

North Wales Borough Planning Commission

June 01, 2022 Meeting Minutes

The North Wales Borough Planning Commission Meeting of June 01, 2022 was conducted in person at North Wales Borough Hall.

The meeting information was advertised in The Reporter on December 21, 2021, as part of the meeting schedule for 2022.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Greta Martin Washington at 7:00 P.M. The following members were present: Greta Martin Washington, Greg D'Angelo, Lillian Higgins and Jocelyn Tenney. Member Mark Tarlecki was absent.

Assistant Borough Manager/Zoning Officer Alan Guzzardo and Borough Manager Christine Hart were present.

Tim Konetchy, Montgomery County Planning Commission Planner participated in the meeting.

Member Greg D'Angelo led the members and public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Public Comment

There was no general public comment and no questions or comments received from the public prior to the meeting.

2. Review: Zoning Hearing Board Application No. 2022-04: 501 E. Walnut St.

George Cholaj, the applicant, is proposing the redevelopment of 501 East Walnut St., located in the R-C Residential District. The proposal involves 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. Mr. Warren Friel, the applicant's representative, presented the plans and with George Cholaj answered the Planning Commission's and public's questions.

Mr. Friel's presentation and Planning Commission questions:

- a) Who owns the property? - Mr. Cholaj has an executed agreement of sale that is contingent upon receiving zoning approval.
- b) Building Height: The existing building is 48 ft. The new building would be 38 ft.
- c) The existing impervious coverage is 75% and the proposed is 77%.
- d) The existing building coverage is 11% and the proposed is 37%.
- e) The existing front setback is 5 ft. and the proposed is 0 ft.
- f) The parking space dimensions are lesser than the code requires so that supporting columns may be positioned properly.
- g) There will be twenty-nine (29) parking spaces on site and five (5) on the street. The owner is looking into accessing the SEPTA lot also.
- h) No business in the commercial area would require a tractor trailer for deliveries.

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The following questions/suggestions were posed by Chair Martin Washington:

- a) Could the building height of the new building be increased as a means to reduce overall building coverage? Response: It would be more costly.
- b) Reducing impervious coverage? Response: It's 75% currently and the proposed would be 77%.
- c) Stormwater management? Response: There would be a subsurface basin in the proposed parking lot. Chair Martin Washington noted that there is flooding at the train station inlet across the street from the property. Manager Hart noted that new piping has been installed there and the drainage is better.
- d) Can the lease contain a notice that only one parking spot is being provided per unit? Response: That would be considered. The parking spots on the property could also be numbered for each apartment.
- e) There are no commercial parking spaces? Response: Correct.
- f) Did the North Penn Volunteer Fire Company check the exit aisle? Response: No. Chair Martin Washington requested that they go to the Fire Company and the North Wales Police Department before meeting with the Zoning Hearing Board.
- g) Chair Martin Washington suggested separating the old building and the new building.

The following questions/comments were posed by Tim Konetchy, Montgomery County Planning Commission:

- a) Tim commented on the sidewalk width, the exit to East Walnut St. and the elevator in the new section.
- b) Tim commented on the possibility of an underground parking area. Response: It is costly and there is not enough space.
- c) Tim commented that conditional approval should be considered since there were no building plans to review.

Manager Hart, suggested upgrading 5th and 6th Street. Additional street parking may possibly be available on Railroad Ave. along the train station and would need striping.

Public Comments:

Wendy McClure, 309 West Montgomery Ave. asked about the elevator and how tenants would access both buildings. Response: The elevator would be in the new building and would have stops at each level in both buildings.

Doug McClure, 309 West Montgomery Ave. asked about the parking and suggested it was good to use Railroad Ave. Could it be made one-way? Has pervious parking been considered? Response: No, pervious paving is costly and is not an effective long-term solution.

Sherwin Collins, 121 Shearer St. asked if there were any ideas or restrictions regarding the type of commercial establishment that would be in the building? Response: No, the owners have considered a coffee shop and urgent care.

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Ian Horowitz, 348 West Montgomery Ave. asked if there was a trash area and if it was fenced. Response: Yes, it is in the back.

Neil McDevitt, 324 South 9th St. Are you taking down the back two additions on the McKeevers building? Response: Yes.

Jim Schiele, 307 East Montgomery Ave. Have you tried to contact SEPTA for additional parking? Response: Plan to contact SEPTA.

Manager Hart noted that the applicant probably would not get approval from SEPTA. They can ask Borough Council to review parking along Railroad Ave. Chair Martin Washington noted that the Planning Commission will be doing a parking study as part of the North Wales Comprehensive Plan 2040.

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 architectural 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. The vote was 4-0-0.

3. Approval of Minutes for May 04, 2022.

Vice Chair D'Angelo made the motion to accept the minutes of May 04, 2022. The motion was seconded by Chair Martin Washington. The vote was 4-0-0 to accept.

4. Discussion: Minor Changes to the TOD and LI

Tim Konetchy provided proposed changes to the TOD and LI. He noted that he will not be available for the Planning Commission meeting in July as he will be on vacation. Rebecca Swanson, Executive Director, Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority will attend the August 2022 meeting. Tim noted that North Wales does not have a noise ordinance. Alan Guzzardo will check if Borough Manager Hart and Council wants a noise ordinance including during construction. Vice Chair D'Angelo made the motion to cancel the Planning Commission's July meeting. Member Higgins seconded it. All members voted in agreement. The vote was 4-0-0.

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7. Adjournment:

Member D'Angelo made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 P.M. Member Tenney seconded the motion. All members present voted to adjourn 4-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jocelyn Tenney, Secretary