

The stated meeting of the Code Enforcement and Land Development Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Monday, September 28, 2015 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Commissioner Sanchez presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners SANCHEZ, DiPLACIDO, MYERS, GILLESPIE
Excused: MARKMAN

Township Manager LEFEVRE
Township Solicitor CLARKE
Director of Code Enforcement MATTEO
Township Engineer POWERS
Community Director STROTHER

Also Present: Commissioners LUKER, KLINE, JONES, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, KALINOSKI, SPIEGELMAN, ZAPPONE, HECKER

MINUTES: Commissioner Sanchez made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to approve the minutes of the August 31, 2015 Code Enforcement and Land Development Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Land Development LD-15-05 – Crest Manor Redevelopment LP – Washington Avenue, Franklin Avenue and Prospect Avenue

Commissioner Sanchez made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie to approve the Land Development application of Crest Manor Redevelopment, LP for properties located at 1602, 1604, 1606, 1608, 1620, 1622, 1626, 1628, 1634, 1636, 1640 and 1642 Washington Avenue; 1601, 1603, 1607, 1609, 1613, 1615, 1621, 1623, 1627, 1629, 1635, 1637, 1639, 1641, 1645, 1647, 1651, 1653, 1659, 1661, 1665, 1667 Franklin Avenue and 1713, 1715, 1721, 1723, 1729, and 1731 Prospect. The applicant proposes to renovate the existing twin dwelling units and construct a new 10 unit structure, a 4 unit structure and a new Community Building. In addition, one twin dwelling unit will be reconstructed and a new playground will be added. The number of dwelling units is proposed to be increased to 46 units. The applicant proposes to construct an onsite stormwater management system and additional parking. The properties are zoned in the (R-4) Residential District and (AO) Apartment Office District in Ward No. 5 of the Township of Abington.

This motion is subject to the following conditions:

1. Sanitary sewer service is available for this development as the flow from this proposal is not impeded by the sanitary sewer moratorium in place on flows through Cheltenham Township.
An Act 537 Exemption Application has been submitted and will need to be approved for this development.
2. The items listed in the Staff Revenue letter dated, August 31, 2015 is to be taken into consideration by the Board of Commissioners.
3. The recommendations listed within the revised review letter from Montgomery County Planning Commission dated, September 8, 2015 must be addressed to the satisfaction of the Board of Commissioners.

This motion is subject to the following waivers:

1. Waiver from Section 146.11.A – Property Identification Plan
2. Waiver from Section 146.11.B – Existing Features Plan
3. Waiver from Section 146.11.J – Recreational Facilities Plan
4. Waiver from Section 146.11.L – Architectural Plan

Commissioner Sanchez called on Director of Code Enforcement, Mr. Larry Matteo.

Mr. Matteo explained that Township staff along with Mr. Narcowich, County Planner has worked on this matter for quite some time and three neighborhood meetings were held with residents. The applicant presented this plan before the Township Planning Commission in which they approved it subject to conditions and waivers as previously stated.

Joel A. Johnson, Executive Director of Montgomery County Housing Authority, 104 West Main Street, Suite 1, Norristown, PA., said we are the owners of Crest Manor and the proposal is to redevelop the site consisting of 40 units, which will be increased to 46 units that are targeted for lower income households. We will present our site plan along with renderings to the Board.

In the spring of 2014, the MCHA sent out an RFP and we received a variety of proposals from national firms. Pennrose Properties was selected and Kyle Speece of Pennrose Properties is here this evening along with Mark Buchvalt, PE of T and M Associates.

The site consists of 40 units and six will be demolished for some floodplain issues and then build 16 new units in a variety of formats and the remaining 30 units will be renovated. The residents are in favor of it and surrounding neighbors are in full support of the project.

Commissioner Sanchez asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Gillespie asked do funds for this project come from HUD?

