

DATE: February 1, 2023

TO: North Wales Borough Council

FROM: Greta Martin Washington, Chair – North Wales Borough Planning Commission

RE: North Wales Borough Planning Commission – 2022 Annual Report of Activities

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This memorandum will serve as the North Wales Borough Planning Commission 2022 Annual Report of Activities.

The members of the Commission were: Greta Martin Washington, Gregory J. D'Angelo, Lillian Higgins, Mark Tarlecki and Jocelyn Tenney.

Timothy Konetchy, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Borough's assigned Community Planner under its Planning Assistance Contract.

Alan Guzzardo, Assistant Borough Manager, serves as a liaison to the Commission.

Eleven official meetings were held during 2022: January 05, February 02, March 02, April 06, May 04, June 01, August 03, September 07, October 05, November 02, and December 07. There was no meeting in July since there were no agenda items. The meetings were conducted in person at the North Wales Borough Hall.

In 2023, Planning Commission meetings will continue to be held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 PM.

### **January 05, 2022**

- The following officers were elected. Greg D'Angelo made the motions and Lillian Higgins seconded them. All members voted in agreement 4-0-0. Chair – Greta Martin Washington, Vice Chair – Greg D'Angelo and Secretary – Jocelyn Tenney.
- The Commission members reviewed the draft zoning map that showed the modifications being suggested for the residential and commercial districts. Commission members discussed R-1 District changes including permitted uses.

### **February 02, 2022**

- The material reviewed by the Commission was information that suggested additional permitted uses by right, accessory uses (i.e. home business, fences), accessory uses permitted by special exception, etc. They included for example,

roof-mounted solar energy systems, swimming pools, telecommunications tower, etc.

- Mark Tarlecki noted that he has suggested to the North Wales Council President and President Pro Tem that, once the zoning plan was in place the Borough should consider inviting Rebecca Swanson, Executive Director, Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority to discuss redevelopment financing.

### **March 02, 2022**

- P/F Plan Approval for 426 East Montgomery Avenue - The Commission recommended to Borough Council that the P/F Plan approval be subject to: Approval from the Zoning Hearing Board granted prior to North Wales Council consideration of the project. • Cross-access easement to be filed against both Lot 1 and Lot 2 for shared parking. \* The agreement shall detail limits of shared access as well as maintenance obligations of each Lot. • All existing utility lines must be added to the plan.
- The new suggested R1 and R2 Zoning Districts Regulations were discussed.

### **April 06, 2022**

- Tim Konetchy led the discussion regarding the new R-3 Zoning District Regulations. He provided photo examples of the type of buildings that would be included in the R-3 District.
- Member Mark Tarlecki noted that as Vice President of North Wales Borough Council, he is a member of the Borough Public Safety Committee. During a meeting the North Penn Volunteer Fire Company had requested that a 'Knox Box' be required on all new commercial businesses in North Wales. The police or fire company would have the code to enter the building in an emergency.

### **May 4, 2022**

- Tim Konetchy led the discussion regarding the proposed changes to the OR-Office Residential District regulations. Parking is a separate chapter.
- The concept of 'Village Houses' was raised. They are single-family homes on a very small lot. The house has a front porch and is built up to the sidewalk.
- The conversation touched on the authority the Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) may have in the building design of new homes in the Historic District. A discussion with the HARB was suggested once the new districts have been mapped out.
- It was suggested that multi-family development changes be considered, for example, the St. Rose Catholic Church property would be an example.

### **June 1, 2022**

- The Commission reviewed: Zoning Hearing Board Application No. 2022-04: 501 E. Walnut St.

George Cholaj, the applicant, proposed the redevelopment of 501 East Walnut St., located in the R-C Residential District. The proposal involved renovating the existing building, formally known as McKeever's Tavern. There would be eleven (11) apartment units in this building and a three story newly constructed building adjoining it that would have twenty (20) apartment units and 3,400 sq. ft of commercial/café space. No architectural plans have been submitted yet.

Chair Greta Martin Washington made the following motion: 1. Applicant agrees to write into the leases the restriction of only one car per unit. 2. In lieu of the required zoning site triangle, applicant agrees to ensure the driveways meet the safe stopping distances per PennDOT's standards. 3. Applicant agrees to obtain an emergency services review of the plan in advance of proceeding to the zoning hearing board. 4. The zoning relief obtained is contingent upon the restoration of the historic portion of the old hotel. 5. The applicant agrees to install an 8-foot-wide sidewalk in front of the new building. 6. The architecture and location of the new building will not compete with the historic building. 7. Applicant will meet with and consider recommendations by HARB. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair D'Angelo. All members voted to approve the motion 4-0-0.

