

# Allen Township Planning Commission

4714 Indian Trail Road

Northampton, Pennsylvania 18067

Phone: (610) 262-7012

Fax: (610) 262-7364



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William Holmes, Chairman  
W. Eugene Clater, Vice Chairman  
David Irons  
Louis Tepes, Jr.  
Alfred Pierce

Brien Kocher, P.E.  
B. Lincoln Treadwell, Jr., Esq.  
Ilene M. Eckhart, Manager

## MINUTES

### ALLEN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

#### REGULAR MEETING

Monday, March 17, 2014

7:00 P.M.

The regular monthly meeting of the Allen Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, March 17, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. at the Allen Township Fire Company Building, 3530 Howertown Road, Northampton, Pennsylvania 18067. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

Roll Call: Present: William Holmes; Alfred Pierce; Louis Tepes, Jr.; Eugene Clater; Brien Kocher, P.E (Hanover Engineering); Jim Milot (Hanover Engineering); Kevin Chimics (Hanover Engineering) and B. Lincoln Treadwell, Jr., Esq. Absent: David Irons

Mr. Holmes thanked the Fire Company for allowing the Planning Commission the use of the building for the meeting. Mr. Holmes requested that public comment would be heard at the end of the business meeting. He indicated the list of individuals who have signed up to speak is extensive.

Minutes: Mr. Irons made a motion to approve the minutes of January 20, 2014; seconded by Mr. Clater. On the motion, by roll call vote, all Commissioners present voted yes.

#### Old Business

1. High Meadow Estates: Noted.

#### New Business

1. FedEx Ground Hub Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan: : Greg Davis, Esq. representing FedEx Ground, confirmed receipt of the Township Engineer's letter of review and indicated that his client will comply with nearly all the comments with the exception of several minor waiver requests which remain under review. He presented Kevin Koken, FedEx Ground Vice President

of Eastern Operations, to address the Commission. Mr. Koken provided an overview of the FedEx Corporation which includes: FedEx Ground, FedEx Services, FedEx Freight, and FedEx Express. Mr. Koken further reviewed the FedEx mission and their commitment to the communities in which they operate. Mr. Koken indicated that FedEx will make an investment of \$335 million the cost including building, road and public improvements, and packaging processing equipment. The initial building at opening will be 800,000 square foot facility with an eventual full phase of 1,100,000 square feet. Mr. Koken provided an overview regarding jobs created: 300 construction jobs, 700 employees and the consolidation of the three existing Lehigh Valley facilities. He further indicated that at full operation FedEx Ground will create 3,000 new jobs to the community. Regarding processing capacity the facility will handle 30,000 packages per hour at the opening and at full operation will handle 75,000 packages per hour.

Mark Heeb, ASLA, of BL Companies, representative for FedEx Ground Land Development Plan, indicated the plan is essentially the same plan as presented at the January 20, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting. He further reviewed that at startup the facility will consist of: an 818,000 square feet main hub, gate way entrance, two guard houses, fuel island, maintenance building and a salt storage building. At full build out the main hub will expand to approximately 1,000,000 square feet. He further reviewed the access roads and parking for the site. He briefly reviewed the truck ingress and egress through the site. He stated trucks will traffic southbound only from the constructed entrances.

Mr. Heeb presented exhibits representing visual impacts of the facility. The line of site exhibits included current imagery overlain with the future facility from the Catasauqua High School, the south side of the Nor-Bath Trail tunnel, the Wayne Grube Park (East Bullshead Road, and from Country Road and East Bullshead Road. He concluded that the view of the future building would be minimal from these locations. This information was presented in order to provide a perspective of the distance of the facility from the surrounding neighborhoods and the view of future building.

