

**I. OPENING**

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** The Planning Commission of Lower Saucon Township was called to order on Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall at 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bethlehem, PA, with Craig Kologie presiding.

**B. ROLL CALL:** Present: Craig Kologie, Chair; Jeffrey Schmehl, Jennifer Peters, Shorav Kaushik, Thomas Bartek and Veronica Gress, Members; Jim Young, Zoning Officer; Steve Goudsouzian, Solicitor; Brien Kocher, Engineer.

Chris Nagy arrived at 7:05 p.m.

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT/CITIZEN AGENDA ITEMS**

Craig Kologie stated I'm going to suggest that we move the public comment period until after the presentation tonight in case there's any comments on the presentation.

**III. REORGANIZATION**

Craig Kologie stated before we start tonight's meeting, we need to reorganize for the year. So, I'm going turn the meeting over to our solicitor and let him direct the order here.

Steve Goudsouzian stated good evening everyone, I'm Steve Goudsouzian and I was appointed the interim solicitor for Lower Saucon Township last night. I'm happy to be here today. Whenever an entity or Board meets for the first time whenever a cycle turns, they have to reorganize which means that they have to choose a chairman, vice chairman and so on. It can be a relatively formal or informal process. Normally for Planning Commissions, it's somewhat informally done compared to others. The process would be that somebody can nominate a chair and then theoretically the nominations are supposed to close and then you vote on the person. So, for argument's sake, I can't do it, but I'm just saying if you were to do it with me, you would nominate me and then see if somebody else wanted to be nominated also and then we go through the nomination process, when that was done you then vote. And if I was voted as chair, fine and then we would move to vice chair and we'd continue down that road. So, that's what we have to do before we actually conduct our official business for today. So, the first question would be would anybody like to make a nomination for the election of the chair? And, it can be anyone who sits on the Planning Commission, it's totally your choice. I'm new so I don't want to volunteer anyone, but Mr. Kologie has sat as the chair in the past.

**A. Election of Chair**

**MOTION BY:** Jennifer Peters moved to nominate Craig Kologie as Chair.

**SECOND BY:** Jeff Schmehl

**ROLL CALL:** 5 ayes – 0 nays – 1 abstain (Kologie) - 1 absent (Nagy)

**B. Election of Vice Chair**

Steve Goudsouzian stated now we have a vice chair and we have to nominate a vice chair for the Planning Commission, so would anybody like to make a nomination?

Craig Kologie stated I nominate Jeff Schmehl.

Jeff Schmehl stated I appreciate that but I decline.

Craig Kologie stated okay. Is there anybody who would like to . . . At this time we have three new members, so I don't want to put anybody on the spot as far as that goes. So, the responsibilities of the vice chair, they would take over the chairman's duties when the chairman isn't here.

Steve Goudsouzian stated so in general as a rule, if you're brand new, you might not want to serve in that capacity. If there's only a few of us who have sat in the past, it would be the appropriate initial choices, if you're so inclined. It doesn't have to be that way. I'm half joking, but you can always punish the person who doesn't show up. You can do that and then we can discuss it later and if we have to reorganize again or if he chooses not to be vice chair, we can address that at that time.

Craig Kologie stated so Chris is the secretary, so he does have a role, an official role, and he's been on the Commission for awhile.

**MOTION BY:** Craig Kologie moved to nominate Chris Nagy as Vice Chair.

**SECOND BY:** Shorav Kaushik

**ROLL CALL:** 6 ayes – 0 nays – 1 absent (Nagy)

Steve Goudsouzian stated and then we have to elect a secretary.

Craig Kologie stated so the secretary's responsibilities are if the chair and vice chair are not here, they would run the meeting and their other role is they sign the final plans when the plans are to be recorded, there's a signature on the plan for the secretary. So, Jennifer since you're not the newest member here, I'll nominate you.

**C. Election of Secretary**

**MOTION BY:** Craig Kologie moved to nominate Jennifer Peters as Secretary.

**SECOND BY:** Veronica Gress

**ROLL CALL:** 7 ayes – 0 nays

Steve Goudsouzian stated normally we then we will set our times for our meetings; and, normally we rely on Molly and the staff to tell us when that is.

Molly Bender stated they're generally the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month. There are, I think, 2 months, December and November, that we will do the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays and we always meet at 7 o'clock.

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Craig Kologie stated so then what we do is take the vote to go ahead and establish the schedule that Molly suggested.

**D. Designation of Planning Commission Meeting: Time, Place and Date for 2022**

It was agreed to designate the meeting dates for the Planning Commission on the fourth Thursday of each month in 2023 (except November and December which will be the third Thursday of the month) at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall.

**MOTION BY:** Craig Kologie moved to keep the meetings as the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

**SECOND BY:** Thomas Bartek

**ROLL CALL:** 7 ayes – 0 nays

**IV. BUSINESS ITEMS**

Craig Kologie stated so the first item on the agenda, typically we do public comments/Citizen agenda items. I'm gonna suggest that we move that to after the business items; so, if there's anybody in the audience that has any comments on that application, they can ask them at that time.

Jennifer Peters stated I'm gonna be recusing myself as St. Lukes is involved in this project and I am employed by St. Lukes.

Shorav Kaushik stated my wife is an employee for St. Lukes, so it might be appropriate for me to recuse myself as well.

Steve Goudsouzian stated so for members who choose to recuse yourself, you have the option of you can certainly remain here and just not participate in in this particular item or if you felt more comfortable you can sit in the back too. So, whatever you feel more comfortable doing.

Tom Bartek stated so, I am Tom Bartek, I am not gonna recuse myself, but I do have a relationship starting up tomorrow with Keystone Engineering. We will be hiring them as our engineer where I work. But, that should not impinge on my decisions with the Township.

