

**Planning Commission  
Minutes  
July 11, 2022  
7:00 PM**

**Present:**

Joseph Vavra  
Patricia Younce  
Nancy Becker  
Dennis McGeehan  
Douglas Leach  
Matt Chartrand

**Absent:**

Joseph Gibbons  
Ed Buonocore  
Brett MacKay

**Staff:**

Carolyn Shisler, Asst. Zoning & Planning Officer  
Mary Stover, Township Engineer CKS

Supervisors Rich Marino was present and many Towamencin residents.

**Approval of the June 06, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Vavra made a motion be approved and Mr. Leach seconded, and Mr. Chartrand abstained. All were in Favor.

**New Business**

SLD 831- Essential Portfolio Partners, LLC  
1560 Old Forty Foot Road  
Presented by: John Kennedy, Kennedy & Associates

Mr. Kennedy explained there are three separate parcels 1560, 1580, and 1630 Old Forty Foot Road which equal 25.6 acres.

In the past it has been used for large single homes. In the way past possibly agricultural in the R200 Zoning District. Mr. Kennedy showed slides of the property and the parcels and stated from a planning standpoint that he wanted to point out how the area has changed over the years. The images showed the changes since 1972.

He explained that in 2010 there were changes with Towamencin Avenue and new residential developments were added. He showed the area where Walnut Meadows was developed as well as the townhouses that were developed on Mainland Road.

Mr. Kennedy went over the 309-connector completion phase 1 to be completed and the upgrades to the slip ramp on Sumneytown Pike.

Mr. Kennedy presented slides for a proposed four-story apartment building containing 205 units with garage parking below and amenities on site. He explained at this point in time that many apartment-type housing is becoming very viable. He stated they generate very few school age children. Mr. Kennedy also showed the plan that allows them to keep a significant buffer around the entire property and along the church area.

Mr. Kennedy stated they feel the R200 Zoning District is not appropriate for this development and this area at this time as they are starting to see this entire area to develop more. They have been working with TPD to develop improvements and are also looking at the trail plans for this area.

Mr. Kennedy asked the Planning Commission members if they had any questions.

Ms. Younce asked if the applicant has equitable ownership to all these parcels and Mr. Kennedy stated "yes". She asked if it gives you all the land you need to construct the entrances required. Mr. Kennedy stated "yes", he explained early on they had talks with the church and they will not sell. Mr. Kennedy stated there would be only two access areas (25.6 acres).

Ms. Younce states the plan the Planning Commission Members have is not the same as presented tonight. Mr. Kennedy stated this is correct; the plan changed since last week.

Ms. Younce asked if he feels the Township has the infrastructure in that area for possibly 810 new residents because she does not feel there is. Mr. Kennedy stated he feels they do with some improvements. Ms. Younce asked how this would help and how would we get the roads widened. Mr. Kennedy stated it is why they brought the plan to TPD (Traffic Planning and Design) and explained further improvements need to be made. They are looking at the general intersection Old Forty Foot Road and Sumneytown Pike. Old Forty Foot Road is narrow, and the curvature of the road could be remedied with development.

Mr. Leach doesn't see there would be any possibility without a tremendous amount of work. His concern also is that there would be school age children and adding school buses to the mix and he feels that will add to the existing problems.

Ms. Becker stated this would be the highest density in the Township currently. Ms. Younce stated that the apartments and hotel were part of a stipulation for their height and this four-story proposed building would not be allowed.

Mr. Kennedy stated he understood and stated they would not be as high as the hotel or apartments. He said there are a few like this going in King of Prussia and Lansdale. Ms. Becker stated for the apartments on Towamencin Ave there was already a wide roadway and infrastructure for this use. Mr. Kennedy stated they do have TPD working on the widening and any widening would come off of their site. He also explained that one other possibility is that they could remedy some storm water issues and remedy some of these issues with adding basins and help for this area.

Mr. Chartrand asked about the garage area. He asked about the tributary running through, and the floodplain associated with this property. Mr. Kennedy showed the tributary and the floodplain area on the plan. He states they are outside of that for any of the development and there would only be two crossings to get over the creek at the entrances for this plan.

The applicant went over the CKS Engineers review letter which expressed concerns for the floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, etc. Mr. Kennedy states they have had a full survey of the site.

Mr. Vavra asked if there is a height restriction. Ms. Stover stated R200 only allows 35 feet in height and does not allow this use. Mr. Kennedy explained they would need to get the property rezoned. Mr. Chartrand asked is a text amendment what they are looking for and Mr. Kennedy stated either that or a rezone with an overlay, etc. Mr. Chartrand stated it would be important to the Planning Commission members to hear what TPD has to say about improvements before they could give input on going on to the next step.

Mr. Kennedy stated he understands but wants to get feedback from the Planning Commission members and their interest on how to proceed with this location.

