

**Members Present**

Will Cinfici  
Philip Ashear  
Lee Olsen, AIA, Chairman  
Wayne Bealer, Vice Chairman  
Bob Conklin, AIA

**Staff Present**

David Peris, Planning and Zoning Manager  
Tim Krall, Public Works  
Jerome Skrincosky, Hawk Valley Associates, Planning Consultant  
Naomi Crimm, Planner

**Others Present**

Thomas Ludgate, Ludgate Engineering  
Dan Laudenslayer, Tarson LLC  
Dave Roberts, McCarthy Engineering

Chairman Olsen called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

**Item #1 - Agenda**

Commissioner Bealer made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Chairman Conklin seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

**Item #2 - Subdivisions and Land Developments**

**PC-2021-102-P: 226 & 230 N. 5th Street (Medical Arts Building)**

Thomas Ludgate asked that the matter be tabled. There are a number of technical items still open, and the applicant is waiting for feedback from fire and codes. He said that they will comply with the Hawk Valley Review letter, but the fire and building code items still need to be addressed. Commissioner Bealer asked how they are going to resolve the issue with the existing windows in 224 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Ludgate said that is an open item.

There was a discussion about the architectural staff being used for the project.

**Action:** Commissioner Conklin made a motion to table the plan at the request of the applicant. Commissioner Ashear asked about a time extension. Mr. Peris said that there is a time extension through August 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Ludgate said that he expects the preliminary plan to be approved in July, assuming that the codes and fire issues are resolved. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

PC-2021-105-P: 208 Chestnut Street (Remcon Plastics)

Mr. Ludgate said that the Planning Commission reviewed a similar plan for this property recently for a building addition over an existing sewer line. The plan received preliminary and might have received conditional final approval. It became cost prohibitive so Remcon abandoned the building addition. This project is a new building. There are no sewer hook-ups, no utility hook-ups and no heating or cooling. It is a simpler plan; there is no longer a conflict with the sanitary sewer. The building will hold plastic molds. There will be no additional employees. He has received the Hawk Valley review letter and will comply with all items therein. They received an erosion and sedimentation control plan approval for the previous plan. They are keeping the same stormwater design as in the previous plan.

Mr. Skrincosky said that he does not have anything further. All of the comments in his review letter can be addressed as part of the final plan.

Mr. Krall said that the stormwater management from the prior plan is applicable here and was approved previously. He does not see any problems with approving it now. Mr. Ludgate will comply with the stormwater ordinance operations and maintenance agreement requirements and the deposit for the inspections. There are no sanitary sewer requirements, as it is just a warehouse.

Commissioner Bealer asked for clarification about whether or not it is a preliminary plan. Mr. Ludgate said that Ms. Crimm asked him to submit a preliminary plan. Chairman Olsen clarified that it is a preliminary plan.

**Action:** Commissioner Bealer made a motion to approve the preliminary plan. Commissioner Conklin seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

Commissioner Cinfici asked if there is an update from the City on making Chestnut Street two-way. When the Planning Commission reviewed the plan previously, they recommended making the two hundred block of Chestnut Street two-way. Tim Krall said that the original request was from Remcon for the entire two hundred block of Chestnut Street to direct their trucks from Second Street to Remcon. That did not meet with favor with Public Works or PennDOT due to confusion that would happen at the Third and Chestnut Street intersection. Another idea was to make it two-way between Second Street and the driveway, but that still has not gone through. This would direct traffic east from Second Street directly into Remcon. This would be great for the trucks but not for anyone else. It would be an extension of their driveway, essentially. There are no other examples of that in the City. This idea stalled and the street is still one-way westbound. Remcon has requested that no parking be allowed on that part of the street, and that is being considered now.