Steve Goudsouzian stated so, when we have the record reflecting when the time comes for the minutes that Mr. Kaushik has recused himself and Miss Peters has recused herself. And, before we get started for the new members of the Planning Commission, what is before you, just so you're aware of and can sort of set the stage for this, it's called a sketch plan. So, a sketch plan is the preliminary way that a developer would come before the Township or the Planning Commission and essentially they'll say this is what we're thinking of doing, this is our concept. So, it is not as specific or in depth as you might have down the line. This is an opportunity for the Planning Commission to provide an indication of what they find favorable, what they don't find favorable and so on. You don't, at the end of a sketch plan, you don't vote formally. But what you end up doing is telling the developers, informally, this is what we liked about it, this is what we didn't like, this is what we'd like to see, with the concept that they would then come back with a much more formal or much more in depth presentation which would then meet or not meet various requirements. So, for today's purposes, especially for the people who are new, keep that in mind. The process normally works where the engineer has provided a letter outlining the various issues that have arisen and rather than

going point by point by point, the developer either through their representatives or their engineer will indicate they're in agreement with most or they're not in agreement and we'll talk about the issues that exist. And then the process is the Planning Commission can ask questions and have a conversation. It's normally done in a relatively informal manner and then subsequently the public can also become involved. So, that's the idea. So, I wanted to sort of give you the ground rules, some of you have been doing this for a long time and I apologize for saying what you obviously know but for some of you it's new. Thank you.

Craig Kologie stated that's very helpful. Thank you, Steve.

**A. ROUTE 412 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SKETCH PLAN #SK 02-23 – Buffalo Plaza LLC – 1865 & 1883 Leithsville Road (R7-11-1; R7-11-2B & R7NW2-1-2, 3 & 4**

Dennis Benner stated I am the property owner. I'm here together with St. Lukes as the applicant or co-applicant for this project. St. Lukes is anticipating a medical office building at this facility. With me tonight is Scott Pasterski with Keystone Engineering, St. Lukes Counsel, Steve Boell and Mary Jane McKeever, she's the head of real estate for St. Lukes.

Craig Kologie stated if you want to jump in and just kind of tell us what you're planning there.

Victoria Opthof-Cordaro stated I'm sorry to jump in, I just wanna ask if you can pull the microphone in front of both of them. But, if you look at your microphone, it has a red colored square, it means it's off. Thank you very much.

Steve Boell stated my name is Steve Boell and as Dennis indicated I'm legal counsel for St. Lukes. Steve candidly knocked off the first ball point I had which was explain what a sketch plan is. And, as Steve indicated we're here tonight to get your comments relative to the layout of the plan and those general comments; and, also have a discussion about the comments in the Township Engineer's review letter. A couple of other comments I want to make to introduce the project is St. Lukes actually currently has two applications that are pending, only one of which is before you tonight. The first one is a sketch plan application, but within our initial due diligence with Dennis, we've actually identified that the development of a medical office or any use on this property will require four zoning variances. Scott is gonna walk you through what those zoning variances relate to. Upon having practiced in this Township before, they are not unusual zoning variances. They have to do with things, and those of you that have been on the Planning Commission, you've probably heard these before, things like woodlands disturbance and steep slopes and things like that. Although those zoning variances will be heard by the Zoning Hearing Board, one of the things we very much want to hear tonight are your feelings about those variances. Are you supportive of them, do you have any concerns about them and have we addressed these concerns. Scott will go over them in greater detail but to give you a 10 second summary of the justification for the variances is where the driveway is on that property, that's where the bulk of those resources are. And this driveway as Scott will walk you through, is located very very intentionally where it is because it aligns with the shopping center, the Giant across the street which is really the only logical place on the property you can build that driveway. And that's a pretty, for us, very compelling legal hardship. So, the batting order tonight is Mary Jane, who is the Senior Vice President of Real Estate for St. Lukes. MJ oversees St. Lukes real estate holdings, their leasing requisition and also a lot of the network development type issues. MJ is going to give you an overview of St. Lukes general intention for the property and then Scott will go through the engineering details.

Mary Jane McKeever stated thanks, Steve. Thank you all for your time tonight. We're very excited to be talking about this project which we think will really be wonderful for Lower Saucon Township. We have a medical office building in Hellertown with a family practice and a lab outreach office. They're at capacity. We've been looking for some time for a great location and we've been working with Dennis to acquire the property that's called the Buffalo LLC right across from the Giant shopping center. So, St. Lukes, we have provided with you tonight I think earlier a sketch plan and I think some directionally an idea of what we would like this building to look like. I think we also provided you with pictures of other buildings that St. Lukes has constructed. We're working with architects, we think we bring a lot of beautiful buildings to communities. We want to enhance access to care for our neighbors and now Lower Saucon residents as well. So, I'm excited that St. Lukes is interested in constructing this building in Lower Saucon Township providing great access to care. We love this parcel, we think it's great in terms of being across from the Giant supermarket at the signalized intersection. And, we're looking forward to talking through the parcel and plan with you. So, I guess I'll turn it over to Scott.

Scott Pasterski stated it's a pleasure to be here tonight. I'm Scott Pasterski with Keystone Consulting Engineers So, just to pick up, a lot of my bullet points were taken by the first two in the line up here. However, I can jump right into it. I'm gonna start on the plan that perhaps is not as exciting. This is the existing features plan and you all know where the site is by this point, it's right across from the Giant shopping center. I just wanted to point out a couple of things before we get into the actual proposal and describe what's going on. This site is actually comprised of 3 current tracts and I'm attempting to kind of trace them right now with my mouse, maybe doing a poor job of it. There's a tract here in the front that's directly across from the driveway, there's another tract right here, and then the one that kind of wraps around everything. The site is located, the project site is located on the consolidation of those three tracts. When you combine those three tracts it's just over 6 acres in size, it's 6.11 if you like details. The underlying zoning is General Business. Within the General Business district, medical office is an approved use. And, you'll see in a minute the plan that we laid out is compliant to all the dimensional requirements as far as setbacks, etc. And again, this right here is the Giant shopping center, I'll talk more about that in a minute. Let me go to the fun plan. Alright, so as was said, this was our general layout, let me just some very basic information, we have 30,000 square foot of medical office space proposed. That would be located on 2 separate levels, that there's two 15,000 square foot plates, this rectangle that you see right here is 15,000 square feet. Two of those that levels with the ground level under ground level parking. So, you could drive under here and there's a small detail here showing you what it could look like, it's just a sketch plan. But, approximately 30 spaces of the proposed 150 parking spaces would be proposed to be provided underneath the building. This is not a completely unusual or never heard of idea. St. Lukes has a similar facility in Whitehall Township on MacArthur Road right at Schadt Avenue where they did the exact same thing, slightly smaller, a little bit smaller, but the same concept. So, the site as you can see once the lots are consolidated is a little bit unusually shaped. So, we had to work the site around the property, but, however, we feel the parking layout is adequate to serve the practitioners, the staff, the patients very well. Again, we believe we've complied with all zoning.