**2. Rockefeller Group Preliminary/Final Subdivision Plan:** Ron Gawlick, of the Pidcock Company, representative for the Rockefeller Group, presented concerning the Rockefeller Subdivision Plan. Mr. Gawlick provided a review of the future road improvements. He indicated that the Scope of Improvements to the effected roadways were developed by Comprehensive Traffic Study was submitted to the Township and PennDOT. The scope of improvements relative to the development addresses the corridor along Airport Road, Race Street, and Willowbrook Road. He indicated that the study components included a study of the existing traffic patterns and proposed traffic from the future project. PennDOT has reviewed the Scope of Study and based on the Scope of Study that is basis and focus of study areas and ultimately future improvements. The trip generation rate, as required by PennDOT, requires the utilization of the ITE (Institute of Traffic Engineers Handbook), which establishing the number of trips for certain type of development. He indicated that the study further utilizes historic trip data at comparable existing FedEx Ground facilities. Mr. Gawlick further explained, that then conservatively, the study applies the combination of the PennDOT ITE rate and the input of comparable historic data for existing FedEx Ground facilities. The higher of the two traffic distribution rates was utilized in the traffic study. The higher of these two distribution rates was utilized in the final study along with data for the busiest times for the FedEx comparable facilities (holiday season). Mr. Gawlick explained the traffic study was prepared based on this track and the study findings were submitted to PennDOT, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Allen Township,

Hanover Township (Lehigh County) and the City of Bethlehem. Each of these entities reviewed and approved the findings of the study which indicated that the level of improvements proposed are adequate to mitigate the traffic generated from the FedEx Ground Hub Land Development, as well as future traffic generated by the Rockefeller Subdivision Plan.

Mr. Gawlick explained, with regard to Airport Road, traffic improvements would include an additional south bound lane from Race Street to Rt. 22. In addition, right hand turn lanes into Postal Road and the LVIA driveway, and a left hand turn lane at City Line Road would be included as part of the overall improvement to Airport Road.

With regard to Schoenersville Road, Mr. Gawlick explained, improvements would include the lengthening of the left hand turn lane to accommodate traffic heading north and turning left onto Airport Road. Additionally, improvement proposes an additional left hand turn lane on Airport Road for traffic approaching Race Street. Mr. Gawlick, explained dual lefts on Airport Road going into Race Street and a through lane on Schoenersville Road heading southbound.

Mr. Gawlick explained Race Street improvements, from Airport Road to Willowbrook Road, would include an additional lane in each direction with additional center turn lanes. The existing signal at Race Street is proposed to be modified to accommodate the additional lanes.

With regard to Willowbrook Road, Mr. Gawlick explained, improvements include the creation of a four lane section throughout (two lanes each direction) with left and right hand turning lanes proposed at the site access driveways to accommodate the traffic. A traffic signal will be installed at the FedEx Ground employee entrance, as well as the new subdivision access roadway.

With regard to West Bullshead, Mr. Gawlick explained, improvements include the installation of an additional lane to provide (left and right) dual turning lanes heading east to Willowbrook Road. In addition, a traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of West Bullshead Road and Willowbrook with pedestrian accommodations to allow crossing at the signal to access the Wayne Grube Park/Nor-Bath pedestrian trail.

Mr. Gawlick indicated, separate from the Rockefeller Traffic Study the Township requested that the developer review the historic problem at Rt. 329/Howertown Road intersection. The Rockefeller group agreed to review the area requested by the Township. He stated the findings of the analysis found existing backups during peak hours at all legs of the intersection. In addition, the difficulty with any improvements at this intersection is the natural constriction of existing bridge over the Dry Run Creek which is very narrow and restricts the amount of road widening that may take place at this location. As part of a "phased improvement" Rockefeller Group is proposing to perform improvements along this corridor. Phase I, which would be constructed along with the FedEx Ground Land Development, would entail the replacement of the Dry Creek Bridge, by replacing the bridge with a new structure which will adequately wide enough to handle future traffic and to install needed left turn lanes at the intersections. Phase II, which would be constructed along with the left turn lanes at each of the legs of the intersection at Howertown/Weaversville and Rt. 329/Savage Road. In addition, construction of a right turn lane on Rt. 329 approaching Savage and a right turn lane on Savage approaching Rt. 329 would be included as Phase II. Mr. Gawlick indicated that the Phase II improvements would be

discussed with the Township upon the occurrence of an additional Land Development proposal submission upon the Rockefeller Subdivision tracts.

Mr. Gawlick reviewed the concerns raised regarding conditions of Rt. 22 and the impact that this development will have. Mr. Gawlick noted that the peak hour rates proposed for the distribution of traffic from the FedEx Ground Hub will be significant different from the peak hour rates of a standard development. Mr. Gawlick explained the distribution of traffic and shifts to and from the site is such that most of the traffic does not occur during the peak periods but rather off-peak periods.