PC-2021-106-PF: 1325 & 1341 Scott Street (Scott Street Subdivision)

Mr. Roberts introduced the project. It is a four lot residential subdivision and land development with two duplex units. The applicant requested several waivers. There is currently no sidewalk

on that block or the 1400 block of Scott Street, so they requested a waiver of sidewalk requirements. They also requested a waiver of the stormwater management ordinance related to the stormwater BMPs. In addition, they requested a time request extension to carry them through September. They do not anticipate it will take that long, but there is sewer planning and coordination with the addressing of the properties needed.

David Peris went over the waiver requests and said that the applicant is asking for the plan to be tabled.

Mr. Skrincosky said that he issued a review letter on May 27<sup>th</sup> and staff went over the comments with the applicant.

Commissioner Bealer said that according to Google Maps there is an electrical line where the unimproved alley is supposed to be. He did not see an easement on the plans. Mr. Skrincosky said that the applicant will have to check that.

Mr. Krall said that the addressing will have to be resolved. He said that he will direct Mr. Roberts to Chris Lovell, Engineering Aide at the City, to help with that. Mr. Krall has some concerns with the stormwater management. The property is on bedrock and the engineer is proposing infiltration. It seems counterproductive to put in infiltration basins when they are so close to bedrock. Mr. Roberts said that they provided two feet of separation distance. The ordinance requires three feet between the bedrock and the bottom of the facility. They are asking relief from that to have a 24 inch separation distance, which aligns with the Department of Environment Protection National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (DEP NPDES) requirements.

Mr. Krall said that the stormwater ordinance was delivered to the City from the County (the 167 plan), which makes it complicated to grant a waiver. He tried to contact the County about this but was not able to reach anyone. Mr. Roberts said that usually the township grants relief for the stormwater management. Mr. Krall said that he will need confirmation from the County Planning Commission before granting a waiver. He asked Mr. Roberts to send him a justification for the hardship. Mr. Krall confirmed that Mr. Roberts will send in the DEP Planning Modules for four equivalent dwelling units.

Chairman Olsen asked about potential actions. Mr. Peris said that the time extension should be granted. The waivers should be considered separately – the sidewalk could be considered, but not the stormwater management at this time, as the City will need to check in with the legal department first.

**Action:** Commissioner Conklin made a motion to grant the extension request until September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

Chairman Olsen asked the applicant for an explanation of the sidewalk waiver request. Mr. Roberts said that there is no sidewalk on the 1300 or 1400 blocks of Scott Street so it would not make sense to build them as part of this project. Mr. Peris said that this will also need a zoning

variance request, and the applicant is aware of this. Mr. Skrincosky said that most homes in the area do not have sidewalks, but there are a few that do. Commissioner Cinfici asked to confirm that curbs are not being asked to be waived. Mr. Roberts confirmed.

Commissioner Conklin asked Mr. Krall if he knows of short-term or long-term plans from the City about assisting in building sidewalks. Mr. Krall said that the only City-funded project is Buttonwood Gateway. It is a defined area that received grant money to do the sidewalks. There is no official position where the City would extend that to other areas. There are programs being promoted by Community Development to do private sidewalk improvements in certain areas, but he said that he cannot give an update on that. The City has done some improvements on City-owned projects.

Commissioner Cinfici said that normally when the waivers are done it is in commercial or industrial areas that are not pedestrian-friendly to begin with. He asked if waiving the requirement would preclude the City from asking the owner to install sidewalks going forward. Mr. Krall said that if there were a waiver granted, a note could be put on the plan to not preclude the City from asking the owner or the future owner to install sidewalks going forward. Mr. Peris said that the property-owners would be on the same footing as any other owner in that area. He would recommend that the note be added to the plan if the Planning Commission grants the waiver. Mr. Krall said that it would be a conditional relief, not a full relief. Commissioner Bealer said that would be a good idea. He said that in years past they waived sidewalks in areas around Alvernia. This is the same condition as in that neighborhood.

**Action:** Commissioner Bealer made a motion to approve relief from section 515-602 of the City's subdivision and land development ordinance with a note added to the plan to indicate that if sidewalks are required by the City in the future, then the landowner would need to comply. Commissioner Cinfici seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

Chairman Olsen said the Planning Commission will wait to vote on the other two waivers.