Ms. Younce would like them to demonstrate how this would be a good thing for the Township. Ms. Younce stated she could not support this in this particular area.

Ms. Younce asked the residents attending the meeting if they had any questions.

Mr. Scott Bailey of 120 Lenape Court spoke and stated he said he lived in the Township for a long time and asked Mr. Kennedy about his experience. He asked about adding 810 more cars and how would that help. Mr. Kennedy stated with the improvements this could be acceptable and work. Mr. Bailey expressed that he doesn't understand how adding more cars would help. He mentioned concerns about the tributary and the floodplain areas. Mr. Kennedy stated a road widening where you can and if it is designed correctly with DEP there can be approvals for anything going into a floodplain. If this would move forward Mr. Kennedy states, they would have to work with the Township and go through Land Development.

Mr. McGeehan stated the proposed new plan is so different and with less land than the previous plan and asked if this plan will continue to change. Mr. Kennedy stated it would as they get more feedback.

Mr. Walt Prusakowski of 110 Lenape Court spoke and asked about the number of units. He stated that 410 units would be a combination of one or two bedrooms. He explained he recently worked for a complex in Lansdale with two-bedroom units and more than half of them had more than two people living in them. Mr. Prusakowski feels it would be more like three or four people and even more vehicles. He does not agree with two people per unit. He also asked about the units of that size and wanted to know if the applicant checked with the local fire department and see if they are capable of handling this type of unit.

Mr. Steve Kohler of 149 Mainland Square spoke and asked about a traffic light and where would it be placed. Mr. Kennedy stated it would be up to PennDOT for the location and if it is warranted. Mr. Kohler stated the stop sign at these entrances is a nightmare. If you move around the other side people making a left would cause many issues near the single lane bridge. He states without a light including four lanes, he feels people could not move around. He expressed concern regarding storm water runoff near the Skippack Creek and during construction. Mr. Kohler explained that with two entrances and exits without a back way in that this would create issues on Mainland Road and a traffic nightmare. Mr. Kennedy agreed. He explained that he would want to do a more comprehensive study and create a solution. Mr. Kohler stated this isn't an area like Forty Foot Road and can't be compared to the apartments on Towamencin Avenue.

Mr. Robert Drumheller of 112 Lenape Court spoke and stated that Mainland Square Drive is being used as a cut through and he is concerned about the additional traffic. He stated Wambold Road has flooded several times and has been closed several times. Mr. Drumheller expressed that with a lot more rain and more impervious coverage basements will be flooded out. He is concerned about additional cars and water issues.

Supervisor Rich Marino, liaison to the Board of Supervisors spoke. He stated that he normally doesn't speak but since the applicant was there to hear feedback and to take our temperature on this, he wanted to express his opinion. Mr. Marino explained that he is in the construction business. He explained that he is speaking for himself but feels they would not be in support of changing the zoning on this property.

Mr. Peter Murphy 1920 Old Forty Foot spoke and asked some impervious surface questions and road widening questions. He states what currently is allowed and how there is no room to widen. Mr. Kennedy explained he doesn't know the impervious amount in terms of widening and improvements and this would be part of this project as it is developed. He compared it to the changes on Forty Foot Road. Mr. Murphy stated he would not be in favor of the widening as a resident of this road and feels it would create more issues with snowplows and traffic.

Mr. Don Lepp of 1843 Rampart Lane spoke. He stated he is a Volunteer Fireman and explained the Towamencin Fire Department does not have any apparatus to get into the parking garage and they have had many water rescues in that area. He is against having anything change in that area for these reasons.

Ms. Younce took a poll of the Planning Commission members. Mr. McGeehan- no, Ms. Younce- no due to density, infrastructure and height, Mr. Vavra- no due to height and infrastructure, Ms. Becker – no, she feels this is not Lansdale and we don't want to be, Mr. Chartrand- no - not in this current presentation and not until seeing any positives, only negatives have been presented. Mr. Leach – no.

A resident asked what the applicant will do, and Mr. Kennedy stated they will regroup.

### **Old Business:**

Ms. Younce asked the secretary to state what the solicitor stated about fee in lieu of sidewalks. The statement from the solicitor is: Mr. Dooley's opinion is that the better strategy for the Planning Commission members for sidewalk and curb issues is to simply recommend the curbs and sidewalks be installed. This puts the Board of Supervisors in the best position to discuss the fee if immediate construction is not warranted.

Ms. Younce stated she read more information about the ham radio issue and checked the ordinance from Montgomery County. She feels we should address the antenna height for commercial and residential. Mr. Chartrand suggested Ms. Younce bring some information regarding this and then recommend CKS do a comparison.

Mr. Murphy stated he knows the Planning Commission members have discussed this before, but he was wondering when they will update Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission does plan to update this.

Mr. Vavra made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Becker seconded. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Shisler  
Towamencin Township  
Planning Commission Secretary/ Asst. Zoning & Planning Officer