Mr. Holmes requested further information regarding times when the bulk of traffic would be leaving the facility. Mr. Gawlick responded that there are different peaks throughout the day depending on traffic type (employee/trucks). Mr. Holmes felt that the Commission was attempting to get an indication of the overlapping shifts involved with the FedEx Ground proposal. Mr. Kevin Koken, FedEx Ground, responded that operation is approximately fifteen hours a day broken into four separate segments. The four sorting operation start segments are: the midday (approximately 2/3 PM), early evening (7PM), overnight (approximately 11PM/12AM) and early morning (approximately 3 AM). The tractor trailer (line haul) arrive to the site a various times of the day. In addition, dispatch times are when they leave the facility vary and a generally sporadic based on loading. The van operation (P & D operation) occurs in the AM peak (depending when the sort ends which generally occurs between 6:30 and 8:30 AM) and the vans disburse at various at times and return in the evening between approximately 3-4 PM to 7-8 PM.

Mr. Clater requested clarification of the peaks pursuant to the Traffic Impact Study. He felt the overlap was low with regard to standard peaks but there was some. Mr. Clater further remarked regarding overview of the preliminary plan and phasing of the FedEx Ground Land Development Plan, with two phases represented for the construction of the facility. He felt that a clearer delineation of each phase should be provided. He indicated he was reluctant to grant a full final plan recommendation with infinite timeframes. He suggested rather that the Commission should consider requesting full preliminary plan (as typically required) and a very clear set of final plans for Phase One. He felt that this would be consistent with the Township's past requirements and allow the Commission a clear eventuality of the proposal. Mr. Greg Davis, Esq. responded that this is the intention and would be provided.

Mr. Clater commented regarding the consistency of the Willowbrook Road improvements between the Subdivision and Land Development Plans. This consistency issue is also present regarding public sewer line. Mr. Gawlick indicated that the Subdivision Plan is currently under revision to address consistency and by the next submission both plans should align. Mr. Gawlick further responded, in addition, the proposed public sewer line (Willowbrook Road) has been relocated outside of the right-of-way at the request of the Township although full design is pending.

Mr. Clater requested further information regarding the timeline for off-site improvements and was progress forthcoming. Mr. Gawlick responded that progress is actively occurring, especially with regard to PennDOT.

**3. Ordinance Changes:** Mr. Clater felt the Zoning Ordinance currently contains language regarding landscaping requirements that should be reviewed going forward relative to the credit for size of plantings. He suggested the Commission consider some language to clarify and better articulated credit based on caliper. In addition, the buffering requirements in the Industrial Zoning District should be reviewed when adjoining Residential (type) Zoning Districts. Mr. Clater was concerned of the instance of buffering standards for Industrial Zoning Districts adjoining publicly owned parks. He was unsure if the standards (or varied standards) should apply to pedestrian trails and suggested a potential exemption along pedestrian trails. In addition, he felt the Ordinances should be updated to require submission of electronic documents. In conclusion, Zoning Ordinance Sections regarding lighting and height requirements for fences should be reviewed in consideration of modern standards. Information regarding these suggestions will be returned to the Commission at a future time.

With regard to the Act 537 Planning Process, Mr. Kocher updated that the Board of Supervisors have authorized study of the southern section of the Township and he was currently acquiring information regarding this study area.

### **Public Comment**

Mickey Philpott, 5016 Saw Grass Drive, questioned the cost of the road improvements, how much of the funds (in the form of direct grants and/or tax abatement) would come from Commonwealth or County tax funds to make these road improvements and why? Mr. Greg Davis, Esq. responded that the developer was pursuing conversations. Mr. Clark Macheimer, Rockefeller Group Development, responded that they were working with the Lehigh Valley International Airport to see the development their lands and that they were in conversations with the Commonwealth regarding regional improvements well beyond the proposed. Mr. Davis further clarified the Federal and Commonwealth governments have created pots of money that are available and will be either designated for the subject development or one like it. Mr. Philpott further inquired regarding the road widening, if the Willowbrook Road bridge south of East Bullshead Road would be widened or remain two lanes. Mr. Gawlick indicated at this time widening to the bridge is not proposed.

