

I. OPENING

A. CALL TO ORDER: The Planning Commission of Lower Saucon Township was called to order on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall at 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bethlehem, PA, with Craig Kologie presiding.

B. ROLL CALL: Present were Craig Kologie, Chairman, Chris Nagy, Vice Chairman; Jennifer Peters, Secretary; Thomas Bartek, Veronica Gress and Shorav Kaushik, Members; Jim Young, Zoning Officer; Steven Goudsouzian, Interim Solicitor; and Brien Kocher, Engineer.

Absent was Jeffrey Schmehl, Member.

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 generated after the presentation.

III. BUSINESS ITEMS

A. SHEETZ STORE-SAUCON VALLEY SQUARE LAND DEVELOPMENT #LD 01-24/Sheetz, Inc. – 3727 PA Route 378 – Time Limit 04/24/24

Blake Marles stated I'm Blake Marles from Stevens & Lee and I represent Sheetz. This is a project that is proposed for a new Sheetz store at the shopping center on 378 that hasn't fared well over the years. This is part of the rebuilding project, this only our part of it; and, the proposal is to put a Sheetz store in a location where a bank no longer functions. We've been before you before, probably a year ago, maybe longer than that with discussions about zoning changes that would allow this to happen. There was some provisions in the Zoning Ordinance that probably didn't relate to current circumstances and with the assistance with the staff, we worked through the ordinance and we believe made the staff and the Planning Commission comfortable with it. With the criteria that were now put into the Ordinance, now we don't have issues with brown water and testing and all those things. So, from that point forward we present our land development plan. This is going to be a very abbreviated presentation because over the course of the last two days almost our entire team got sick. We attempted some discussions with Brien's office as recently as this afternoon. So, I think we should probably treat tonight as an introduction to the plan, identify questions you may have and then plan to come back. There was a design concern about the number of entrances and how they align that was raised in Mr. Kocher's letter. That was the subject of discussion this afternoon and we believe we have to go back to the drawing board and do some tweaks to make everyone comfortable and then come back to your engineer to make sure that that works. But, we can begin to work through some of the other issues if you would like to do that. With me is Eric Moundz, he's our traffic engineer. I think Jessica Urbas is the Sheetz site coordinator. We're missing Brian Spray, whose the design engineer and two of the other Sheetz staff who would have questions that might be . . . even though we might be able to progress forward. So, as I said, let's treat this as an introduction. Brien are there any particular questions that you want to discuss tonight before we move in to questions from the Planning Commission?

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Steve Goudsouzian stated before we start with this, just because we have a couple of new planning members. Normally what was happening is whether this was supposed to be before us for today, to listen for preliminary or final approval. So, we would have to take a look at it and then make certain recommendations and so on and so forth. And then ultimately the concept from our side would be somebody may or may not make a motion to say they approve or disapprove or approve under certain conditions; that recommendation would be sent then to Township Council. Based on the representations of Mr. Marles and certainly in light of the health and other issues they're having, what they're saying is rather than . . . they're not asking for that type of approval today, but it's somewhat similar to what we did last time where there was a sketch plan where essentially you're going to provide our comments and they're willing to provide their comments and then come back at a later date and look for some approvals. So, for the newer members, just so we're clear, they're not asking for approval today, it is more, as indicated, more introductory more than anything else which isn't a bad way for some of the newer members to start their first plan review.

Brien Kocher stated so we did look at all the documents for the new members understanding, we look at the plans and we look at the Township's Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and various other ordinances that govern land development. And that is what produces our review letter, in this case it's February 16, 2024. And that's sent their engineering team as well as the Township staff to review as the Planning Commission. We point out things that we believe need to be added to the plan to comply with the Ordinance, maybe some things that need to change, our overall opinions on the geology studies that need to be done, and the stormwater management calculations and some of the traffic impacts, they did submit a traffic study. I did talk to their primary design engineer and he had indicated that they could address all the comments in the letter; but, did have some questions on the circulation that Blake mentioned. It's in their court now to look at those circulations. I think based on the conversations I've had with their engineer, it looks good and we will be getting a revised plan that you will see and then we'll have another review letter. So, I don't have anything in particular that I'd like to review in the letter, he didn't seem to have any questions other than the circulation.

Thomas Bartek stated I have a few questions based on what you submitted. Before you demolish the building, are you gonna cap off all the utilities to the building.

Blake Marles answered it has to be.