Commissioner Bealer said that he agreed with the note in Mr. Skrincosky's letter about making driveways forty feet long. The neighboring homes also have driveways of that length. The way it is set up now, the duplexes would be about twenty feet in front of the neighbors. There is enough setback there for the developer to move the building back. Mr. Skrincosky said he did not think that the developer would have any objection to that, but there will be a garage space as well. Mr. Roberts said that his understanding was that the current parking configuration with the driveway and garage was compliant. He would need to talk over changes to where the house sits on the lot with the developer. Mr. Skrincosky said that he thought the developer would look at the setbacks of the other homes in the area and see if they could make some adjustments.

PC-2021-103-PF: 654-660 Schuylkill Avenue (Isla Property Management 1 LLC)

Mr. Laudenslayer said that Dr. Peppen is still working on the parking, so the project cannot move ahead until that issue is resolved. He suggested tabling the plan.

Mr. Peris gave an update on parking. He did some calculations and based on the changes to the project, the total number of parking spaces required has been reduced. Originally at the time of Zoning Hearing Board approval, it was twenty-eight spaces total. It will be less than that – likely eighteen to twenty total. That will be based on a review of floor plans of the proposed uses. There will still only be seven spaces on-site, so there is a need for off-site parking. There was going to be a lease agreement with the owner of a parking lot across the street. The City has not yet received that lease and would recommend that a note be added to the plan that allows the zoning office to review and make sure that the lease complies with zoning requirements for parking.

Mr. Skrincosky said that the zoning ordinance does allow for retail use to have one space per two hundred and fifty square feet or one space for every five hundred square feet. He said that he will need a floor plan to determine what is retail space and storage space. Mr. Laudenslayer said that Miguel Herrera drew up the floor plan and he will submit it to Ms. Crimm.

Mr. Krall noted that Deb Hoag from Public Works said that the three equivalent dwelling units for the three existing apartments are satisfactory. The proposed use does not exceed the existing use. He asked that a note with that language be put on the plan to explain. The driveway, sidewalk, and curbing need to be replaced on Schuylkill Avenue. This will be handled with a developer's agreement.

Mr. Peris confirmed that the Planning Commission granted a time extension to July 27, 2021 at the May meeting.

**Action:** Commissioner Conklin made a motion at the request of applicant to table the plan. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

#### PC-2021-107-P: 243 N. 4th Street (Super Natural Foods III)

Mr. Laudenslayer said that he received the review letter from Hawk Valley Associates. He met with staff last week. He sent updated information for the stormwater so that they can come to an agreement on the impervious area. There are some issues with the parking, as there had been off-site parking spaces available, but he is not sure whether they are still available or not. He will also submit a floor plan. They did a landscaping plan. The brick façade of the building is to be preserved. The windows along Fourth Street were replaced, and the roof has been replaced. The parking garage will be pre-cast concrete, but they will put landscaping along Madison and Elm Street. There is nothing there currently.

There was a discussion about whether a licensed architect is being used for the project. Chairman Olsen expressed concern that there is no design professional involved in the project. He asked if this project was previously approved. Mr. Laudenslayer said that this came before zoning; there were two zoning hearings. He is doing the land development plan, and he is a licensed professional surveyor.

Chairman Olsen asked about the parking structure. Mr. Laudenslayer said that there is a ground level and there is one level that comes in off of Madison Street via a ramp. The parking structure

is happening in conjunction with the land development. Mr. Laudenslayer said that his plan shows the lower and upper levels of the parking structure.

Mr. Skrincosky said that they submitted six plan views as part of the land development plan. There is going to be additional information required for the parking facility and the internal parts of the building. This was addressed with Mr. Laudenslayer at a meeting last Thursday. There is still some work to do on the project.

Chairman Olsen said that the concept is a great idea for the site, but he wants to see the expertise of design professionals from the beginning.