Another important point I wanted to point out is a good portion of the site is woodland and this proposal is to leave it woodland for this entire area over here you can see or actually individually surveyed every tree in here and also outlined the rough edges of the woods. With regards to the access again, good access management principles, this is located right across from the Giant parking lot, that's a signalized intersection currently, it would remain signalized. And, we would create this driveway to basically mirror what's going on on the shopping center side. Even though this particular use, and we'll talk about traffic in a minute, does have a traffic impact of about 1,000 trips per day which would trigger a traffic impact study in accordance the Ordinance, which we understand.

However, the footprint of this driveway is most likely, does not have to be this large, but we wanted to mirror what was going on over here and plus we're contemplating a potential, if it's ever feasible, and we can't comment on that, but if it's ever feasible to extend this alignment for future use, we want it to be set up to do that. But, in the immediate or part, in perpetuity we would leave this driveway for the single access to the site. So, moving on, with regards to traffic impacts, I mentioned it's a little over 1,000 trips per day based on current estimates using the ITE manual which is the traffic geek way of determining these things. Also, in the AM peak hour, the morning rush hour when everyone's going to work and school and everything, it's about a little over 80 vehicles in the peak hour time and about 120 vehicles roughly in the PM peak hour. Everyone's coming home from work in the rush hour basically. And so that in traffic circles, that's a very low traffic impact. However, like I said, we would be providing the traffic impact study per the Township's ordinances. Moving on, this plan is just a sketch plan so it's not fully engineered, it's typical of a sketch plan. It just shows layout compliance with zoning hopefully. But, things like the vertical design, the grading of the site, the details of the utilities, the stormwater are not depicted on this plan; but, I can touch briefly on each one of those so you know what we're thinking. We have spent a good amount of time and effort thinking through those things to make sure what we have here would actually work.

With regards to water service, there is existing water in the Giant parking lot actually, roughly where I'm motioning here. There's also water in Springtown Hill Road that kind of comes to this strange intersection down here. We have had discussion with the Lower Saucon Authority engineer and although the most direct access to the site would be to connect it right here with probably a directional drill under the roadway, they have asked the applicant to consider connecting that utility to connect the loop, in water engineering having a loop system is generally better, it creates redundancy if there's a problem in one area, you can still serve from another area. In addition, hydraulically, it performs better in their belief. I can't certainly comment on that; but, certainly that would be considered as part of our application. With regards to sanitary sewer service, there's an existing manhole that is, it's off this page actually, it's not depicted, but from the building would run along the right-of-way of Leithsville Road or State Road 412 either across public right-of-way, the applicant's property or Lower Saucon Authority property if we can squeeze it in there and direct to that existing manhole. Now, I think maybe some of you are not aware, but probably most are aware, if you've been here any length of time the Township has a lift station, a public works project that is in the process of being designed and bid out and things like that. So, no sewer could flow down that pipe until that lift station was operational, constructed and operational; and, so we understand that.

Just briefly with regards to . . . there is 3 phase electric on the other side of Leithsville Road, there's also UGI gas, both with no issues perceived to serve the building in that respect.

Last thing and I'll be done and I know throwing a lot of information, I want to open it up to questions and I wanted to ask a few questions myself with regards to Hanover's letter. But with regards to stormwater, again just a sketch plan, not fully designed; however, we are contemplating stormwater is mostly going to be managed with underground facilities under the parking lot which is very typical for a development of this nature when you have space constraints and not a lot of open land. And, we'd manage it with respect to rate control, volume control, most likely a spray irrigation system to spray the undeveloped portions of the proposed grass areas and even spray into the wooded area to meet the requirements of our DEP permitting and also the Township's Stormwater Management Ordinance. And with respect to site grading, you know it is a relatively steeply sloped site, it's about 7 to 8 percent average slope across as you go from west to east, north is to the right, I should've mentioned that. But, we believe we can accomplish that. Hopefully, we might need a few retaining walls, but we believe we can largely accomplish that with just normal site grading. So, I neglected to mention in the beginning, we are receipt of Hanover's January 19<sup>th</sup> letter; and, unless there's any

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immediate questions on my presentation, I did have a few questions for the Board that I'd like to pose. But, I think I'd open it up first to any questions you may have.

Jeffrey Schmehl asked the one lot on Springtown Hill Road that you're taking, there's currently a house on that lot that's gonna come down, is that what's happening there?

Dennis Benner answered yes.

Scott Pasterski answered correct.

Chris Nagy asked what's the setback from the building to the road?

Scott Pasterski asked the zoning setback?

Chris Nagy answered yeah.

Scott Pasterski answered let me zoom in. I believe it's 25 feet, let's see if I'm right.

Chris Nagy stated that area there is considerably higher than the parking lot at the Giant. Do you know the difference between that?

Scott Pasterski answered I do. I should address something here, we had this sketched out as a stormwater management area which I completely realize that's at the top of the hill. So, at first glance what are you doing, you know who hired this guy. What that's for, first of all we can back pitch water into the basin. The initial intent was to take some water from Mt. Pleasant Road and bring it into the basin and kind of over compensate, basically let a little more water on the site run off and capture that. As we investigated it further, most likely there will not be a basin here, this will be an area reserved to spray. So, that's in order to manage the water, we have to spray the water into grass areas or undeveloped areas. And, it's probably gonna be more useful as a spray area than it would as a basin. Again, just a sketch and not fully evaluated; however, that's where our current thinking is on that matter.