Thomas Bartek stated it has to be, but in section 137-19, there's something that says something about the sewer line P 6 inch and P 10 inch does not meet the minimum size requirement of 15 inch. Is that the case on the site now?

Brien Kocher answered no, that's in their proposed stormwater management system, they had 2 very short sections of pipe that don't meet the 15 inch minimum. The P designation is not the size of the pipe, it's the label on the pipe. We point that out to them. I think they were 12 inch pipe, they just need to increase to 15 inch.

Thomas Bartek stated there was something to do with the culvert and the weir wall in the outlet of the structure may hinder access to the structure through the manhole cover for cleanout and maintenance work, is that something that's gonna be repaired?

Brien Kocher stated they probably just need to add a second cover.

Thomas Bartek stated okay, just make sure of that because the Township would be responsible to keep that up.

Brien Kocher stated no, that's all private.

Thomas Bartek stated that's all private, just to make sure that that's gonna be done correctly.

Brien Kocher stated that's all private and there will be an operation maintenance agreement with the Township.

Thomas Bartek stated I also, I guess parking, you're hoping to, there's a lot of ample parking over there, so you probably shouldn't have any issue with parking. The last thing with signage, I haven't seen, I'm new here, so I'm sure there's gonna be signage out there.

Blake Marles stated there will be signage, we haven't presented that yet.

Thomas Bartek stated and then the last thing was, I do work out at the Max Fitness and I had used that access road, I know it's a little tight, and my question would be is one exit or one exit/entrance into that site is not enough. I do agree that with emergencies, you do need another exit out and that road is not adequately designed for, I'm sure there's trucks that do get stuck back there. And that if you do go that way out, if you go back to 378, you can only do a right hand turn.

Blake Marles stated there may or may not be engineering issues in that one that recently doing the traffic study is to determine whether or not what is currently in place is adequate for the use that we're providing. We have taken into account the entire center, obviously, and the traffic that's there. We can't look at Revolutions as an empty building; and, so for purposes of this traffic study, Revolutions was presumed to be a movie theater, which is what it used to be, because nobody has a crystal ball as to how that can be used. But, if that's then reused, that property owner will come forward to you with their plan and they'll have to do improvements if there's not adequate traffic flow. So, Mr. Kocher's firm, Hanover looked at the traffic study, our traffic engineer is here and if he's sitting apart from everybody hopefully, because he's got the same bug that everybody else seems to have, but he may be able to address some of those questions for you.

Eric Moundz stated I'm with traffic planning and design. So, to your point on the access, 378 is a PennDOT road, so PennDOT also has jurisdiction over the access points. While, and not just this development, but pretty much any commercial development would love multiple access points, PennDOT typically tries to consolidate them. And in this case, the one access point with the signal is absolutely gonna be the preference here. They try to minimize access particularly on arterial classification which 378 is, so there's probably little probability that PennDOT would allow it. And then I think more importantly is the site really doesn't lay out such that you couldn't really get a second access for this site. And our study did fine. In all honesty, we looked to the study, as Mr. Marles said, we did assume Revolutions would be reoccupied with some type of entertainment use which we did assume a movie theater which is the original approval. We actually show that the intersection does offer it acceptably per PennDOT standards in order to accommodate not only Sheetz traffic, but every occupancy of that facility as well. So, all that kind of a long winded to say what our traffic study's concluding is that that center does function with just that one signalized access.

Thomas Bartek stated right, that said, I do have an issue with emergencies, when they take place for emergency planning which I do as part of my job. And, as a second egress out would be beneficial for a site that large and for what Sheetz brings in for customer base, right now you can't rely on Revolutions or if it's a movie theater or whatever it's going to be, but I think there's gotta be some sort of shared thing going on with that second access.

Eric Moundz stated it's a very good point and PennDOT somewhat addresses that through the design of the driveway that's actually out there as it exists today. So, PennDOT has different . . . based on the level of volume using your driveway, there's different design classifications for driveways. Little volume, obviously you see one lane in, one lane out. The classification of this driveway is high volume which is the largest driveway that PennDOT permits. In respect to the emergency access, what that does, there's actually a center median down the middle of the driveway that separates the travel lanes; and, you have channelized movements for your right turns in and out. What that does is in the absence of a second access, you have emergency pre-emption that signals as well which provides your emergency access vehicles obviously access to it. So for example, say there is somebody, say one of the travel lanes gets blocked internally which is they are obviously cutting off the site, you have that whole other side that's separated by the median that emergency vehicles can use. Or if there's an accident in one of the lanes right at the intersection, there's channelized islands that are again a separated median. That driveway's so big, emergency vehicles have the ability to pretty much by-pass if there is some type of blockage.

