

**NORTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**3256 LEVANS ROAD, COPLAY, PA 18037**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF JULY 24, 2012**

**Meeting** brought to order at 7:30 p.m., on Tuesday, July 24, 2012 by Chairman Richard Celmer.

**Attendance:**

Chairman Richard Celmer	William George
Vice Chairman Brian Horwith	Leonard Nuss
Secretary Bruce Stettler	Joanne Guth
Attorney Lisa Young	Jeff Johnson
Township Engineer Steve Gitch	Planning Administrator Jane Kelly
Supervisor Steve Pany	

**Minutes** of the, June 26, 2012 meeting were approved with the following addition, during the conversation regarding Route 329/Old Post Road, Planning Commission member Joanne Guth suggested a mixed use district.

1. **Castle Rock Estates**, Special Exception, Project # NWT 12-018, Heliport/Airport, 5471 Route 309, AR zone, 5459 5715 2002. The property owner, Michael Selig presented the plan.
  - a. Keystone Engineers have reviewed the plan and offered their comments and recommendations in a letter dated July 17, 2012.
  - b. Zoning Officer's review is contained in his letter dated July 19, 2012.
  - c. Mr. Selig purchased the property in April 2012 and corrected all current zoning violations on the property.
  - d. A Heliport and 1200 X 100 small engine aircraft landing strip is proposed.
  - e. The helicopter and aircraft landing and take-off from the site will be for donor organ transport.
  - f. A building to store the helicopter is also proposed.
  - g. Mr. Selig is a pilot and he has given rides at the Schnecksville Fair in the past.
  - h. Mr. Selig indicated the FAA and PA Bureau of Aviation have already given their approvals to utilize the site.
  - i. The flight paths have been determined.
  - j. The site is proposed to be a private heliport for only his helicopter and small single engine aircraft. With Mr. Selig's permission small single engine aircraft could land on this site.
  - k. Mr. Selig is also a surgeon and he is considering the transportation of donor organs part of his retirement plan.
  - l. There is currently a barn on the site, which Mr. Selig would possibly like to relocate to another location on the site.
  - m. The landing strip is proposed to be a grass strip, not paved.
  - n. **Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson** questioned the location of the access road and the hours of operation.
  - o. **Planning Commission member Leonard Nuss** stated the Township Driveway Ordinance needs to be met. Mr. Nuss also questioned the existing house on the site and why this location was chosen? Mr. Selig stated he is proposing to fix up the house and possibly live there. As to why this location, this was another option for the donor organ transports to use.
  - p. **Planning Commission Vice Chairman Brian Horwith** stated the plan needs more definition, is there fuel storage on site, where are the structures, the access road or any future buildings that have been discussed tonight? Mr. Selig stated everything is staked out at the site.
  - q. **Planning Commission member Bruce Stettler** questioned the use of the heliport and airstrip in the winter months. Mr. Selig stated the helicopter can take off as long as there is not ice in the atmosphere, but if there is ice on the ground the airstrip will not be in use.
  - r. **Planning Commission Vice Chairman Brian Horwith** questioned the FAA approval, what is this approving? Mr. Selig stated FAA and PA Bureau of Aviation have given him a Statement of No Hazard. They have also determined the position of the runway.
  - s. **Township Supervisor Steve Pany** questioned the runway, is this grass or turf, and is it reinforced? Supervisor Pany also inquired how many airplanes would land on this airstrip weekly? The airstrip is north- south, due to the winds in that area was an east-west airstrip reviewed? Mr. Selig stated it is grass and it is not reinforced, only one aircraft a month or one every six months should be landing on the airstrip, and they did not review an east-west airstrip because they were not concerned with the winds in that area.
  - t. **Township Supervisor Steve Pany** also questioned the transition zones to the adjoining property owners. Mr. Selig stated if these property owners would decide to develop then the landing strip would have to be moved.
  - u. **Township Supervisor Steve Pany** also stated the plan is lacking quite a few items for discussion.
  - v. **Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson** questioned the runway, is it level? Mr. Selig stated it needs to be no more than 4% at grade.
  - w. **Planning Commission member Joanne Guth** questioned runway lights and customers, how many would come to the site. Mr. Selig stated the lights are a whole other cost and the tour business is slow, so not many.
  - x. **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** questioned if the FAA and PA Bureau of Aviation approvals were submitted to the Township. Mr. Selig stated the Pa Bureau of Aviation certificate was submitted tonight, FAA does not give a certificate only a verbal approval to the Bureau of Aviation.

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- y. **Planning Commission member Bruce Stettler** questioned if Mr. Selig will have any employees on the site? Mr. Selig stated he does not have any employees, but he does have one mechanic who performs the annual inspection since 2004.
- z. **Planning Commission Chairman Rich Celmer** stated a revised plan is needed that gives more detail of what is proposed for the site and how it affects the adjoining properties. Mr. Celmer suggested the airstrip not be added until it is needed.
- aa. **Township Supervisor Steve Pany** suggested Mr. Selig should show the Township how the plan will work.
- bb. **Planning Commission member Bruce Stettler** questioned if the Commission could recommend the plan come back to the Planning Commission after Zoning Hearing Board?
- cc. **Planning Commission members Brian Horwith, Leonard Nuss and Jeff Johnson** all stated there is not enough information to make a decision.
- dd. **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** stated the plan would not come back to the Planning Commission after the Zoning Hearing Board; at this point the Zoning Hearing Board would get the plan without a Planning Commission recommendation.
- ee. **Planning Commission member Jeff Johnson** suggested the plan be resubmitted as just a heliport.
- ff. **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** stated the plan could be resubmitted as an amended plan for the Zoning Hearing Board.
- gg. **Township Solicitor Lisa Young** reminded the Planning Commission members that tonight's recommendation is for the use only.
- hh. **Township Manager Jeff Bartlett** stated according to the Township Zoning Ordinance a Heliport includes buildings and a fueling station.

Comments from the Floor:

**Ronald Roth, 5353 Route 309, Schnecksville**, stated Mr. Selig has more than one adjoining property owner and there is one property owner in Washington Township. What if these property owners decide to develop? Mr. Roth also stated the stone road to the property is pretty steep; it should be macadam.

**Leonard Nuss motioned to send an unfavorable recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board due to the lack of information on the plan, Steve Pany seconded, all others agreed.**

## **2. Ordinance 2012-1- Draft Sidewalk Maintenance Ordinance**

- o The Ordinance was crafted to satisfy PennDot; if PennDot is installing sidewalks they want to ensure someone is taking care of them.
- o In existing subdivisions with sidewalks the property owners currently are required to maintain them.
- o Planning Commission member Leonard Nuss questioned if Basketball Hoops and soccer nets could be added to #2 as recreation equipment.
- o Planning Commission Vice Chairman Brian Horwith questioned how far does the maintenance go?
- o The Ordinance would require the current property owners to maintain the sidewalks on their property.
- o Eric Neubauer, 4998 Abbey road, Coplay, raised a few issues for discussion. Have grants been applied for to install these sidewalks? The resident's obligation to clear the sidewalks is a violation of their individual rights, shouldn't clearing the walks be a voluntary effort.

**Jeff Johnson motioned to send a favorable recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, Bruce Stettler seconded, Supervisor Steve Pany abstained and all others agreed.**

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Jeff Johnson motioned to adjourn, Brian Horwith seconded, all others agreed

Meeting Adjourned: 9:35pm.

Jane K. Kelly  
Recording Secretary  
Planning Administrator  
North Whitehall Township