

**COLLEGE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
In Person and Via Zoom**



January 17, 2023 7:00 p.m.
1481 East College Avenue, State College, PA 16801
www.collegetownship.org

- PRESENT:** Ray Forziat, Chair
Ed Darrah, Vice Chair
Peggy Ekdahl, Secretary
Matthew Fenton
Robert Hoffman
Noreen Khoury
Bill Sharp
- STAFF PRESENT:** Don Franson, P.E., P.L.S., Township Engineer
Lindsay Schoch, AICP, Principal Planner
Mark Gabrovsek, Township Zoning Officer
Sharon Meyers, Senior Support Specialist – Engineering/Planning
- GUESTS:** Jim May – Centre Regional Planning Agency
Mark Torretti – Penn Terra Engineering
Jason Straley – Arize Federal Credit Union
Mark Saville – HRG
Joseph Siekirk – Plante Moran
Jim Routh – Stantec
Bryan Roach – Mount Nittany Health
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CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Forziat called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ZOOM MEETING PROTOCOL: Ms. Schoch reviewed zoom protocol as there were guests present via zoom.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Forziat verified all commissioners were present.

OPEN DISCUSSION: None presented.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Mr. Sharp moved to approve the January 3, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Mr. Darrah seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PLANS:

P-1 Arize Federal Credit Union Land Development Plan

Ms. Schoch introduced the plan and pointed out this plan was seen a few weeks ago as a Sketch Plan. Ms. Schoch continued with a power point presentation, discussed the waiver request to defer sidewalk construction in the residual area of the lot, and asked the commissioners for a recommendation to Council.

Mr. Darrah questioned how much area of lot 3B would be available to develop. Mr. Torretti stated the client intends to finalize the design for the solar array field at which time he would be able to give a more accurate measurement. Mr. Darrah stated if the rest of the property is not buildable then the requested deferral is not feasible. Mr. Torretti asked for the landscape plan page to be projected then explained the aesthetics and reasoning for the request to defer the construction of sidewalks in the empty area of the lot until development of that area.

Mr. Sharp asked who currently owns the property. Mr. Torretti stated that Stocker currently owns the property, however, there is a sales agreement for Arize FCU to purchase.

Mr. Darrah asked about the ingress and egress from Benner Pike and how the proposed would affect the development of the rest of the lot. Mr. Torretti explained that he has planned for a possible entrance from Premiere Drive. Mr. Hoffman stated he was confused by the in/out from Benner Pike. Mr. Torretti explained the concept of right-in/right-out and people coming from State College would use Ellis Place to access the credit union as an alternative to turning left directly into the parking lot from Benner Pike. Mr. Hoffman stated that he recently drove down Benner Pike and believes this concept could be an accident waiting to happen. The commissioners discussed the access from Benner Pike in more detail.

Mr. Hoffman asked how the sidewalk design was conceived. Mr. Torretti stated that he was trying to give the Township something that is functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. He continued the curves played off of the curve in the parking lot and thought it would be more appealing to have landscaping on both sides of the sidewalk. Mr. Hoffman applauded his efforts. Mr. Hoffman questioned staff if the waiver to defer sidewalk construction is granted and nothing is built in the empty area of the lot, then what happens with the sidewalk. Ms. Schoch stated that within the newly adopted ordinance, there is a two year time limit, meaning, should the lot remain undeveloped after two years the sidewalk will be constructed.

Mr. Sharp asked if there will be a sign along the road. Mr. Torretti stated there is an existing sign to remain for Christ Community Church, however, Arize FCU would prefer their own sign which Mr. Torretti is working with Township staff on the matter.

Mr. Hoffman opined the architecture is positive and good for the area. He also questioned if there would be a fence around the solar array. Mr. Torretti stated he had originally interpreted the ordinance differently than the zoning officer and there will be no fence installed which the client likes as they intend for the solar array to be visible to the public. Mr. Gabrovsek stated that a fence is required due to the proposed array being located in the front yard. He explained that regardless of a street being public or private, an area is considered a front yard if it borders a street. This property has front yard on three sides, along Benner Pike, Ellis Place, and Premiere Drive.

Mr. Fenton stated his concern for the potential for accidents from the turning lane on Benner Pike. Mr. Darrah stated that a PennDOT highway occupancy permit will be required, so that may be addressed and potentially restrict left hand turns during that process.

Ms. Ekdahl had no comments.