Kyle F. Speece, with Pennrose Properties, LLC, One Brewery Park, 1301 North 31st Street, Philadelphia, PA, Senior Developer for the project, replied there a number of sources such as low income tax credit that begins at the IRS level and channeled through the Pennsylvania Housing Financing Agency in the amount of \$12-\$12.5 million; \$200,000 comes from the CDBG, which is a Federal source channeled through Abington Township; \$1 million comes from the Montgomery County Affordable Housing Trust Fund; \$750,000 from Penn Homes Funds, which is a Federal source channeled through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency; and \$2.7 million comes from the Montgomery County Housing Authority in which the Product Partnership pays the MCHA for the land and then the MCHA immediately lends the money back to the partnership. Also, there will be traditional private debt from a bank, which will be about \$500,000.

Commissioner Jones asked during construction will there be any type of minority and women participation thresholds for employment?

Mr. Johnson replied yes, there are thresholds.

Mr. Speece added that Pennrose has worked on a number of developments partnering with housing authorities and/or using local, county or Federal funds, and we have a long history of engaging minority and women-owned businesses as well as hiring subcontracting firms and hiring local and low income individuals for certain roles during construction.

Commissioner Jones asked for the percentage target threshold of that \$17 million in the subcontracts?

Mr. Speece replied it is our hope to achieve 10% of minority and 10% women-owned businesses and 15% in Section 3, which is local or low-income or both.

Commissioner Jones commented that he hopes local means Abington Township-based contractors and businesses contributing to this project benefiting the Township and themselves. He understands these are rental units, but are there pathways to homeownership?

Mr. Johnson replied the target for this effort is being reserved for the low income rental market; however, the Housing Authority does have programs designed to promote ownership.

Commissioner Jones asked is there anyway to mandate that a resident in this development would have to avail themselves to some of the homeownership pathway projects?

Mr. Johnson replied there are supportive components to the Crest Manor project, and if their income increases, the resident would no longer remain in the rental units.

Mr. Speece added that Pennrose will manage the property after completion and we will have a supportive service program. We will present to the residents a menu of options they can avail themselves to such as financial counseling, employment assistance, etc. We cannot force anyone to participate in a homeownership program, but if they are interested, we will assist them.

Commissioner DiPlacido questioned whether the Township will have to obtain funds to release any of these grants because the figures do not add up.

Mr. Johnson replied there are Federal requirements for the release of funds through the CDBG and we are working with Mr. Strother on that.

Mr. Speece replied he will send a copy of the budget to the Board through Township staff.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked are qualifiers who live in Crest Manor analyzed on a per unit basis every year?

Mr. Johnson replied currently, under HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development), which is our funding source, sets the rent for each unit size at Crest Manor and on an annual basis. To be eligible to live there, tenants have to contribute 30% of their household income towards the rent.

Mr. Speece added that we certify tenants' income annually.

Commissioner Luker asked for a detailed financial report to be sent to the Board verifying that the amount of funds from the Township is locked in.

Mr. Speece agreed.

Commissioner Myers asked how does redevelopment of 46 units cost \$17 million and is all of it construction costs or are there other items included in that cost?

Mr. Speece replied it is not all construction costs and there are a number of soft costs built into it. He will be happy to share the financial report with Township staff and the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Myers commented that just as important as where the money is coming from is how that money will be spent and she asked for the project budget to be included in the report as well.

Commissioner Hecker questioned whether the playground will be open to the public.

Mr. Speece replied during the Planning Commission meeting there were numerous questions about the playground and its availability to the public, the location and the safety of it at that corner, so the intent is to remove the playground structure from the design.

Commissioner Kline said there were a number of recommendations listed in Township staff review letter as well as the County's review letter in regards to lighting, crosswalks, bump-outs and traffic calming measures; how will that be handled?

Mr. Speece replied we agreed to provide crosswalks and ramps at all locations and existing street lighting is sufficient. There was mention in the County's review letter about a traffic calming circle and we expressed that type of measure is outside of development of this nature because it is expensive and a complicated measure. So we are hoping for assistance in devising other ways to slow traffic down.

