Rails to Trails map of the Township. He noted this mapping was still in progress. Due to the recent activity with Granite Run Mall, Ponds Edge, and Franklin Mint, Mr. Comitta felt that focusing on Baltimore Pike (beginning at proposed Wawa train station through Elwyn) and Route 352 made the most sense and presented a prepared draft of documents illustrating the possible trails and walkways.

Mr. Comitta distributed this information and explained the map shows from Wawa Trail to SEPTA, with walkways, retaining walls and pedestrian foot bridges along the way. Mr. Galloway asked why there was a retaining wall shown in front of Chick-fil-A and Mr. Comitta stated the tightness of space would require a retaining wall in order to fit the walk way. He then went on to show the area in front of Franklin Mint (Sheet B) and noted that it may not be an exact alignment but that he included it since it is already proposed. He then presented Sheet C (in front of Rocky Run YMCA and car dealership) for the Committee to review.

Mr. Comitta then discussed Sheet D, which includes the Rt. 452 and Rt. 1 intersection. He described this area as "uncharted territory." He stated that he is proposing crosswalks at every curb cut and reported that PADOT will only allow crosswalks at intersections that are signaled. Mr. Clark commented that only 2 of the 4 crosswalks at this specific intersection have the pedestrian crossing button. If the Township desired the intersection to have it at every light at the intersection, then an amendment to the traffic permit would need to be submitted to PADOT. Mr. Clark noted that handicap accessibility would also have to be considered. Mr. Galloway asked how the Township could get "count down" buttons, like Media Borough. Mr. Clark stated they would need to be retrofitted and would be part of the signal permit application. When Mr. Galloway asked who would pay for this upgrade, Mr. Clark explained that in some cases a developer, but more often it is paid by the municipality or through a PADOT grant. He noted that Media Borough received some grants for their countdown pedestrian buttons, and that there could likely be funding available for the Township too, if Council chose to pursue this option. Mr. Galloway went on to state that would be helpful for the Rt. 1/452 intersection. Mr. Comitta commented that the proposal shows benches at the intersection. While he realized that people would likely not sit there, he felt this was the only aesthetic location in this section to place the benches.

Mr. Comitta moved on to review Sheets E and F, which run the length of Riddle Hospital, Riddle Village, and ends at the cloverleaf. He explained that the trail noted with a red line is 825 linear feet and because the ground drops off, it would be about $400,000 to build the appropriate retaining wall for

that location. Once at the cloverleaf and down the length of Rt. 352 to Elwyn (Sheet G), Mr. Comitta stated the land would be much more navigational on either side of the road. Instead of the expense of building the necessary retaining wall shown on Sheet E, Mr. Comitta proposed an alternative illustrated by Sheet J. This alternative would turn into Riddle Hospital and go left into the entrance of Riddle Village. Once there, existing walkways could be used and then a walkway could be constructed through the wooded area behind the property to connect with an existing access road that would lead to Rt. 352. He noted that permission from Riddle Village would be needed for this alternative.

Mr. Comitta provided the Committee with the preliminary pre-design cost estimate, and noted that it breaks down the cost for each walkway section so the Township will have an idea of what each part will cost for possible conversations with developers and grant opportunities.

Mr. Comitta moved on to provide the review comments he put together for the Granite Run Mall redevelopment, which highlights what is being proposed, what is missing, and provides a diagram of internal sidewalks and crosswalks. He noted that the applicant would need to consider and provide connections as residents of the Township are used to walking the mall and may be looking for another walking location. He noted that the mall's plans for an external walkway around the perimeter may accommodate this need. Mr. Comitta stated his diagram includes completed connections that are not being proposed.

Mr. Galloway thanked Mr. Comitta for putting together the pedestrian connection plan and expressed he thought it would be helpful for future discussions. Mr. Clark commented that rather than trying to capture the whole plan, he found it useful and more prudent to capture this key area first. He also expressed that this information would be helpful with discussions with PADOT about the cloverleaf improvements, as well as Granite Run Mall, Ponds Edge and Franklin Mint.

Mr. Clark also noted that Bob Heuser, who is with Ponds Edge, is now working with Franklin Mint. Mr. Comitta agreed and stated that Mr. Heuser took what was done with Ponds Edge and applied it to Franklin Mint. He also reported that he, Erin and Mr. Clark met with the McKee Group about Franklin Mint and that they are working on a redesign of the plan but that it was not done. Mr. Clark stated the stormwater management and retaining walls are the issues they are currently working out. Mr. Galloway asked where Mr. Heuser was from and Mr. Comitta stated Moylan, noting he has worked with him before.

Mr. Comitta asked what the Committee thought about the proposed alternative to the footbridge (sheet J). Ms. Bradshaw asked if there was a grade separation issue by the first stop sign with crosswalk and if that was why the crossing did not occur there. Erin answered in the affirmative. Ms. Bradshaw expressed that she was not sure how Riddle Village would feel about pedestrians crossing their parking lot. Mr. Clark commented that this could be a temporary solution until the cloverleaf project is completed since the Township was still unsure of what PADOT's complete plans are for this location. Mr. Comitta explained the Riddle Village easement hill is considered steep (about 7-8% grade) and that this would be the only part that would be a grade issue.