Mr. Forziat questioned the area to the left of the right-in/right-out at Benner Pike and if it is designed for future development. He continued that if there would not be an access to Benner Pike from the residual area of the lot, then it would make sense to construct the sidewalk now for ease of pedestrian flow. Mr. Torretti explained the reasoning for the deferral request and added that a sidewalk can be constructed during the rest of construction, however, to eliminate the possibility of the sidewalk limiting the area to be developed the sidewalk will be straight and not as aesthetically pleasing as is proposed at the credit union. Ms. Khoury questioned if a temporary sidewalk, maybe gravel, would be considered.

Mr. Hoffman stated a gravel sidewalk would not be ADA compliant. The commissioners discussed the sidewalk and potential development of the remaining area of the lot.

Mr. Darrah moved to recommend that Council approve the Arize Federal Credit Union Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan dated December 19, 2022 and last revised January 9, 2023 subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Within ninety (90) days from the date of approval by Council, all conditions must be satisfied, final signatures must be obtained and the plan must be recorded with the Centre County Recorder of Deeds Office. Failure to meet the ninety (90) day recordation deadline will render the plan null and void.*
- 2. Pay all outstanding review fees.*
- 3. Address, to the satisfaction of the Township Engineer, any outstanding plan review comments from staff.*
- 4. Fully comply with College Township Code Section 180-12.*
- 5. Post surety as approved by the Township Engineer prior to recordation.*
- 6. Provide an Intent to Serve Letter from the University Area Joint Authority.*
- 7. Provide an Intent to Serve Letter from the College Township Water Authority.*
- 8. Provide NPDES approval.*
- 9. Approve the request for sidewalk deferral for the portion of the lot not currently being developed for a period of two (2) years or less.*
- 10. Stocker Auto Body Shop Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan must be recorded prior to recordation of the Arize Federal Credit Union Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan.*
- 11. Provide approved PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit.*
- 12. Provide a Traffic Impact Study.*
- 13. All conditions must be accepted in writing within seven (7) days from the date of the conditional approval letter from the Township Engineer.*

Mr. Sharp seconded. Motion carried by a vote of six to one, with Mr. Hoffman opposed.

P-2 Mount Nittany Medical Center – Sketch Plan

Mr. Seeker introduced himself, Mr. Saville, Mr. Ralph, and Mr. Roach as representatives and their roles in the Mount Nittany Medical Center Bed Tower Project. Mr. Roach introduced the plan and stated that this strategic investment continues to build on the medical center's commitment to their mission which is "Healthier People Stronger Communities".

Mr. Ralph presented the existing property then stated the proposal consists of three buildings, including: a parking garage, a central energy/utility plant, and a bed tower. The hospital currently holds 238 beds and their license allows for 260 beds total. The plan proposes 168 private patient rooms which will transform many of the existing semi-private rooms into private rooms.

Mr. Saville stated that they have been working with Penn State to facilitate operations and construction so as to not impede the flow of traffic around the building during construction. Fire access has also been reviewed with Alpha Fire to be sure there is plenty of room to maneuver in case of an emergency.

The proposed parking deck will be constructed twelve feet from the property line and will satisfy the added demand for parking. Trans Associates has been involved to evaluate the possibility of congested areas. They found no issues according to the traffic report which may be provided upon request. The placement of the utility plant does eliminate some parking at the Cancer Pavilion, however, there is still adequate parking for that area of the hospital. There is a reduction of runoff proposed, which will redirect stormwater to the existing stormwater basin which has been deemed capable of managing the additional runoff. The proposed renderings show lots of glass to open up the patient rooms to make them light and airy with a lot of natural light. The overall motif is contemporary with lots of glass and

include some masonry elements which is used throughout the property to help tie the proposed building into the rest of the campus.

Ms. Khoury stated that the plan looks lovely and asked what source of energy is proposed. Mr. Saville stated that the central energy plant will use home heating fuel as does the existing energy generation facilities throughout the campus. Mr. Sharp stated that the proposal does not increase the bed count very much. Ms. Ekdahl and Mr. Darrah had no comments. Mr. Fenton stated that as a retired healthcare professional he applauds the intent of the proposed plan. Mr. Hoffman stated that he applauds the efforts to manage and maintain the flow around the building. He added that the intent of adding only five beds was explained well during the presentation, and as an architect he likes the ideas and aesthetics of the proposed buildings. Mr. Forziat verified that the drive is for individual rooms and asked in the event of a state of emergency, would the proposed be able to convert to double rooms. Mr. Roach stated the license held by the medical center allows for 260 beds. He added the intent of this project is not to cost patients more as the price per bed is the same whether single or double. Mr. Forziat asked if there would be a substantial increase in staff. Mr. Roach stated that there will be little to no increase in clinical staff, cleaning staff will increase, and the intent is not to increase overall cost of operations.