Commissioner Kline asked about protection of the bump-out at the intersection of Hamilton and Washington Avenues.

Mr. Speece replied we will install landscaping at that corner and we are working with Township staff and our engineer about what else can be installed there as it is located in the floodplain. Nothing can be placed there that would impede the flow of water.

Commissioner Kline questioned whether the applicant will comply with all comments listed in Township staff review letter dated, August 31, 2015, and was a response letter submitted by the applicant?

Mr. Speece replied we met with Township staff to review that letter in detail and worked through all of the items.

Commissioner Kline asked is the community center just for tenants of Crest Manor or for the neighborhood as well?

Mr. Speece replied the primary function of that building will be a management office for our onsite manager and a maintenance office/garage for onsite maintenance personnel. There will be a 500-600 sq. ft. room that will have soft seating and a television that is meant for gatherings of residents, so it will primarily be intended to serve tenants.

Commissioner Kline noted that the ZHB decision indicates that relief was granted for all variances for this site to be redeveloped; what were those variances?

Mr. Matteo replied they were all dimensional variances for front yard porches, etc.

Commissioner Kline clarified that there were no use variances granted. Is that correct?

Mr. Matteo replied that is correct.

Commissioner Myers asked how much off-street parking is there currently and is it enough for the entire complex?

Mark J. Buchvalt, PE, with T and M Associates, 74 West Board Street, Suite 530, Bethlehem, PA, Civil Engineer for the project, replied there will be 82 parking stalls; two per unit for each building and some additional for new units and community building.

Commissioner Kalinoski asked where will the residents be relocated to?

Mr. Johnson replied we have been working diligently to insure that every resident can remain somewhere onsite during construction. Tenants will need to move to another onsite location for a period of four to six months while their unit is being renovated and then can move back.

Commissioner Luker said although the playground is being removed from the application, would it be considered in the future if the residents wanted it and if safety measures were applied?

Mr. Johnson replied the MCHA would be happy to entertain any discussions with Township staff.

Commissioner Jones asked for the total square footage of the project.

Mr. Johnson replied we do not have that info at this time.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked will sidewalks be installed around the entire community?

Mr. Speece replied we will be installing sidewalks entirely on our portion of the property.

Commissioner Sanchez asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, asked what the appraised value of the final product will be and what the rent will be for the residents as well as the public subsidized portion. She asked that the community center be a "free and open" use for any resident.

Commissioner Gillespie clarified that it is 30% of the tenants' income is what the rent will be. Is that correct?

Mr. Johnson replied that is correct.

Commissioner Kline asked is there a restriction on the MCHA from selling this property?

Mr. Johnson replied yes, the MCHA will retain ownership of the land, but the limited partnership will be between the MCHA, the developer and the equity investor for tax credits to own the structures.

Commissioner Kline asked who collects the rent?

Mr. Johnson replied the management company for the joint venture.

Commissioner Kline said so, the appraised value is immaterial.

Mr. Johnson replied that is correct.

Commissioner Kline said due to the fact that this is publicly-owned property, the appraised value is meaningless because the purpose of this property is for affordable housing and not to create profit, although, he would like to see the budget costs for this project.

Commissioner Myers asked for the budget numbers for this project to be sent to the Board prior to the full Board meeting next Thursday.

Mr. Johnson replied he will send that to the Mr. Matteo.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Commissioner Sanchez asked for any general comments relating to Code Enforcement and Land Development.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, said she feels it is not immaterial because “the amount spent on this project will not serve two-thirds of the hundreds of people who are on the waiting list for low income housing.”

Commissioner Kline replied that this Board questioned the budget for the project. What is irrelevant is the appraised value, but not the actual budget.

Code Enforcement Committee Meeting

September 28, 2015

ADJOURNMENT: 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael LeFevre, Township Manager

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