Jeffrey Schmehl asked what do you anticipate the cross slope on the parking lot to be?

Scott Pasterski answered that's a great question. Industry standard is 5 percent or less for a parking lot otherwise you get things like doors banging into other cars . . .

Jeffrey Schmehl stated you've definitely got a 5 percent. Five percent is pretty steep for a parking lot.

Scott Pasterski stated right, it's an industry maximum, it's not necessarily desirable. I like to keep them at 4 percent and that's just the way you know 20 years ago that's how my boss taught me. So, we're gonna try to maintain a comfortable slope. Most likely we will have, I mean the building itself will be elevated a few feet above the road, so that's gonna take care of some of the grade difference. We'll pitch the water away from the building probably a gutter line either here or maybe here and come up as fast as we can without sacrificing the quality of the parking lot. So that could be, that could be 3 percent, that could be 4 percent if, depending on the way it's pitched. If it's pitched along the longitudinal portion of the car, that's not as bad. If the cars were sat sideways and you're on a steep slope, you open the door and there it goes and you get a nick in whoever's parked next to you. So, that has to be looked at very carefully and thought through and make sure it's something we're

gonna be happy with when we're done. To answer your question directly, about 3 to 4 percent is what would we would end up with.

Thomas Bartek asked has the land been perced?

Scott Pasterski answered no, with respect to sewer that's proposed to be public. With respect to this particular BMP, it's best management practice, and that's what we need to provide. We would use, with spray irrigation, especially on new ground, you use what's called an evapotranspiration rate. I think it's a half inch per hour per day, about 3 inches, you don't need to perc it, let me just sum it up that way. If you do perc an area that's undeveloped and it comes up better, you can use it. But, we based our feasibility on what we're guaranteed to get regardless of how it percs.

Thomas Bartek asked are you planning on designing some rain gardens with all this as well?

Scott Pasterski answered if it's feasible and this area right here if we can get some water to it and design it for volume control, also for water quality, that would be an area, any place where you see white, perhaps in this area here, we can consider that. I just know do we have a fail safe method, we have, we actually have two. We have spray irrigation and there's another one, but I won't bore you with the details.

Thomas Bartek stated because I know some of the islands in the parking lot, the white spaces, they can be designed as rain gardens the way of how you allow the water to enter it. But just make sure that we have curbing all around that so that snow removal doesn't destroy what you're retaining the water in there for, you know allowing water to penetrate back down.

Scott Pasterski stated good point, that'll certainly be considered. This is all proposed to be curbed as well.

Thomas Bartek stated but I'm saying with the slope of the grade that you're allowed to, you could probably manage some of that water to those areas and make those inside areas rain gardens if you choose.

Scott Pasterski stated right, that's an option on the table, absolutely.

Jeffrey Schmehl asked where you have the road, the future, I guess, the road extension where the driveway's coming there . . .

Scott Pasterski stated yes.

Jeffrey Schmehl asked the possible future road extension I guess we'll call it. What's that gonna look like when it's finished? Are we gonna leave that like that with the curb return like that or we gonna curb across there?

Scott Pasterski stated that would depend, I mean the water's not gonna be flowing, if the water was gonna escape the pavement and head onto the neighbor's property, we would have to manage it and capture it.

Jeffrey Schmehl stated I'm just looking at it more from an aesthetical point of view.



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Scott Pasterski stated gotcha. You know maybe we show it like it's a stub, we could probably revise that a little bit so it doesn't look like a stub, so it bends around with the radius it looks more intentional and not like hey there's something else going to happen.

Thomas Bartek stated I think you almost have to put some sort of barrier there so that, you know, we were all kids at one time, and they're gonna drive through this and wreak havoc. So, maybe some sort of a barrier so you don't continue on the property.

Scott Pasterski stated right.

Craig Kologie stated I think just a finished . . .

Jeffrey Schmehl stated yeah, that's the point I was making, if you actually curb that, you won't need a barrier and it would look nicer and finished.

Craig Kologie stated providing that right-of-way to the property line. How would you envision that being constructed, say if it ever comes to building that in the future, would the property owner be responsible for building that portion of that, the remainder of that roadway?

Scott Pasterski asked you mean the extension of the roadway?

Craig Kologie answered yeah.

Scott Pasterski stated I don't know if I can answer that right now. That's something that would have to be discussed.

Craig Kologie stated yeah, I think it might be something that when we get into the plan itself, that's a detail we'd probably like to get worked out. I mean certainly you're not responsible for off your property but maybe on your property so to finish that road in some point in the future.

Steve Boell stated I think St. Lukes would be thrilled if that became a through road right there. Beyond the benefits to the community, I mean obviously the hospital and I think the Township could expect full cooperation with St. Lukes through that process.

Craig Kologie stated and there might be a desire to make that offered for public dedication if you want to make a through road and discontinue doing something else with the road alignment through there and make that part of the official Township roadway.

Steve Boell stated yeah, I mean, it's part of the land development and we're more than happy to work through those details.

Thomas Bartek stated it would definitely offset the awkwardness of entering Spring Road from 412 which is that always is a high traffic area for the future.

Dennis Benner stated one of the whole purposes for this was that in anticipation at some future point, they will connect that.

Thomas Bartek stated I have a question about properties, so on Springtown Road, there's 2 properties correct?

Scott Pasterski answered one on either side of our property, yeah.

Thomas Bartek stated and then one in the back by Mt. Pleasant. Is that all grass behind that property of Mt. Pleasant.

Scott Pasterski stated Mt. Pleasant here, right.