With no further comments, the commissioners thanked the gentlemen for their presentation.

OLD BUSINESS: None presented.

NEW BUSINESS:

NB-1 Maxwell Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Report

Ms. Schoch stated that this is the third time the Planning Commission has seen this project, which is due to the detailed process. Ms. Schoch stated the report proposes the rezoning of three acres of a thirty-one acre parcel, currently zoned forest to be zoned industrial. She explained the order of the document presented to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Forziat asked Ms. Schoch to summarize the recommendation. Ms. Schoch stated the following is the College Township staff recommendation:

“As one stands and looks toward the Maxwell site from the north side of College Avenue, you can see the growth boundary line by the limited amount of homes and businesses at a certain point, going up the side of Mount Nittany. This is subjectively the purpose of the RGS/SSA. Our region is unique in the fact we have a regional growth boundary, it can be a very useful tool when determining where future growth and development occur. Allowing an intensive use to encroach up the sides of Mount Nittany could be detrimental and could set a precedent. Anytime the opportunity to expand the Regional Growth Boundary/Sewer Service Area is on the table, we take a chance in setting a strong precedent for the expansion request is successful. In this particular case, the development is slowly creeping up the side of Mount Nittany.

After much thought and consideration, staff recommends the Planning Commission make a recommendation to Council to approve the DRI Application and to set a Public Hearing after the DRI is heard by CRPC and the COG General Forum, and in-turn, the rezoning. Staff finds the rezoning acceptable for a few reasons, which include fact that the soil is undesirable and building something denser without expanding the sewer service is nearly impossible from a sewage planning standpoint; the most reasonable/least intrusive request was made (3 acres) rather than request the entire lot rezoned; the intent to preserve what is existing beyond the three acres is present and a 125' by 500' buffer exists to buffer the residential zoning from the industrial zoning.”

Mr. Forziat questioned the list of considerations and more specifically the future consideration of a Ridge Overlay. The commissioners discussed the possibility of a ridge overlay to be added to a future agenda. Mr. Fenton questioned the list of allowable uses in the industrial district. Ms. Schoch explained that the list is potential uses of the three acres to be rezoned, only if there is no sewage generated. Mr. Darrah stated that there are rezoning restrictions in place to not allow further rezoning/development up

the mountain. Mr. Sharp stated that the report looks good and is quite redundant. He added that the conversation of a ridge overlay should possibly be added to the Dale Summit Project.

Mr. Forziat questioned if the rezoning will impact the agreement College Township has with Patton Township. Ms. Schoch stated it does not as the Township will need to make Patton Township aware of the rezoning but they do not need to approve the rezoning. Mr. Sharp asked what the rest of the process will be. Ms. Schoch stated that after Planning Commission makes a recommendation the report will head to Council, CRPC, COG General Forum, then Council will set a Public Hearing. She further explained that there is no expansion of the RGB or SSA proposed so the General Forum will give a recommendation and not approval. Mr. Darrah asked what if the property owner expands even more. Mr. May explained if the owner wants public water there would be no issue and they would need to go to College Township Water Authority. However, should the owner desire public sewer, that inquiry will need to go to the General Forum and will need to get approval from five of the six municipalities.

Mr. Sharp moved to recommend that Council approve the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Report dated December 9, 2022 subject to the following:

- 1. Approve the DRI based upon the recommendations of Centre Regional Planning Agency,*
- 2. Set a Public Hearing,*
- 3. Approve the request to rezone the three (3) acre portion of tax parcel 19-004-078 from Forest to Industrial.*

Mr. Darrah seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS: None presented.

STAFF INFORMATIVES: None presented.

OTHER MATTERS: The Planning Commission briefly discussed positions to be filled across the College Township ABC's.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Forziat announced the next meeting of the College Township Planning Commission will be Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: *Mr. Hoffman moved to adjourn the January 17, 2023 meeting of the College Township Planning Commission. Mr. Darrah seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Sharon E. Meyers

Sharon E. Meyers
Senior Support Specialist – Engineering/Planning