Thomas Bartek stated I do agree with you that that access is wide enough for that occurrence; but, I'm looking at more down the road and more in a larger format that when that whole parking area does become filled with a lot of parking lots, everyone's gonna be using just that one way in, one way out and I don't think that's correct. I think there's gotta be another means of an exit strategy. In the world we live in today you don't know what happens around you and people are gonna run, drive everywhere. So, I don't think, honestly, we can give them a one way in and out, out of this area.

Blake Marles state we may not have a choice, as what Mr. Moundz was saying, it's under PennDOT's authority and PennDOT's control. So, you can certainly ask PennDOT to look at that, but ultimately it's their decision because it's their intersection.

Craig Kologie stated and there is an emergency access for the center currently. So, did you evaluate that access in terms of the ability for that to function in an emergency situation?

Eric Moundz answered not specifically with the traffic study that was done, hearing your concern, as I said we have some additional coordination to be done. We can certainly add that to the list of evaluating that emergency access.

Craig Kologie stated so I think Mr. Bartek, you're not necessarily talking about 378, you're talking about evaluating that existing access.

Thomas Bartek stated evaluating that exit out on the north end side. I don't know what the name of that road is.

Craig Kologie stated Raders Lane.

Thomas Bartek stated Raders Lane, going out to there and then exiting from Raders Lane onto 378 and then my guess would be if that were allowed, 378 would only be a right hand turn only. So, then you have to notify people that that's only a right hand turn because that wouldn't become another traffic light that's the last thing we want.

Eric Moundz stated I apologize, we will certainly look at that. I was interpreting what you were asking was for an additional driveway from the center onto 378. We will certainly evaluate your request.

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Thomas Bartek stated that's all my questions.

Craig Kologie asked do you know are there other situations similar to this where Sheetz has put a facility in a parking lot, in a shopping center parking lot.

Blak Marles stated I can't think of one in the Lehigh Valley.

Eric Moundz stated there are several facilities that are in with like a multi-use tenant facility. Stand alone in like a parking lot to a commercial facility, nothing is coming to mind. But they have a few there within a shared use development.

Blake Marles stated Schoenersville has cross traffic, but that's not the magnitude of the shopping center like this is.

Craig Kologie stated right, that's the only one I could think of locally that Schoenersville because there is some movement from one parking area to the Sheetz lot. It's just it seems unusual in terms of getting in and out of this. I would think this is gonna be the biggest traffic generator on this site at least in the near term.

Blake Marles stated we can look at that, we have hundreds of sites, so we better be able to find one that's relatively comparable and let you know if we do.

Thomas Bartek asked is this a 24 hour site?

Blake Marles answered yes.

Jessica Urbas stated I can think of one in Johnstown where I think there's a Wawa, a Panera, a Petco and Best Buy if you want to check it out.

Craig Kologie asked is there any other items that anybody on the Planning Commission wants them to look at now before they come back?

Jennifer Peter stated a couple questions, one of them is in regard to the letter from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, specifically in regards to pedestrian traffic and the bus stop that's there, that's right immediately adjacent. What will you be able to do to make sure there's safe pedestrian access to that bus stop and just make it a safe experience for folks?

Blake Marles stated well one thing we have talked about, that one thing we don't want to do is put sidewalk on 378 because you don't want people walking along 378. So, the question is if Lanta wants to stop there, then how to make people be able to move safely into the center. The question is is that really the logical place for it if the center redevelops. So, my guess is it's gonna be a temporary location until the center develops because it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to put it there, there's no where for the pedestrians to go in that spot and there's not much across the street. So, we're gonna have to have some conversations with Lanta and figure out what the best idea is.

Craig Kologie asked so it might result in relocating that stop?

Blake Marles stated we don't know. They throw out a concept without talking to us; we throw out a concept without talking to them and then we talk. We'll figure that out.

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Jennifer Peters asked one other question, how do your parking requirements for your use affect that of the center? What do those numbers look like?

Blake Marles asked can you do that Eric or would that be for Brien?