- Tim Konetchy provided proposed changes to the Transit Overlay District (TOD) and Light Industrial (LI).
- There was no July, 2022 meeting. Tim Konetchy will be on vacation.

### **August 3, 2022**

- Ms. Rebecca Swanson, Executive Director, Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority was invited to the Commission to speak about possible financial assistance for redevelopment in North Wales Borough. She provided the Commission with information on available grants and low-interest loans, specifically highlighting C-Pace. It is a financial tool for property owners considering energy efficient, renewable energy and water conservation projects. At this time the program is available for commercial, industrial, agricultural and non-profit properties. Government buildings are not currently eligible.
- Tim provided the Commission members with a copy of the updated zoning map and ordinances. Reviewing sign ordinances will be the next topic for the commission. It was suggested that the Commission also check with the North Wales Historic Architecture Review Board (HARB) since they also have requirements for signs in the North Wales historic district.

### **September 07, 2022**

- Tim provided the Commission members with a copy of the 2022 Stormwater Management Ordinance Updates that the Montgomery County Planning Commission had submitted as recommendations to North Wales Borough Manager, Christine Hart. The updates are to be included in the Borough's Ordinance.
- The INO Institutional Overlay District was reviewed. Discussion involved possible updates to the District's dimensional standards and permitted uses. The intent is to maintain the architectural prominence of the buildings and at the same time accommodate community service and institutional uses.
- Parking and loading improvements would be a stand-alone section and would be updated across the board. The Transit Oriented Development District's parking will also be included in this section. The discussion included bicycle parking and materials for driveways other than cement and asphalt. SALDO should be reviewed in regard to parking lot plantings. Future discussion could also involve lowering requirements for businesses and non-resident parking.

### **October 05, 2022**

- Assistant Manager Guzzardo announced that North Wales Borough is applying for a PA State Grant for improvements in the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Park. This would include among other improvements a pervious path through the park, a planted meadow and signage indicating it is a park. The grant is for small municipalities with a 20% match. The grant recipients will be announced the first week in January 2023.
- The INO Institutional Overlay District was reviewed. Tim Konetchy presented updates following the September 07, 2022 discussion. The updates included establishment of an overlay district, permitted uses, dimensional standards, and conditional use requirements.
- Tim Konetchy presented suggested standards for parking areas, Subsection E, Driveways, and vehicular access. These included design for a ribbon driveway and specifications for pervious paving. A turn-around area in the parking area would be required.
- Tim Konetchy presented inventory maps of Montgomery County that indicated the number of multi-family and attached housing locations as well as business park inventory and age restricted housing inventory. Tim also provided a sampling of maps and data, some dating back to the 1960's, that is available on Montgomery County's website.

- Alan Guzzardo and Tim Konetchy are researching electric car charging stations that might be possible in North Wales Borough. The question was raised by council member Eion O'Neil at the September council meeting.

### **November 02, 2022**

- Review of ZHB Application 22-08 (501 E. Prospect Ave.) – Minor Home Occupation. All members voted in agreement to recommend the variance and special exception be approved by the North Wales Zoning Board.
- Tim Konetchy provided information regarding electric vehicle charging stations that included their background, zoning regulations and the municipal case studies of Lansdale Borough and Whitemarsh Township. In addition, there are tax and PECO incentives for the municipality. Commission members generally discussed the need, locations, etc. of the electric vehicle charging stations in North Wales Borough in addition to the requirements for a direct connection to a house.
- Tim Konetchy led the discussion about wireless telecommunications facilities by explaining the three types and the general requirements for siting them in North Wales Borough on a tower, on a building and on a utility pole or light pole.

### **December 07, 2022**

- Review of ZHB Application 22-09 (101 Elm Ave.) – Change of Non-Conforming Use. The Applicant required a special exception for a change of non-conforming use to allow for a roofing storage use (Section 208-173) and a use variance for the micro-brew production (Section 208-82). The Commission voted unanimously to support the application and send to the North Wales Zoning Hearing Board that the North Wales Planning Commission has no objection to the request for a special exception for a change of non-conforming use and a use variance for the micro-brew production.
- The Commission discussed additional zoning code updates – Article II: Terminology, Article XVI: General Provisions, Article XIX: Non-Conforming Uses, Article XX: Administration, and Article X Conditional Use. Examples of the sections reviewed include: Section 208-64: Storage of Certain Vehicles and Equipment in Residential District, Section 208-69: Public Open Space and Conservation Areas, Section 208-107: Non-Conforming Uses, Section 208-113: Zoning Officer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jocelyn Tenney, Secretary