Thomas Bartek stated so, what I'm getting at is light pollution. You know, all these big buildings go up and you're a neighbor, you're used to darkness, I don't like light pollution at all and I don't think there's consideration for everyone. All these buildings today, I live next to the big box buildings, they have these lights on their building shining out. The lights should be at the parking lot shining in and away from residents. And the light intensity should be another factor of not this high bright intense LED lighting, something soft all down lighting which you know that's what you want to do. So, I'm the big guy on light pollution when we're used to darkness and seeing the stars and what not, and I know this is a higher concentration of some commercial things going on, but anything we can do to make sure that residents have some maintained of some darkness, that's a great thing to try to do.

Scott Pasterski stated right.

Brien Kocher stated so as part of the land development plan submission, you'll be submitting a lighting plan. The Township does have light standards, you know a maximum of 16 foot, there's full cut off, all that to address that. But those details we'll see when the land development plan comes in. Then you'll be able to review it.

Thomas Bartek stated because there's gonna be some parking lot lighting and I just want to make sure that it's not impinging on the residents that are currently there.

Steve Boell stated Scott and I have done a number of St. Lukes projects together before and this is not the only one we've done where there's nearby residences. St. Lukes is very intentional in the process they use on lighting in terms of all those types of controls we were just talking about where the direction, the types of bulbs that are used and all those things. When we come back with that lighting plan, we'll demonstrate to you that we truly do not want to have any adverse impact on the neighbors.

Thomas Bartek stated I just want to be an advocate for the residents.

Jeffrey Schmehl stated there's a property that looks like it's south of the basin on Mt. Pleasant Road. It's not shown on the map here, I guess it would be under somewhere around where the legend is, there's an existing home there. Is that, so it seems like they're gonna be impacted by this parking lot and what's going on here. Is there a plan, I don't see any kind of a buffer there? I know that they're showing that it's wooded but I'm looking on the map here and it looks like they're not gonna have much of a buffer there.

Scott Pasterski stated I'm glad you pointed that out because I forgot to mention that in my presentation. Where you see the green circles here, there's 2 things that are going to provide a buffer between anybody on Mt. Pleasant Road, residents, traveling public or whatever, and from seeing the building which will be beautiful. I mean St. Lukes always does a great job. However, if someone doesn't want to see intermixed a residential feel to a medical office feel, we have evergreen buffering proposed. These have a mature height of about 40 to 50 feet. Not only would the trees provide a

visual screen; but, just as I mentioned one of the good things about the grade of the site is we've got about 15 feet of the site is buried by the fact that we're higher here and lower here. So the grade is going to help immensely to cover most or maybe about half of the building and the dense evergreen screen would cover the rest. Again, this is just conceptual, but we staggered it to allow some overlap of trees to make sure there's no gaps.

Jeffrey Schmehl stated so you don't think we'll need something on the southside of that parking lot? Because where that guy is located, he's right where it says legend, that's right about where his house is.

Scott Pasterski stated right. This here, I mean they're gonna be completely, there's woods over here and I believe over here.

Jeffrey Schmehl stated yeah, that's not helping him though.

Scott Pasterski stated I see what you're saying.

Dennis Benner stated that's Nanette Keck's property. We've had conversations with Nanette Keck and we've represented that we will buffer along that, it would be the south side of that property. There's a lot of grade change from that line down to where her home is also, so just what Scott said in terms of where that office building is terms, in starts at that grade change with the trees they're gonna plant up on top of it. It's a similar thing on the south side of that property.

Jeffrey Schmehl stated okay. Yeah we can't see that.

Craig Kologie stated so that would be something we'd like to see when you come back in with an application.

Steve Boell stated I'd also say that as part of the lighting, Scott can speak to this, St. Lukes has worked with municipalities where it's in a residential district in terms of dimming certain lights after operational hours. These are not 24 hour a day buildings as MJ said. These are gonna be more specialty practices where they'll close down; and, again certain lights have to stay on for safety as you know. But they really do try to work with the Township to identify a lighting plan that may get through that.

Thomas Bartek stated the site that you're talking about is on Water Street that would be moving over to here, your St. Lukes site? The existing site on Water Street.

Mary Jane McKeever stated the existing practice is in Hellertown.

Thomas Bartek asked on Water Street?

Jennifer Peters stated it's on Front Street.

Thomas Bartek stated my next question is this, the other thing I'd like to see a lot more green over the parking lots to shade the parking lots, the asphalt. You know often times it's just a sea of black asphalt and it's just heat after heat after heat and anything we can do to protect the environment by planting more trees, I know it's a clean up issue but it does help part of what we're all trying to do is get a better green earth.

Scott Pasterski stated agreed, similar to the lighting that will be part of the land development, we'll have a lighting and landscaping plan. Actually, they'll be separated. In the landscaping, the ordinance has, I think it's one tree every 500 square foot of impervious surfaces is required by the ordinance. And that'll all be detailed on the land development.

Brien Kocher stated I do have 2 sort of planning issues to start to think about when you put the plan together. So, the Township has historically recognized that the alignment of Spring Hill Road and 412 is not the best alignment in its current condition. So, the Township has in the past studied a connection like this from across the street from Giant. The question is, no one has ever decided where it will end up, whether it will end up on Mt. Pleasant or Springtown Hill. If the Township gives some thought to that now, at least we can point your portion in the right direction at least to the best that we can now, so that you don't build it and somebody has to move it in the future, that's the first thing. And then the second thing for the benefit of the new members especially, as Scott mentioned, the Lower Saucon Authority has a temporary pump station for sewage right now in that triangle at Springtown Hill and 412. That is being eliminated and moving further north. When that happens, Council has to decide what properties get allocated that sewage. So, that had, I do not believe that's happened from the Council aspect. So, that particular allocation has to be sought by St. Lukes with the Council as they determine what the service area of that pump station will be.

Steve Boell stated absolutely, St. Lukes acknowledges and knows that they'll ask for an Amendment of the 537 plan as a part of this process.

Craig Kologie asked so this particular property is not in the sewer service area currently?

Brien Kocher stated well the current pump station doesn't really have a sewer service area, it's Giant. But, there was sewage planning done for the new location; but, that actual allocation step that Council has to make and acknowledge what that area is, I do not believe they've done that yet.