Eric Moundz stated that would be Brien. What I would say just in conversations with the team that we had thus far, I'm trying to represent what I've heard so far, I believe when you look at the overall development with the requirements for the residual development, there's still adequate parking for the remaining commercial that stays. Sheetz has their requirements that they are looking to meet. So as far as the Township Ordinance requirements, there's no relief being requested on the number of parking spaces, so it would be compliant.

Brien Kocher stated we did ask Jim to look at that too.

Jim Young stated yeah, I looked at it briefly today and the original plans were very inadequate. I google mapped it and counted every single parking spot and came up with 790 spots. The requirement for their development without the Sheetz is 548; with the Sheetz is 618. So, they're still 87 over with the reduction.

Thomas Bartek asked is that parking on one side or is it the whole . . .?

Jim Young stated it's the whole shopping center.

Thomas Bartek stated so you're calculating even where the fitness . . .

Jim Young stated the whole shopping center, so you calculate the entire square footage of the buildings for all the parking.

Thomas Bartek stated but the facility is on the other side of the road access strip.

Jim Young stated it's still one shopping center.

Eric Moundz stated in respect to Sheetz itself, Sheetz has 600 stores, I believe they know what their parking need is. This, the number we proposed here is adequate to meet their demands.

Thomas Bartek stated I agree.

Eric Moundz stated in many cases what we find is actually that the Township or municipal requirements for this type of facility is actually more than what they would actually like to provide and what's provided here is within that.

Jennifer Peters stated one other quick question the center is a condominium, is that correct?

Blake Marles answered I don't know. Not with regard to what we're talking about, I don't think. I haven't seen the title work on it. But, I don't think it is for this lot.

Brien Kocher asked is it a leased area that you're gonna develop? Is that it works?

Jessica Urbas stated we are leasing it, yes.

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Jennifer Peters asked so, who would be the owner and who would be the developer?

Blake Marles stated we'll be the developer, whoever the owner is, the owner is. If we're leasing it, Sheetz would be leasing it and would be developing the site.

Jennifer Peters asked would that be a long term ground lease?

Blake Marles stated I don't have an answer to the question, I presume that.

Jessica Urbas stated we typically lease the properties and this is a typical, like you said, a ground lease. I don't know what the number of years are on it, I didn't look at that closely.

Brien Kocher stated so Blake, once you get that figured out, you can reflect that on the revised plan when you do it so we can address that question.

Blake Marles stated sure.

Jessica Urbas stated I believe that is on there.

Craig Kologie asked any other questions?

Veronica Gress stated I have a question, in regards to the Lanta bus stop, is there a bus service, Lanta, do they come in there now? And, they stop on 378?

Blake Marles answered yes.

Veronica Gress asked is there any way that they might be able to move into the shopping center and stop somewhere in there?

Blake Marles stated that's what we'll talk to them about.

Brien Kocher stated here's a picture that LVPC sent us

Veronica Gress stated yeah, I saw that.

Jessica Urbas stated we actually talked about that idea.

Blake Marles stated actually it would be interesting to know whether this would even be used. They only stop obviously if people want to get on and off and I don't know. They want to have sites in case people want to get on and off, but I just don't know if that's happening now. That'll be part of our discussion.

Chris Nagy stated just to follow up that that question you had about the Sheetz in a shopping center, is it the Johnstown?

Jessica Urbas answered yeah.

Chris Nagy stated that is. I'm just looking at it here. It's in a very large shopping center and there are multiple entrances to it.

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Jessica Urbas stated that has a Walmart, so it is a little bit bigger. I know I asked our real estate and he said Allentown on Lehigh Street to see an example.

Eric Moundz stated I was just going to say that. The one next to Auto Zone on Lehigh Street that opened about 6 to 8 months ago, it's a similar use and honestly I've worked on that one as well and that was in coordination with the underlying property owner. So, that's actually a very good example. In coordination with the underlying property owner, they worked out an internal access configuration that worked for both parties to serve both parties with one property owner who leased to both entities but they all worked together. So, that's probably a pretty good example of one that was recently done.

Craig Kologie asked have you seen the letters from the Police Department, the Fire Marshal and the Sewer Authority?

Blake Marles answered yes.

Craig Kologie asked are you able to address all of their items?

Blake Marles stated yes, we've seen them.

Craig Kologie stated because they're gonna have some things in there that maybe go beyond what our ordinances necessarily say.

