

MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
BOROUGH OF PARKESBURG
THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT –

Todd Brade
Shelby Smith
Jennifer Mayo
Dave Bashore

OTHERS –

Joseph Reali, Borough Manager
John Carnes, Jr., Esq., Borough Solicitor
Michael Bingham, PE, Borough Engineer, Arro Consulting
Brandon Conrad, VistaBlock, Applicant
Debra Shulski, Esq., Applicant's Attorney, Riley Riper
Justin Brewer, PE, Applicant's Engineer, Howell
David Babbitt, Applicant's Planning Consultant, Babbitt & Assoc.
Greg Duke, Resident, 80 E. 2nd Avenue

Call to Order. Mr. Bashore called the meeting to order in the Borough Building at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Request to review sketch plan of VistaBlock re: *Development of 24.4 acres at 70 East Second Avenue (Stauffer Parcel) into 240 rental units.*

All parties acknowledged that under the borough code, the Planning Commission's review of a sketch plan is for informational and guidance purposes only and that no comments are intended nor should be taken as implicit or explicit approval of any concepts of the sketch plan discussed or presented.

General Comments from Applicant:

- * VistaBlock comprises Sam Stoltzfuss (75% ownership) and Brandon Conrad (25%). VistaBlock will be property owner and developer.
- * Instead of having all 240 units for rent, VistaBlock would like to build four 36-unit apartment buildings for rent (roughly 72 1- and 72 2-bedroom units) plus 96 3-bedroom townhouses for sale (still 240 total units), with a Homeowners Association and a perimeter walking trail.
- * Business model is based on fulfilling demand for high-end rentals along the Keystone train line; data suggest that at least 20% of new residents would use Parkesburg train station to commute.
- * A by-right plan – 56 housing units – is not financially viable because of infrastructure and related costs.
- * Apartments would rent for minimum of \$1,700 (1BR) and \$2,000 (2BRs); townhouses would be offered for sale for min. of \$275,000, with estd. absorption rate of 8 rental units/mo. and a 4-year buildout /occupancy; townhouses for sale would result in estimated 2-3 year buildout with 3 units sold/mo.
- * Proposed plan would generate net annual income for both borough (\$175,000) and school district (\$470,000) under fiscal impact analysis by David Babbitt, with approx. assessed value of \$20 million; development would add estimated 437 new residents, 30 of whom are school-aged children.

General Comments from Applicant (continued)

- * Open to having all ingress/egress from/to Route 10, in consultation with PennDot and emergency responders, with possible separate street for apartment building access. If emergency access would be required from 2nd Avenue, that entrance could be gated with a code for emergency access only.
- * Receptive to conceptual design produced by Chesco Planning Commission, with less than 240 total units, possibly with single-family houses along the property line adjacent to 2nd Avenue neighbors, townhouses and apartments.
- * Would plan to heavily landscape buffer with 2nd Avenue neighbors.
- * Would work with borough, PennDoT and others to improve safe pedestrian access to/from train station.
- * Open to contribution to borough for open space, recreation and related infrastructure improvements.

General Comments from Borough Officials:

- * Development of Stauffer parcel is a generational opportunity to attract particularly younger, upwardly mobile people to develop roots and grow a family in the community.
- * Concerned about adding 240 rental units to a town with an already significant rental housing base.
- * Concerned about experience and financial wherewithal of VistaBlock to complete development of this size and scope.
- * Concerned about unnamed parties in VistaBlock's agreement of sale with existing owner.
- * Concerned about development's traffic and quality of life impact on existing neighbors and borough as a whole.
- * Concerned about emergency access to development.
- * Would like to see VistaBlock incorporate TND (traditional neighborhood development) best practices.
- * High quality development could attract additional commercial business to borough (e.g., restaurants, shops, etc.).
- * Additional emergency access could be achieved with extension road to Western Avenue on east side of parcel.
- * Concerned about consistency of development with borough's new comprehensive plan.
- * One or more speed humps could be installed on E. 2nd Avenue to mitigate traffic/pedestrian safety concerns.

Approval of Minutes. Ms. Smith moved to approve the Minutes of the Commission's April 23, 2023, meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mayo and passed 4-0.

Old Business. None.

New Business. None.

Adjourn. There being no further business, Ms. Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mayo and passed 3-0. The meeting was adjourned at about 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Dave Bashore, Chair

(NOTE: *These minutes were approved 4-0 by Planning Commission on 9/28/23.*)