Craig Kologie stated I'm sure they have a certain capacity, is there . . .

Brien Kocher stated it has more capacity. The Authority knows what that is and will communicate that to the Township when the allocation portion comes.

Steve Boell stated we appreciate that comment, we understand that. Scott, just two more things just to facilitate discussion on them, can you talk about the variances and I think you did say you had a couple questions on the letter.

Scott Pasterski stated one of the questions, we can start with what Attorney Boell's mentioning. If we can skip to the zoning comments, does everyone have a copy of the letter? The zoning comments are in section B.

Steve Boell stated the Hanover January 19<sup>th</sup> letter.

Scott Pasterski stated I do have a couple of extra copies. And so, all this is basically saying is this is what was referenced earlier in the presentation that this, we believe and we've reviewed this letter in detail with respect to the other zoning comments. And we feel good about those and, I don't think we have any real questions. But, with respect to what's called the natural resource section of the zoning ordinance and what it is briefly, let me go to the existing features plan for a moment, and you can see them mapped on this plan. The zoning ordinance identifies several types of items that would

include a steep slope area, sometimes if it's a combination of the two, that's called environmentally sensitive woodland. So, these, and the steep slopes in particular are divided up into ranges, so I think it's 0 to 8 is one range, 8 to 15, 15 to 25 percent slope and then greater than 25 percent slope and the intensity of those slopes are indicated by the dark or shading in these areas. So long story short, there's a significant portion, as Steve had said, of those natural resources, you can see the steep slopes here right across from the driveway, you can also see the woodlands, actually here's the edge of the woods right here. A lot of those woods are getting disturbed in addition to elsewhere on the site as well that our layout in any way we've tried to do it, cannot avoid exceeding the allowable disturbance areas that the zoning ordinance outlines. So, we have done a calculation of natural resources which is just an itemized area calculation of each resource individually; and, in doing so we exceed the amount of area that we are allowed to disturb. And, I have, I won't rattle off the amounts, but, well I guess I will because it won't take but a moment. In slope areas of 8 to 15 percent, we are allowed .34 acres and we're disturbing .79 for a difference of almost half an acre; 25 percent or greater slopes, we have a relief of .07 acres that's required, for a natural resource of woodlands we have almost three quarters of an acre that we can't meet. And, then for environmentally sensitive woodlands which are the combination of two woodlands and another natural resource, we have it's a little over a tenth of an acre that we cannot mitigate with this layout. So, we realize that this, you know this is the zoning ordinance we're talking about and that's the jurisdiction of the Zoning Hearing Board and any decision would need to be rendered by the Zoning Hearing Board. But as the Planning Commission, do you have a recommendation or any thoughts or concerns about those variances in light of and with respect to everything you've heard so far.

Steve Goudsouzian stated if I may, before anybody responds, as a Planning Commission you have no obligation to affirmatively answer this question. I'm not saying it's done improperly in any sense, I'm not suggesting that. But, you don't have to answer it, number one. Number two, at the sketch plan stage, anything or anything that you indicate isn't binding. So, your not, even if you say something and you might want to change your mind later, it's okay. And, ultimately, as indicated by their engineer, appropriately, if they need to obtain zoning relief, they would not come before the Planning Commission, they'd go to the Zoning Hearing Board and they'd have to meet certain requirements. So, it wouldn't be your ultimate decision anyway. So, with that understanding, if you want to respond back and give your thoughts, you certainly may; and, I'm not saying you shouldn't. But, also don't feel obligated like you have to.

Thomas Bartek stated I'm gonna respond. So, any of those disturbances would require the retaining walls and that's what you spoke of at higher elevation areas. That's where the retaining walls are gonna be coming in.

Scott Pasterski stated no, it's just the driveway and parking areas, if you will step on those environmentally sensitive areas. And we can't do this layout without stepping on those areas.

Craig Kologie asked would you characterize the slopes along the road as, are they manmade as a result of building the roadway to begin with or what's the genesis of those in your opinion?

Dennis Benner stated I think I actually, when I did the initial subdivision from the Keck property, my engineer who happened to be with the same firm told me and indicated that the slope along 412 road was manmade as a result of building the road out there. None the less, it's there but it was a manmade slope.

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Craig Kologie stated personally I'd like to just reserve comment on that until we see how you deal with some of these other issues we talked about tonight, whether it's the lighting, the landscaping and some of those other things before I'd give you any direction on that.

Thomas Bartek asked you didn't have any Geotech studies yet or anything of that nature done?

Scott Pasterski stated not, geologist's studies based for infiltration, no, not yet.

Dennis Benner stated as part of the initial subdivision, I did have perc work, one of your questions, done here and this property does perc.

Craig Kologie asked do you want to ask Hanover any other questions?

Scott Pasterski stated I do have just a few more questions from the letter. We're on the zoning comments and we could probably handle these both together. With respect to comment number 6 and comment number 10, both are pertaining to buffer yards, one is a buffer yard provided along abutting residential uses and number 10, a buffer yard is required to separate parking areas from side property lines. I just want to confirm that we're on the same page, and maybe it is more of a question for Brien. So, the buffer yards we have here, you know they're coincident with the setbacks, or whoever, I'm not trying to say who has to answer this, and it's okay for them to . . .

Brien Kocher stated the ordinance does give guidance on that and it is allowed.

Scott Pasterski stated that was my reading of it but I just wanted to confirm because it's so important because if it can't then that drastically changes our layout.

Brien Kocher stated I'd be happy to review that with you, call me.

Scott Pasterski stated okay, thank you that would be helpful. The buffering like I said, we did have the opportunity, not me personally, but to meet with the Township staff and we indicated some of the concerns that were expressed here about buffering from the residential neighborhood. So, we did in response to that provide the buffering along Mt. Pleasant. But, as far as side lot lines and things like that, what would the expectation be as far as if there's existing woods there, would that count as buffering. Do we have to plant more trees on top of that? It's really a minor detail, but I wanted to get some clarity.

