

POCONO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
August 29, 2022

The special meeting of the Pocono Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, August 29, 2022 at Northampton Community College – Pocono Hall and was opened at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Jeremy Sawicki, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Joe Folsom, present; Marie Guidry, present; Christina Kauffman, present; Chris Peechatka, present; Dennis Purcell, present; Jeremy Sawicki, present; Mike Velardi, present.

Planning Commission Alternate: Claire Learn, present..

IN ATTENDANCE

Amy Montgomery, Twp. Engineer; Leo DeVito, Township Solicitor; Taylor Munoz, Township Manager; and Krisann MacDougall, Administrative Assistant.

NEW PLANS

Core5 Stadden Road Warehouse – Motion to administratively accept the plan for engineering review. **(Action Item)**

- Proposal for a 302,400 square foot warehouse. Access to the property is proposed via the approved Core5 Warner Road development, with an emergency access located on Stadden Road. The property is located in the Commercial Zoning District.

Applicant presented plans for a proposed 302,000 sq/ft project on property owned by Gregory Katz. The property is zoned commercial and stated that warehouses are allowed in a commercial zone. Stated they are proposing to install and construct a “warehouse.” Outlined land development process and various approvals required of the developer.

Applicant stated the proposed Stadden Road access is proposed as emergency access only, and will be gated off Stadden Road. Stated there will not be regular truck traffic entering or exiting via Stadden Road.

Aaron Sisler, Borton-Lawson, outlined engineering details regarding the proposed project. Explained that the 63-acre parcel is bisected by I-80 and Stadden Road and the property is zoned commercial, which allows up to 80% impervious on the property. The project proposes 24% impervious surface, with trailer loading docks on the I-80 facing portion of the property. They do not propose improvements for Stadden Road. Discussed preservation of steep slopes, stormwater management requirements and three infiltration basins proposed around the site to reduce peak runoff.

J. Sawicki asked about the nature of emergency access and whether the emergency access would be for entry only. Also asked about runoff coming from the property. J. Folsom stated he has heard rumors of Core5 looking at the PEC school property and asked about traffic coming out to Warner Road. C. Kauffman asked how many loading docks are proposed. J. Sawicki asked if a tenant has been identified. The developer stated one has not been secured.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nick Wilson (Township Resident) – Stated his street is adjacent to the proposed project and expressed concerns regarding runoff, flooding of properties, protected wetlands, quality of well water and what recourse the residents would have if issues occur in the future.

Mary McIsaac (Jackson Resident) – Stated just because something can be built does not mean it should be built. Described activity that has occurred on Stadden Road recently. Expressed concerns about the addition of a second warehouse in the vicinity, traffic concerns and environmental issues.

Lisa Buchholz (Jackson Resident) – Stated in the Township's zoning it appears that warehouses are only allowed in Industrial zoning districts. Concerned about impact of the development on the community. Expressed concerns about the spread of warehousing in the region and impact on local residents.

Guy Doleiden (Township Resident) – Stated he is a new resident of the Township and lives on Ruby Lane with other family members. Expressed concerns about impact on quality of life with structure 20 feet off property line.

Vitaliy Braverman (Township Resident) – Expressed concerns about water supply and need for sprinkler system pressure. Stated Core5 is leasing property to third parties, which could store hazardous materials. Concerned about adequate plans to protect residents, traffic impacts and evacuation plans.

Elina Braverman (Township Resident) – Expressed concerns about financial impact to the Township from warehouse development and potential burst of ecommerce driven by the pandemic. Stated studies show ecommerce demand will continue to diminish and that tenants of this warehouse will leave. Discussed negative impacts to property values and difficulty of attracting employees.

Rebecca Smith (Township Resident) – Expressed concerns about proximity of the warehouse to residences on Kevin's Lane. Stated her property is the lowest lying property on the road and has existing drainage issues. Expressed concerns about the surrounding infrastructure, roads, bridges and environment.

Beata Jazwiez (Township Resident) – Moved to Township to leave city. Expressed concerns about growing traffic concerns and existing issues coming off of I-80. Lives off Fish Hill Road and has experienced issues with traffic firsthand. Concerned about removal of trees and pursuit of other properties for warehouse development.

Elizabeth Casciano (Township Resident) – Stated she is a real estate agent and expressed concerns about reduction of property values in the vicinity of a proposed warehouse. Stated warehouse development is a "race to the bottom" and warehouse development affects tourism value of a region. Expressed concerns about safety, pollution, traffic backup and noise.

Bob Turner (Township Resident) – Six-year resident of Pocono Township. Stated tourism is the Township's number one industry, with the casino, resorts, restaurants and outlets in the area. Stated tourists come to the Poconos to connect with nature versus their urban environment. Expressed concerns about solar farm proposal in the Township and proposed warehouses and their impact on tourism.

Rose Walsh (Jackson Resident) – Expressed concerns about her health with fumes from warehouse activity and impact on property values.

James Slutter (Jackson Resident) – Thanked the Planning Commission for representing the community. Represents a company that works with industries, including warehouses, and is currently representing incidents where negative environmental impacts have occurred. Expressed belief that these types of facilities do not belong in this area.

Cynthia Anglemeyer (Township Resident) – Lives adjacent to proposed warehouse location. Shared history of nearby superfund site and impacts to area properties. Expressed concerns about impact to local wells and potential for contamination from the proposed facility.

Aneta Varouti (Township Resident) – Lives on Ruby Lane adjacent to the proposed project site. Concerned about the future of Pocono Township and the value of tourism activities to the area. Stated the Poconos are not an appropriate area for development of a warehouse.