Blake Marles stated which is obviously a problem. But, we are concerned about safety too; and, one of the concerns we're going to have is with 600 stores, if our systems don't work here as they work elsewhere, safety concerns are created. So, we have a pretty sophisticated safety system which we'd like to go over with the police to explain how we do it and what information is accessible to them at all times. Sheetz is somewhat unique in that you always have people on site, at least 2 people on site, so if something's going wrong, there's always somebody else physically there to be doing a coordination with the Police or Fire for any emergency that might arise. So, I think we need to talk to the Police Chief about how the system works and then determine what issues he has.

Jessica Urbas stated I did ask our security for some information on how it works if you want me to go over it.

Craig Kologie stated yeah, you're gonna have to satisfy the Police on this. So, I just wanted to make sure you saw these comments.

Shorav Kaushik stated it's gonna be a 24 hour business which I think is gonna be a change from the other businesses in that shopping center. Has there been any . . . have you looked into how, you know, having a gas station with lighting, obviously it has to be well lit to function, how that would affect the experience of you know residences there nearby? I know there's actually a fair amount of trees on the opposite side of 378; but, just looking at a map I think some houses on Raders Lane are gonna have a clear line of sight to this gas station. Can you say anything about how the lighting plan would maybe minimize the experience for you know people in their homes, just because it is when the lights are gonna be on all night, they have to be.

Blake Marles stated yeah, they have some of that on 378, you got a gas station at Black River Road and most of those businesses along there stay lit all night.

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Jessica Urbas stated I can speak to that a little bit. I think our lighting plan design is complete and typically, not typically but all the time, our lighting does not leave the site, so the lighting will be contained at the site. So, it shouldn't bleed over into those residences.

Brien Kocher stated what we have asked for details on the lighting plan about the fixture height and actually the type of fixture to make sure they're shielded. So, it's possible when you do that and you provide that to your lighting consultant may be able to produce a 3D image that shows how the lights are actually projected that we can put up on the screen next time so that they can understand that.

Jessica Urbas stated yeah, we can do that.

Craig Kologie stated and probably some real life photos of sites that are lit like you intend to would be helpful.

Jessica Urbas stated yeah, we can do that as well. And, I also know it was a request before and as part of that some renderings of what the store will look like. And, we do have a new design concept, so those are completed so we can bring those as well.

Shorav Kaushik asked is there gonna be a gas station sign, you know with gas prices?

Jessica Urbas stated marketing is trying to figure that one out because it's a shopping center. The free standing sign that's allowed is already been used, but we have to display the gas sign, so we're working to maybe put them on the canopy. So, they'll be on there, they're working on it but they're just really backed up right now. So, we'll have an example plan for that as well. I think I shared with you a photo of what it looks like.

Craig Kologie stated if there's no more questions we have some people that signed in, Neil Ortwein, do you want to get up and state your name and ask your questions?

Neil Ortwein stated my name is Neil Ortwein, I live on 378 right off of Raders Lane and I just have some questions. You said that the traffic study that you did, I live there, and from 4 o'clock to when I just pulled out to come down here, that traffic is backed up to that light and if something's coming out, it's gonna be a disaster. And with a gas station, it's coming and going constant. I know you didn't do any of that until the next meeting. Another thing, Raders Lane would never take any access out of there. And the emergency exit behind, I don't know if you've ever seen it behind there, I know you said you go to Maxx Fitness, but did you ever drive out, it's so narrow.

Thomas Bartek stated just the other weekend I did.

Neil Ortwein stated the other point, there's gonna be tankers coming in there, have they looked at that to make that turn to get in to where they're . . . because that's gonna have to be changed, left and right where you go to Maxx Fitness and come up to where the Sheetz is gonna be.

Thomas Bartek stated I'm sure that they'll have . . . they know the radius of a truck when it moves around, they'll make sure that that intersection in front of Maxx Fitness coming out to the road to go out to 378, they'll look at that very carefully and make sure they get the turning radius to the left to go to Sheetz. I'm hoping that's what they're doing.

Jessica Urbas stated yeah, we have a design program that you can input the size of the truck and then you can run a template to make sure that the turns work and it'll show you the paths that it takes. We've

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already done that and I think your office had a couple questions on that, so we'll be providing that next time.

Brien Kocher stated yeah, that's part of the whole circulation concerns that we had.

Jessica Urbas stated yeah, we talked about that with him a little bit today.

Craig Kologie stated I think traffic will be one of the main focuses as it always is for these types of uses.