Mr. Quinn asked if there was room behind Kohl's to run a walkway. Mr. Clark stated the problem with that would be the pedestrian walk for the cloverleaf bridge is on the opposite side. He was not sure if PADOT would be able to redesign the plan to have the pedestrian connection on the other side. Ms. Bradshaw commented that PADOT knows the Township wants pedestrian and bike access at the cloverleaf. Mr. Clark agreed. He also noted that Mr. Kirchgasser informed him that a representative of Elwyn mentioned they'd be interested in the walkway being on their side of the road. Ms. Bradshaw commented that Williamson may also be interested in getting a traffic light at their entrance. Mr. Clark agreed, noting that their new executive director is very interested in a light being installed; however, traffic may not warrant the need at present. On the other hand, if a walkway was on the other side, a traffic light may make sense.

Mr. Galloway asked if there has been any discussion with Mr. Riper regarding Granite Run Mall. Mr. Comitta stated Mr. Riper requested a meeting for the following week and that hopefully the mall would seriously consider his proposal. Mr. Clark noted that Granite Run was due to return in front of Council on June 22nd for an Ordinance and they were expected on the Planning Commission agenda next week as long as their review was completed. Mr. Comitta expressed that Granite Run's design guidelines need to be more specific. Mr. Quinn requested a copy of his recommendations and Mr. Comitta stated he would get them to the Township the next day. He noted that Granite Run did extensive work on architecture guidelines, but lighting and landscape still needed improving.

The Committee thanked Mr. Comitta and Erin for presenting. Mr. Clark expressed that there were no significant red flags, so the Township could move forward with using the proposal for a basis of discussion with Franklin Mint, PADOT, and BET. Mr. Galloway agreed and asked Mr. Comitta to be present for the meeting pertaining to the mall on June 22nd since that would be the first part of the project. Mr. Comitta stated he was already planning on being there.

Proposal for Zoning Amendment: 33 and 47 N. Middletown Road - Iacobucci

Ray Iacobucci and his legal representative Tim Sullivan were present. Mr. Sullivan explained that Mr. Iacobucci is in a property agreement with some contingencies for the purchase of 34 and 47 N. Middletown Road. Mr. Iacobucci has reduced the number of townhomes he is proposing on the property, and was currently planning on 27 being built on 11 acres. He noted that this would require the Children's Academy selling some of their acreage to Mr. Iacobucci.

Mr. Galloway asked what the current zoning was for the location. Mr. Sullivan stated it was currently R-1; however, it is close to the R-2 zoning district. He was proposing moving the R-2 zoning line so it would be included as R-2.

Mr. Sullivan presented two possible proposals. The first involved the townhomes being buffered with access driveways to them and a potential connector road that would not impact the residents. He explained that Township open space is next to this property and Mr. Iacobucci would dedicate 5 more acres to it as open space, where this connector road could go. He stated this would avoid PADOT condemnation for providing a new connection to Blackhorse Lane. The second proposal provided a

dedication of open space to allow for a playground to be added next to Smedley ground without using Smedley open space, where it can't go. This would be across from the Kohl's entrance. He stated the only way to accomplish either plan via zoning though, would be to have an overlay to R-2, as has been done with Children's Academy.

Mr. Sullivan emphasized that a connector road was important because the faster PADOT has a way to do something, the faster PADOT will move on getting the new cloverleaf project started.

Mr. Quinn asked if the Smedley referendum was to be used as a park, even if condemned by PADOT. Mr. Clark noted that PADOT does not want to condemn because it would send red flags up for construction funding. Mr. Sullivan stated that his proposal would sidestep the need to violate a deed restriction. Ms. Bradshaw stated nine houses would need to be condemned and Mr. Iacobucci explained that he may be able to provide the Township with a lot nearby for the house instead. Mr. Clark felt this could be an issue with PADOT. Mr. Sullivan expressed that it was a minor issue compared to other steps PADOT would have to take to fix the intersection (i.e. Hannum Harley Davidson, new restaurant, etc.). Mr. Clark agreed, stating significant properties may be affected. Mr. Sullivan noted the house in question may sell prior to then.

Mr. Quinn commented that he was concerned about the density and Mr. Sullivan pointed out it is below 2.5 units per acre. When asked how many acres the property was, Mr. Iacobucci reported there was a total of 11 ½ acres.

Ms. Bradshaw asked if purchase discussions began with the Victoria house on Route 352. Mr. Iacobucci answered in the negative. Ms. Bradshaw noted that she liked Proposal 1 the best and wondered if it would be possible to put a road into the entrance of the park as an access road. While she felt the access road and connector would be helpful, she did not know if it would present a legal issue.

Mr. Galloway requested that plans be left for Council review at the next executive session. Mr. Clark noted that the regular agenda was light so there should be enough time for that review. Mr. Galloway instructed Mr. Clark to put the review of this plan on the agenda for executive session.

Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned by Ms. Bradshaw at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Allen, Recorder