Mr. Philpott, questioned traffic impacts when accidents occur – would traffic then travel north. Mr. Koken indicated that on-road resources would notify as to alternative routes or stoppages if the site is inaccessible due to a traffic accident. Mr. Koken indicated that line haul trucks cannot travel north across the Willowbrook Road bridge. Mr. Philpott questioned what was being done to address noise and maintenance of roads in the future. Mr. Gawlick indicated the development will comply with Township ordinances regarding noise and there are no specific fees for road maintenance.

Rita Philpott, 5016 Saw Grass Drive, questioned van and car traffic traveling northbound on Willowbrook Road. Mr. Gawlick provided details regarding the number of single unit trucks and vans traveling north at various peak times per day.

Kathy Pavlovcak, 4124 Pine Hurst Drive, requested a clarification on the 12,000 cars projected. Mr. Gawlick indicated that 12,000 was the number of cars at full development.

Donald Knoll, 4040 Pine Hurst, questioned if any waivers have been issued. Mr. Holmes indicated no waivers have been dated to date. Mr. Knoll questioned if ordinances amendments or waivers has the developer submitted pursuant to this project. Mr. Greg Davis, Esq. indicated no ordinances amendments have been submitted. He further responded that a few standard waivers would be submitted which is expected with any development of this size.

Troy Kuskic, 5400 N. Halbea Street, Bethlehem, voiced concerns regarding Rt. 22 traffic.

Steve Pignato, 10 Country Road, questioned the Site Plan area north of the site. Mr. Heeb noted that trees have been added to the area Mr. Pignato referenced. Mr. Pignato questioned the other parcel to the north. Mr. Heeb indicated that portion of property Mr. Pignato referenced which is currently agricultural land, if developed would need to go through the land development planning process. Mr. Pignato further questioned the noise impact of the trucks.

Meritt Snyder, 1023 Hogan Way, read a letter he authored and distributed to Allen Township, the adjoining Township's and their Planning Commission as well as the County Planning Commission into the record. Mr. Snyder further questioned if a Rt. 22 study has been completed?

Sandra Blaukovitch, 10 Drexel Drive, voiced concerns regarding traffic impacts. She was additionally concerned regarding noise impacts regarding the Sheckler Elementary School in Catasauqua.

John Pesuch, 7 Phyllese Drive, voiced concern that the Township did not have a local police force. He further questioned the number of full time and temporary employees. Mr. Koken indicated about 40% were full time with the remainder being part time (and they were not temporary). Mr. Pesuch felt that there would be significant employee turnover that would impact the crime in the Township. He questioned if the State Police have been contacted regarding the project. He further questioned the weight limit of the Willowbrook Road bridge.

Mike Givey, 197 East Bullshead Road, requested that no variance be granted and that Rt.22 was going to be a complete nightmare.

Kimberly Pierce Nappa, 382 East Bullshead Road, questioned why has this site been selected? Mr. Bill O'Connor responded that FedEx conducted a site search which was a combination of factors relative to development issues as well as the labor force available. Mr. O'Conner indicated that the Majestic site referenced by Ms. Nappa did not meet the FedEx size requirements.

Robert Nappa, 382 East Bullshead Road, questioned Mr. Koken with regard a question he wrote to Mr. Fred Smith, whom forwarded his question for response to Mr. James Maxwell (FedEx Ground Managing Director of Real Estate). He questioned why would the site be located as proposed? He went onto express that he would fire the individual who selected the site. Mr. Maxwell, who was present and responded, explained that many factors go into site selection. The size of the site was the most important component. He understood the issues with Rt. 22 but felt it was not much different than many highways throughout the Commonwealth. He indicated there was nothing nefarious about the selection of the site.

Mr. Nappa further requested if diesel particulate filters would be required for vehicles at the site. Mr. Koken indicated all motor vehicle carrier laws would be abided by pursuant to the progressive mandates from the State and Federal government regarding emissions.

Mr. Nappa questioned the MPC timeframe. Mr. Holmes indicated that the review deadline was June 17, 2014.

Mr. Clater commented regarding regional land use planning issues and improvement scheduling of Rt. 22 however the Township has some limitations to operate in this regard.

Mr. Charles Everett, Executive Director of LVIA, offered any information that the Commission require would be made available.

There being no further business or comments the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ilene M. Eckhart