Mr. Laudenslayer showed the time extension request on screen and requested a time extension until September 28, 2021. He has contacted PennDOT for the highway occupancy permit.

**Action:** Chairman Olsen made a motion to extend the time for this project until September 28<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

Commissioner Bealer said the plan requires a utility plan. The pictures in the Hawk Valley review letter are older. The structure next to the garage is demolished. There is no documentation showing that the electrical, water, and sewer lines have been properly capped and meet the requirements of Public Works so that a parking garage can go on top of it. Chairman Olsen confirmed the boundary of the garage.

Chairman Olsen asked if there is work going on currently and if building permits have been pulled. Mr. Laudenslayer said that they redid the roof and are working on the sanitary sewer and replacing the existing stormwater off of the roof. He said that as far as he knows, the City inspectors have been inspecting and approving it. Commissioner Bealer asked if a section 505 report has been submitted to Mr. Krall.

Mr. Krall confirmed that a utility plan is needed. A 505 permit is the land development plan. The work is being done ahead of permission and authority being granted by the City. Commissioner Bealer said that a Stop Work order has already been placed on the building.

Chairman Olsen said that he is glad that the developer is using a professional surveyor so that they can do the right thing and follow the correct process. He expressed the hope that Mr. Laudenslayer can direct the developer accordingly.

PC-2021-108-PF: 936 & 938 Penn Street (Prince and Princess Daycare)

Mr. Laudenslayer said that this a straight-forward project. They are converting a modern office building on Penn Street into a daycare and putting a small tot-lot on what used to be 936 Penn Street with AstroTurf. There is existing paving all the way out to Cherry Street. They have to rework the driveway ramp onto Cherry Street. There is very little land disturbance. They will do some lighting on the parking lot and improvements along Cherry Street, along with some fencing.

Mr. Peris said that a special exception for the daycare was approved.

Mr. Skrincosky said that the two properties will be combined. The applicant needs to submit deed descriptions. The outdoor play area should have a security/privacy fence to match the architecture of the building. He asked for a fencing detail on the plan. They are shifting the driveway entrance along Cherry Street, so they will need to consider site accessibility, parking, and loading. This will need to go through an ordinance curb revision with the City.

Tim Krall said that if it is just the driveway, it might be able to be done with a driveway permit. If it includes moving the curbing, then it would need an ordinance. However, if it is in conjunction with a driveway, the driveway permit make be sufficient. He will need to look at the specifics to determine.

Mr. Laudenslayer explained that it will be twenty feet of curb and a ramp. Mr. Krall confirmed that it would be one driveway in and out. He said in that case, a driveway permit would be sufficient. He asked that the on-site pickup and drop-off should be preserved, as it is rare in the downtown.

Mr. Krall asked about the proposed silver maple. Mr. Laudenslayer said that they will put in a different type of tree, as the arborist did not approve it.

Mr. Laudenslayer explained that the three-foot access easement is the old alley between the row houses. When the row house on 936 Penn Street was torn down, the alleyway remained. The property line goes through the easement to allow access to the back of 934 Penn Street. In addition, the fire escapes come down there so that has to be accommodated.

Mr. Skrincosky said that the number of parking spaces required will need to be verified. Mr. Laudenslayer said that there will be eight employees and no more than sixty-five children. The state requirements for daycares stipulate that more staff is required for babies one to four years old. Mr. Skrincosky said that this information should be put on the plan. Chairman Olsen said that the requirements for daycares from the state should be put on the plan so that Building and Codes can see the correct number of spaces are provided.