Neil Ortwein stated everybody knows that 378 is 2 lanes, I mean right here it's 4 and then it's 2 down Wyandotte and down to Coopersburg. It's a lot more traveled than it has been and plus there's another development that was before Planning for 40 some townhouses over here off of Black River. That's gonna bring in more traffic onto that road.

Craig Kologie stated sure, yeah, they have to consider all the background traffic and look at all those elements. So, yeah, we all know traffic's an issue and has concerns.

Neil Ortwein stated the lighting probably won't . . . it will affect me, I see it sometimes with the trees; but, the other people on Raders Lane there, they have no buffer other than that slope that's right there. And, if it's on 24/7, I was on Council that approved that back in the 90's and the parking was for the cinema and everything else that's in there but whatever goes in, who knows what's gonna go in over at Revolutions with the parking. I'm just concerned as being a neighbor, I've lived there all my life.

Craig Kologie stated thank you. I also have Carol Ortwein that has signed in.

Carol Ortwein stated I'm just wondering if they could put a buffer across the top along Raders Lane, some kind of a tree buffer.

Thomas Bartek stated I know light, I call it light pollution, when you enjoy your evenings and I do to, I live in the woods, that's the last thing you want to restrict our view from something else coming in. I like light shining in to the building as opposed to out. And a lot of times, I live off of Easton Road where all the concrete buildings are, all those lights are shining away from the building and these houses are brightly lit and it's not fair. So, I'm very well aware of that.

Carol Ortwein stated the only other thing that we're concerned about is security, our safety. We just want to make sure there's a division between them and us.

Craig Kologie stated alright, so they heard your comments and hopefully they'll be able to address those types of things as well.

Victoria Opthof-Cordaro stated if I may ask a couple questions, I'm Victoria Opthof-Cordaro, I'm the Council liaison for the Planning Commission, and I heard the discussion that was about the traffic stop for Lanta and I can say that that traffic stop is used. And, there are employees that work at the shopping center and what currently happens is they do walk on 378 from the stop to the shopping center. They climb the embankment to get into the shopping center. And, it happened we had some Township meetings last year that were at the SE-WY-CO Fire Hall which is like right across the street from the bus stop. So, we saw how that all transpired on a daily basis. I think I would like to see that the pedestrian traffic be improved with the sidewalking to allow people to access that. And, just my other thought is, our Township is looking at improving our connectivity to different places for pedestrians and bicycles and things like that and there are, I'm sure, people within the Black River Road community

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which is right there at the traffic light, not to far, Black River Road is a road that goes right next to where the bus stop is, so if there was, if that was properly addressed with Lanta and there was additional sidewalk there, I think it would also benefit the people on Black River Road who may want to get to the shopping center also by other means other than driving.

Jessica Urbas stated I think we could work something out there. I think our major concern too is the timing that it would take to do that because that would require an HOP with PennDOT, so I think we'd ask if that could be something that could be like done but maybe like approved with that condition or not really tied to our project that much but we can do it. Maybe we can work something out there.

Brien Kocher stated I think it would be important to identify the scope of the improvements as Blake mentioned so that the Township is comfortable with a reasonable approach, you know what that approach is and then we can decide how the timing and how we do that.

Jessica Urbas stated yeah, okay.

Blake Marles stated we can't do the connectivity to the other roads because we have a very confined area, but we can make sure that what we do will tie into that so when that happens it's at the right place.

Craig Kologie asked any other questions?

Neil Ortwein stated I just had a question, the next meeting, we got a letter about this meeting, will we get one for the next meeting when this comes for approval?

Craig Kologie asked Molly, what's the process for that?

Molly Bender stated no, you can sign up to receive the agendas or you can call the office and find out. Normally the Planning Commission meets the 4th Thursday, but next month is the 3rd Thursday because of Easter.

Neil Ortwein stated because we wouldn't have known nothing about it, we got a certified letter from them letting us know.

Molly Bender stated right, they are required to when they first submit a land development plan. So, again if you sign up on our website to receive the agendas.

Neil Ortwein stated I think I do.

Brien Kocher stated yeah, and it may be, I don't know if you've thought about resubmission, but March probably is a little tight to get the plans in on time, so, if it isn't already passed. So, it may be April.

Jim Young stated I believe it is passed the deadline already.

Craig Kologie stated we do have a letter, did they get a copy of the letter?

Molly Bender stated no, but I have copies for them.