Brien Kocher stated it can, and it's a matter of you explaining to them and showing them what's there to say it meets the requirements of a buffer; and, then it needs to be protected and identified as a buffer just like a new buffer would be so that they're not cut down the next day.

Scott Pasterski stated okay, fair enough. I think I got my answers unless someone else wanted to comment. And I just had actually two more questions on this letter, if we can actually go back a page, Subdivision & Land Development review and it's comment numbers 5 and 7. So these are both, basically the site has 3 separate frontages, so along Leithsville Road or State Road 412, along Mt. Pleasant from about here, if you can see in my cursor, to here and this is a different property, and on Springtown Hill Road from here to here. And per the ordinance, the SALDO ordinance, there are improvements required such as widening of the road to whatever the use of the road, whether it's a collector road or a local road, a certain width is specified in the ordinance, to put sidewalk in. And then in comment number 7 also to dedicate additional right-of-way to match the standard cross section for the road classification that these roads would be. And, so, with respect to Springtown

Hill Road and Mt. Pleasant, since these, typically in these types of situations where you only have a small amount of frontage and you're kind of landlocked on the other side with properties that are not required to do this, we request a deferral for these. Not saying we would never do it or St. Lukes would never do it, but it doesn't make sense to do it now. And so for these two properties for the road widening, because think about it, if you're driving down the road and this road is say 22 to 24 foot wide and then it gets to be 30 foot wide and then it stops again abruptly and there's sidewalk going for a stretch of the road, it just seems a little out of place. So, I wanted to get the Planning Commission . . .

Jeffrey Schmehl asked are there sidewalks on the adjacent properties?

Scott Pasterski answered no. And the Township would decide when that deferral would be called in, when it was appropriate. The Township would have the complete authority as to if and when that ever occurs.

Steve Boell stated upon the approval, St. Lukes would sign an agreement or a plan note, whatever's required saying that whenever someone else widens that road and puts a sidewalk in, they have to install it. And then they actually just had to go through a project over in South Whitehall where they had to install a sidewalk under those circumstances.

Brien Kocher stated and that would be for all three of you frontage roads, that you would request that deferral.

Scott Pasterski stated the only difference in on SR 412 since it is a Penn DOT road and we will have a PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit, we would actually request a waiver because, you know, PennDOT's gonna dictate what that road needs to look like. So the request will be a little different for that.

Brien Kocher stated yeah, so, that we'll have to deal with that when the actual submission comes in, one waiver and two deferrals. But I mean the Township's ordinance could tell you you need the curb and sidewalk that for 412. I think that would result in a much greater natural resource disturbance if you wanted that. And, I don't think there's any of that until you get up into Hellertown anyway. That is some discussion that you'd have to have, if anybody right now says no that frontage needs curb and sidewalk then, I mean that's a good discussion, but they would need some direction on that, some indication, I don't want to say direction, but you do run the risk if you come in and Township Council says you have to curb and sidewalk 412, you're natural disturbance . . .

Craig Kologie asked did you get the answer you needed for that?

Scott Pasterski answered I think so, I mean it can be determined at a later time. I didn't know if there was any preliminary opinion. I mean that's typically what we do, not that that matters necessarily, but typically we would defer such a, request a deferral for these items. Usually, it depends, it depends on the circumstances of your Township and ultimately it's your decision and the ultimate decision of Council.

Craig Kologie stated and it depends on how that, you know whether it's in an agreement or there's some security posted or whatever and to make sure that that happens.

Scott Pasterski stated yeah, we'd work out all the details. I just didn't know if there was a preliminary opinion on that. And with regards to 412, you know we can discuss this at a later time, but you know

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PennDOT is pretty particular and they're gonna want, they dictate what this road's gonna look like. And, usually that's grounds for that, but again, I think it's a discussion for a different day.

Craig Kologie asked I guess, will there be a crosswalk or anything at this location, if anybody wants to go get lunch or something over at the Giant complex, you know they can walk across the street?

Scott Pasterski answered yes there<sup>4</sup> would be. We've kind of tried to depict that in conceptually here, There would be traffic signal poles there, pedestrian signalization, you might have seen like the flashing man hands, so it's a man when it's okay to walk and a hand when it's not. You know, but whatever PennDOT would want, I don't know, whatever the latest PennDOT requires we'd have to install.

Jeffrey Schmehl asked so is your plan gonna have sidewalk with it shown on here when you're submitting to PennDOT?

Scott Pasterski stated it will have sidewalk along the state highway. This sidewalk right here will be on the PennDOT plan, yes. PennDOT requires that there be either a wide shoulder or sidewalk, it's a requirement of PennDOT. And Hanover made a comment about site circulation and sidewalk, I acknowledge there's a couple of things we need to clean up here to make it better and we can work together on that. I have no further questions, I don't know if anybody else has any further questions.

Craig Kologie asked does anybody else on the Commission have any other questions at this point? Well hopefully we gave you enough direction and you're gonna come back with a plan modification soon I would imagine.

Scott Pasterski stated thank you, that was helpful.

Craig Kologie stated any comments, I don't think we had any sign in, do we have a sign in sheet?

Molly Bender answered yes, but nobody signed on it.

Craig Kologie stated okay, is there anybody from the public who would like to comment. If you want to get up and state your name please.