Mark Love (Township Resident) – Stated he is aware that requirements of the SALDO can trigger zoning requirements for a regional impact development (RID). Stated one of the requirements of the RID addresses many of the concerns expressed about warehouses. Provided clarification regarding zoning ordinance and commercial zones allowing for warehouse projects.

Dr. Alexander Jackson (Brodhead Watershed Association) – Stated BWA purpose to protect regional watershed and said the watershed is a special protection watershed. Discussed research that talks about impact of impervious surface on area waters. Urged skepticism regarding claims of temporary impact to wetlands and requested subsequent joint hearing with the Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission regarding waivers prior to action. Asked whether Core5 is building a warehouse or a truck terminal.

Michael (no last name or residency provided) – Stated it took him 27 minutes to get his mail because of traffic from Kalahari and said the same problem would be intensified by trucks.

Kevin Schlier (Township Resident) – Expressed concerns about Core5 plans for additional warehouses and “warehouse sprawl.” Urged the Commission to do something to prevent warehouse activity from being developed.

Robert Buchholz (Jackson Township Resident) – Echoed concerns about contaminants and pollution and impacts to tourism.

Abby Jones (PennFuture) – Attending in a personal capacity. Expressed concerns regarding impact to the area's special protection watershed. Expressed concerns about impacts to infrastructure and cumulative effects of multiple large scale projects. Implored Township to consider the cumulative impacts of this project and others within the review process.

Justin Anglemeyer (Township Resident) – Stated the impact of this project is greater than just the immediate vicinity. Shared concerns about existing flooding in the Warner Road area that makes way down to SR 611 and further impacts with additional development.

Teri Van Britsom (Chestnuthill Resident) – Stated this area is critical to Core5 and that regional planning should occur for warehouse uses, as opposed to single townships. Expressed concerns from observations of other warehouse activity in the region and possibility of that occurring here. Stated community needs to protect the “Pocono brand.” Urged public not to threaten public officials, as opposed to banter. Thanked Planning Commission for representing the community and asked that the Commission not make it easy for the developer.

Gary Gray (Jackson Resident) – Expressed concerns about quality of life issues caused by projects like the proposed warehouse and need to preserve quality of life.

George Baroudi (Township Resident) – Lives on Ruby Lane adjacent to the proposed warehouse project. Expressed concerns about variances given to Core5 in the past and whether future ones will be granted.

Josh Knapp (Township Resident) – Stated waivers should not be clean-up for poor planning. Stated this is an industrial use and should not be allowed in the area being proposed.

Dana Beecher (Jackson Resident) – Has lived in area for six years after moving from city. Stated she enjoys the serenity of the Poconos and does not want to see a similar concrete area down the road. Urged Planning Commission to oppose the project.

Karen Doleiden (Township Resident) – Lives on Ruby Lane and family is concerned about impact of the proposed development.

Rep. Maureen Madden (State Representative) – Lives in Coolbaugh Township, but is at the Township on behalf of a local citizens group opposed to warehouses and distribution centers. Commended Planning Commission for moving the meeting to a better facility to accommodate public comment and for listening to concerns raised. Thanked Township officials and school board members in attendance. Stated she stands with the residents concerned about these proposed uses and emphasized the importance of representative democracy. Stated warehouse activity contradicts the identity of the Poconos and Pocono Township. Stated we as public officials have the ability to preserve the quality of life of the community.

Carmen Churion (Jackson Resident) – Has lived in area for 20 years and is active in the community. Stated through her involvement in Scouting, they instill the importance of community and environment in the participating Scouts. Urged Township to be an example for the community. Expressed concerns about adjacent PPL power lines.

Robert Turnbull (Township Resident) – Commended Commission for allowing public to air their concerns. Expressed concerns about applicant not having traffic engineer present to answer questions. Urged Township not to grant waivers and exceptions.

William Gardner (Township Resident) – Came to Poconos after serving in the military. Expressed concerns about environmental impacts.

Yvonne Newton (Jackson Resident) – Has lived in area for 30 years and regularly travels Stadden Road. Expressed concerns about those who live on Ruby Lane closest to the proposed warehouse and expressed disappointment that the applicant's traffic engineer is not present. Thanked Planning Commission and reiterated need to consider quality of life issues.

Ann Marie Brown (Township Resident) – Stated a couple years ago a school bus was too heavy to travel over the bridge on Stadden Road. Recounted issues last year regarding flooding at SR 611 and Warner Road. Stated she will leave the Township if project goes through.

L. DeVito reiterated the only action being taken this evening is to accept the plan for administrative review. After review, a comment letter will be issued by the Township engineer. Letter will include waivers requested from the SALDO. When Core5 again appears on agenda, the meeting will be held at Northampton Community College. Explained consequence of not accepting the plan for review and the potential of a "deemed review."

M. Velardi asked about variances already approved. L. DeVito clarified the difference between variances and waiver requests.

J. Folsom made a motion, seconded by D. Purcell, to administratively accept the plans for engineering review. All in favor. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS, CONDITIONAL USE, ET AL, APPLICATIONS – None

PRIORITY LIST – None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

ZONING HEARING BOARD SCHEDULE

- CMBK Resort Holdings LLC – 213 & 238 Evergreen Court; 142 & 145 Ridge Drive 5:00 p.m. on August 30, 2022.
 - Hearing regarding Camelback's use of properties for employee housing.

NEW BUSINESS – None

PUBLIC COMMENT – No further public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

D. Purcell made a motion, seconded by M. Guidry, to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.

DRAFT