Chairman Olsen asked for staff's recommendation. Mr. Peris said that the applicant is asking for a time extension and staff is in agreement with that. Mr. Laudenslayer agreed and said that sewage planning is outstanding as well. He estimated fifteen gallons a day per person, one thousand one hundred gallons total. It was an office before, so there might be increased flow which would require sewer planning modules. Mr. Krall said that the sewer planning is based on 2010 when the City's Act 537 plan was approved. They will need to look at the water flows rates (the sewage flow), and compare that to what it was measured to be at the treatment plant to see if there would be an increase with the fifteen gallons per day. He said that fifteen gallons per day sounds a little high. Mr. Krall said that there are other ways to demonstrate flows apart from the DEP manual, such as data from a comparable use. Mr. Laudenslayer said the applicant has another daycare and they can compare flows with that facility. Mr. Krall asked Mr. Laudenslayer to send in a narrative.

Mr. Laudenslayer asked for a time extension until September 28, 2021.

Commissioner Bealer asked about the driveway cut. He thought that they cannot be more than twenty-four feet wide, but they are proposing thirty feet. Mr. Peris said that relief was granted by the Zoning Hearing Board. Commissioner Bealer said that plan notes specifying the requirements for AstroTurf are needed because there are children. When the Planning Commission does plan notes for playgrounds for the City they spell out the coverage and how that complies with ICC or with state law. Mr. Laudenslayer said he put a detail on the plan with AstroTurf's specifications for installation. Commissioner Bealer said that there are density requirements and requirements according to age group. That should be noted on the plan.

**Action:** Commissioner Cinfici made a motion to grant a time extension until September 28, 2021. Commissioner Bealer seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

Commissioner Cinfici asked if a motion to table the plans is needed. There was a discussion of the normal practice.

**Action:** Commissioner Cinfici made a motion to table 243 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Commissioner Conklin seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

**Action:** Commissioner Cinfici made a motion to table 938 Penn Street. Chairman Olsen seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

### **Item # 3 - Other Business**

**Action:** Commissioner Bealer made a motion to accept the May 25 meeting minutes. Chairman Olsen seconded the motion. Commissioner Cinfici said that he had a couple of minor edits. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

**Action:** Commissioner Bealer made a motion to grant the Marion Street Station time extension request until August 24, 2021. Commissioner Ashear seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

**Action:** Commissioner Bealer made a motion to reaffirm the Reading Soda Works plan approval. Commissioner Conklin seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5-0.

For the Commission Liaison Report, Commissioner Bealer said that he sent a few emails that he thought might be interesting for Commissioners to look at. Public Works needs to do some investigation of the 4<sup>th</sup> and Cherry Parking Garage. There was an article in the newspaper on lead poisoning indicating that levels are quite high, in particular in the downtown area. He is putting something together on that. There has been some talk that upgrades are needed at the stadium. The City spent a lot of money working on the last set of stadium upgrades, including foundation changes because of the creek that runs under the parking lot. The City has a lot invested in the stadium. He expressed the hope that the new changes are relatively minor compared to the renovations a few years ago.



Commissioner Cinfici complimented the City for removing the concrete planter on the corner between 4<sup>th</sup> and Penn Streets. That area has been a focal point for loitering and he expressed the hope that will alleviate the problem.

Chairman Olsen said that the Blighted Property Review Committee next meets on August 26<sup>th</sup>. He looked at the Planning Commission bylaws regarding the voting of officers. He has been the chair for the last two years. He would like for the board to reconsider the bylaws. He proposed that the bylaws be changed to go from annual turnover to two, two-year terms. He will not run for re-election. He said that he wants to step down from the Committee, but will reenlist with the Planning Commission for the next two years. This can be considered at the July meeting. The new chair can be the representative to the Blighted Property Review Committee. His term expires in June 2022. If asked by Council he will take another term. He suggested that the legal department write up a bylaw change to be put to the commission at the July meeting. Mr. Peris agreed and asked that any input be provided to staff before the next meeting.

Commissioner Cinfici asked if there should be a nominating committee. Commissioner Bealer said that he sent Ms. Crimm the bylaw changes proposed in 2011. They were brought before the Planning Commission and tabled and never brought up again. Commissioner Cinfici asked Chairman Olsen to put forward nominations.

The meeting was adjourned at 8pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Naomi Crimm, Planner*