Craig Hay stated my name is Craig Hay, I live on Springtown Hill Road for the moment. First of all, let me preface my comments by saying how refreshing it is to come into this hall and hear people sitting up there concerned about the people out here. Very refreshing, don't give it up. I was not happy about this when it all came to come to pass. That was a decision that was made Township Council to change the zoning. It made a lot of people in that area unhappy which I think was reflected in the last election. That being said, I personally would ask that the Council look favorably on such a project, simply because number one it provides a valuable service to the community. Numbers two it would be aesthetically pleasing and number three it's a much better idea than bringing in a warehouse or a strip mall. The warehouse gives you the truck traffic, I'd rather have the cars and it's during business hours. All right. A strip mall, we need another one of them like we need a hole in the head. I'm sure Sheetz would like to put one of their places in there, they're building one up on Fourth and Emery in Bethlehem which it's going up like a house of cards and that's gonna be in competition with Wawa. Now wouldn't they love to be on the southside of Wawa? And, does the Township benefit really by having something like that there? I don't see it. You've got positives going here. Something that most people aren't going to appreciate is leaving those trees in place. I can tell you that they've been there for about 37 years and they're a source of environment to all



kinds of wildlife, they're aesthetically pleasing and they will provide a beautiful barrier, a natural barrier. Another point that I'd like to touch on is the lighting situation. It's been my experience that St. Lukes, in their various locations, is very, I want to say minimal on lighting. There's more lighting pollution coming from the shopping center across the street right now than you will have from this medical building. I was in contact with the Zoning and Code Enforcement Officer in the past about the LED lighting on the tobacco store which would be on 24 hours a day. Nothing was done about it; but, I think economics have stepped in and now they're turned off after 10:00 o'clock at night. Now there's a dry cleaner further up towards Giant that has, I don't know, three by five lit up signs, they're lit all day and all night. I could tell you they shine in my house and I don't like them. All right, so let's put the cards on the table. Any number of things could go in here. Thanks to the previous Township Council, something is going to go in there. I implore you to make it nice for the community.

Craig Kologie stated public comments or questions.

Victoria Opthof-Cordaro stated if I may, I'm sorry I'm over here. My name is Victoria Opthof-Cordaro, I am a resident in Lower Saucon. I am also your Council liaison for Planning Commission, I thought it might be appropriate to sit over here so you all saw me and know who I am. I did, as a Council person, receive an email today from somebody requesting that their comment be read in tonight's proceeding and that person is Nanette Keck who I believe owns the lot and maybe the spot that you were concerned about.

Dennis Benner stated she owns that southern property.

Craig Kologie stated the piece to the south.

Victoria Opthof-Cordaro stated and I'm not sure if that's the same one that you were worried about screening. If that was the question, I think you mentioned a gentleman, different. She doesn't list her address on here, no, 1710 Mt. Pleasant Road.

Brien Kocher stated she would be on the left side of the drawing.

Dennis Benner stated yes.

Victoria Opthof-Cordaro stated okay, so I'm just reading her statement without any comment for or against it. I'm just reading it because she asked me to. "Hello, my name is Nanette Keck of 1710 Mt. Pleasant Road. I sold part of my property across from Giant. I wanted to say I am very proud to have a medical building on the property and will be continuing to live next to it. I do understand that they do not pay taxes; but, I truly believe this building will be a benefit for the people of Lower Saucon and surrounding area. We don't need another pizza place or bar. Thank you." And then she finishes with just saying "I would like you to read this at tonight's Township meeting. I would like it to be part of the record." So, I am reading that for Miss Keck for the Commission's consideration.

Jeffrey Schmehl asked is she the property owner of 1710?

Victoria Opthof-Cordaro stated I believe so. I believe that she owns the parcels . . .

Dennis Benner stated yes.

Jeffrey Schmehl stated that's the one I worried about.

Victoria Opthof-Cordaro stated aside from Miss Keck as a resident, I did have a question regarding the three areas of variance that you were concerned about with the driveway and I think it was .79, .5 and .75, yeah, .5, .75 and then a tenth of an acre I thought were the three figures you said as disturbance above what was permitted in the Zoning Ordinance. And, I don't know if this is possible so maybe Mr. Kocher can answer this question for me also, is it possible to, to grab other natural resources somewhere else on the lot to make up for the over disturbance on this section, if that makes sense to you. Like you have over disturbance on these little, this section of the driveway as I understand it, and maybe, I don't know if it's ever been where you could, there's other sections of your lot that you're not using that you could try to, you know, provide extra compensation in the form of other natural resources on the lot to help minimize disturbance overall if that makes sense.

Brien Kocher stated yeah, the biggest one you identified was 8 to 15 percent slopes in your disturbance I think I remember correctly. That would be difficult for them to create more 8 to 15 percent slopes. But any of the woodland areas, you know you could offer to plant.

Dennis Benner stated I was just gonna say in the past in a lot of developments that I've done, this type of question has come up and I think after our further investigation of the site in terms of where some of the existing tree lines are and the requirements for the landscape trees for this site, I've offered to plant additional trees in your park or some other such place to make up for some of that deficit.

Steve Boell stated and St. Lukes has previously on other projects certainly done that.

Dennis Benner stated I think you're gonna see a very cooperative applicant here.

Victoria Opthof-Cordaro stated that's all my questions, thank you.

Craig Kologie stated okay, no other questions, thank you for your presentation.

## **V. MICELLANEOUS BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 21, 2023**

Craig Kologie stated Steve, how would we work this because a number of the members here weren't on the Commission of weren't present. Could they still vote on the Minutes?

Steve Goudsouzian stated no, the people who were not here for the last meeting would not vote. But, whoever can vote, votes. But, we have a quorum for the meeting because we have the number of people when we started the meeting. So, that's good so we can actually vote on it. The only people who should be voting are the ones who were there; and, all we need is a majority of those people who were there. So, for example, if there were only three of you, two of you would have to say yes, then they would be approved.

Craig Kologie stated so, at that meeting was myself, Chris and Jennifer.

**MOTION BY:** Chris Nagy moved to approve the December 21, 2023 Planning Commission minutes.  
**SECOND BY:** Jennifer Peters  
**ROLL CALL:** 3 ayes – 0 nays – 4 abstain (Schmehl, Kaushik, Bartek & Gress)

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT/CITIZEN NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Craig Kologie asked does anybody have any comments not related to this application? I'm hearing none so we'll move on to the approval of the Minutes.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY:** Criag Kologie moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

**SECOND BY:** Chris Nagy

**ROLL CALL:** 7 ayes – 0 nays

Submitted by:

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Craig Kologie, Chairman