Craig Kologie stated so I have a letter here dated February 20, 2024 and it's addressed to all the Planning Commission members. I guess I'll read this into the record "We are residents of Lower Saucon Township and our property borders the Saucon Valley Square shopping mall. We are pleased that

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Sheetz will be added to the mall and welcome them, the conveniences they will offer, and the new influx of business they will generate. We have reviewed the entire 236 page proposal being brought before the Planning Commission by Sheetz, on February 22, 2023. Due to this new business, and as indicated throughout the proposal, there will be a substantial increase in activity including vehicles, customers, and personnel. And as further indicated in the proposal, all new populations for this business will be accessed by way of the single entrance on Route 378. We have a big safety concern because we see nothing addressing an alternative entrance/exit strategy other than the current single entrance/exit on Route 378. Minutes can be vital during a crisis and a detailed alternative route should be part of your safety design, for all, before an emergency. We, therefore, request some thought, discussion and deliberation be considered in the planning stage for an alternate exit/entrance for this growing shopping mall other than the currently depicted single entrance on Route 378. The Saucon Valley Square mall was originally designed with an emergency access road located on the upper east side of mall. (Please see attached aerial view map). This road runs behind and parallel to the buildings containing Casa Mia, Se-Wy-Co Beverage, etc. There is a gated entrance at the north end of the road, where it intersects with West Raders Lane, with a fire hydrant, and signage to keep through traffic from using this road. All of these specifics were promised and agreed upon with the surrounding neighbors prior to the mall being built – during the planning stages decades ago. Although this emergency access road was specifically designed and designated for emergency vehicles to service the original smaller shopping mall, in our opinion this road is completely inadequate as an alternative entrance/exit for personal vehicles, large fire equipment and/or multiple emergency vehicles – which will most probably be used for any emergency involving a gasoline station of this size with multiple surrounding businesses and customers. We invite you to drive this road and consider the width and curves as you navigate out or in. It is much smaller and tighter than depicted in an aerial view. Our home is located directly across from the entrance to the emergency access road and we have full view of this area. We have witnessed all types of trucks and vehicles attempt to use this road unsuccessfully and once stuck, reversing is a nightmare. If a new design or revamping of this area is considered we would like to be notified as our years of experiencing the activity in this area might be helpful in the layout. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Anthony & Suzette Califano, 1485 West Raders Lane, Bethlehem, PA 18015.”

Craig Kologie stated so that kind of reiterates what we’ve talked about already.

Blake Marles stated if the emergency entrance originally was put in with restrictions on it at the request of the residents on Raders Lane, we may have a disconnect in the request that we’re hearing and the interest of the people on Raders Lane. Mr. Ortwein, I assume that as a resident of Raders, you’re not gonna want any traffic in and out of there, just as an emergency entrance, but it’s barricaded, right?

Carol Ortwein stated what happens rather than them coming out at the light, they shoot across Raders Lane to make a quick exit.

Blake Marles stated right, and that can’t be a regular entrance and that I assume was the reason it was restricted originally.

Craig Kologie stated yeah, and I don’t think it’s our intent to have it be a full functioning access to the site; however the adequacy of what’s there now should be evaluated to make sure it will function.

Blake Marles stated understood.

Craig Kologie stated if there’s no other comments or questions, do we need to do motion to table this or just do a motion?

Steve Goudsouzian stated we should do a motion to table.

MOTION BY: Craig Kologie moved to table the Sheetz Store-Saucon Valley Square Land Development #LD 01-24.

SECOND BY: Chris Nagy

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

Steve Goudsouzian stated and then before we close the record for this, Attorney Marles, I presume you have no objection to providing an extension of time?

Blake Marles stated I don't think we need one yet, but no I don't.

Steve Goudsouzian stated okay. That because you're gonna be bounced to a couple months from now.

Molly Bender stated that's something I can email to Jessica and I will check on the time.

IV. MICELLANEOUS BUSINESS ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 25, 2024

Craig Kologie asked if everybody had a chance to read the minutes? Does somebody want to make a motion to approve to approve the minutes?

MOTION BY: Shorav Kaushik moved to approve the Minutes of January 25, 2024 as presented.

SECOND BY: Jennifer Peters

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

V. PUBLIC COMMENT/CITIZEN NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Craig Kologie asked are there any new business or public comments on the non-agenda items? There's nobody here from the public. I'm looking for a motion for adjournment?

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: Chris Nagy moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

SECOND BY: Thomas Bartek

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

Submitted by:

Craig Kologie, Chairman