

MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
BOROUGH OF PARKESBURG, PA
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT –

Todd Brade
Shelby Smith
Matthew Marran
Dave Bashore

OTHERS –

John Carnes, Jr., Esq., Borough Solicitor
Michael Bingham, PE, Borough Engineer, Arro Consulting
Brandon Conrad, VistaBlock, Inc., Developer
Debra Shulski, Esq., VistaBlock's Attorney, Riley Riper
Justin Brewer, PE, VistaBlock's Engineer, Howell
Jesse Crapino, D.R. Horton, Inc., Developer
Dan McKenna, Horton's Engineer, Howell
Borough residents (7 neighbors from E. 2nd Avenue; 2 neighbors from northside; 2 others—anonymous)

Call to Order. Mr. Bashore called the meeting to order in the Borough Building at 7:00 p.m. A quorum of 4 of 5 members was present.

Approval of Minutes. Ms. Smith moved to approve the Minutes of the Commission's June 29, 2023, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brade and passed 4-0.

Review of Sketch Plan of VistaBlock, Inc. re: *Construction of 131 residential units (25 single-family houses plus 106 attached and semi-attached townhouses) on 24+- acres at 70 East Second Avenue (Stauffer Parcel) (in the R-2 Residential Zoning District).*

Mr. Bashore advised neighbors and members of the public in attendance that under the Borough's existing zoning code and state law, VistaBlock or another developer could build "by right" between 54-65 residential homes on the parcel.

All parties acknowledged that under the borough code, the Planning Commission's review of this sketch plan is for informational and guidance purposes only and that no comments are intended nor should be taken as implicit or explicit approval nor a recommendation of approval of said plan. The final approval, including any conditions, or rejection of the plan rests with Borough Council.

General Comments from VistaBlock:

- * VistaBlock, Inc., a private company located in Lancaster, advised that it is the equitable owner of the property; its principals are Brandon Conrad (CEO) and Sam Stoltzfus (Chief Strategy Officer).
- * To accommodate the Borough's and County's previous comments, VistaBlock would now like to construct a grid-like development comprising 26 single-family houses and 131 attached/semi-attached townhouses – all with front-facing garages and public water and sewer – with no apartment buildings.

General Comments from VistaBlock (continued)

- * In/Egress would be to/from S. Church Street (Rte. 10) only; E. 2nd Avenue would be gated and opened only for use by emergency vehicles.
- * VistaBlock did meet with the owners of the property to the east of the Stauffer tract to make an offer in exchange for an easement for additional in/egress, but the property owners were not interested.
- * 2nd Avenue properties will be heavily buffered with tree, shrub and grass plantings the entire length of the development (VistaBlock presented conceptual renderings of this).
- * The developer will install a tot-lot on the portion of the parcel fronting E. 2nd Avenue for use by the entire community.
- * The developer will install a walking trail, a minimum of 4-6 feet wide, around the perimeter of the development.
- * The single-family houses would be approx. 2,000 sq.ft., with front porches, 3-4 bedrooms and a 2-car garage, with an estimated starting price of \$500,000.
- * The townhouses would be 3 stories with living spaces on the second and third floors and a 1-car garage, with an estimated starting price of \$325,000-\$350,000.
- * VistaBlock will install sidewalks throughout the development.
- * VistaBlock will provide architectural renderings of the houses and townhouses during the formal subdivision/land development process.
- * VistaBlock will request a PennDoT highway occupancy permit during the formal SALDO process and will install a traffic light, crosswalk, and/or other traffic-calming devices at the development's main entrance as required.
- * The development will have a Homeowners Association agreement that will have to be negotiated with the Borough; roads and other infrastructure would be dedicated to the Borough; trash/recycling would be collected by the Borough.
- * Construction of infrastructure would begin about three months after VistaBlock were to receive final approval of their plan, with construction of houses to begin immediately afterwards.

General comments/questions from Borough officials:

- * Mr. Marran asked VistaBlock if the Chester County Planning Commission has approached them about purchasing the tract or placing an agricultural or other type of conservation easement, or vice versa. Mr. Conrad answered no.
- * The developer was asked to seriously consider conserving all or a large portion of the tract for agricultural use or as open space.
- * Ms. Smith asked VistaBlock if they would reconsider the elimination of rental apartments from their updated sketch plan. Mr. Conrad responded that they eliminated the apartment buildings to accommodate previous suggestions from Borough officials and the Chester County Planning Commission.
- * Mr. Carnes advised VistaBlock that they would be required to submit with any formal SALDO application a draft of a zoning text amendment to allow a density bonus and other applicable considerations for this parcel in the R-2 Residential zoning district.
- * Messrs. Carnes and Bingham advised that a SALDO application submitted by VistaBlock pursuant to the sketch plan would be considered a Preliminary-Final Plan under the Borough code and is the next step.

General comments/questions from neighbors and the public:

- * A neighbor asked if 2nd Avenue property owners would be required to repair/replace their sidewalks if the development were to be approved. Messrs. Brade and Carnes responded almost certainly not.
- * The installation of streetlights in a new development would be an issue in the neighborhood. Mr. Bingham responded that this development would be subject to the Borough Code's lighting provisions. Mr. Conrad said that VistaBlock would be sensitive to neighbors' concerns.
- * The neighbors are very concerned about additional traffic and pedestrian safety in the neighborhood, particularly because children now play on the lightly traveled streets. Mr. Bingham advised that VistaBlock will be required to conduct a traffic study as part of any formal SALDO application and submit it to the Borough and PennDot (plus, only emergency access would be permitted from 2nd Ave).
- * In response to a question about what happens from here, Mr. Carnes reiterated that the next step is for the developer to submit a formal plan to the Borough. Mr. Bashore thanked the neighbors for their input and advised that they would be contacted about any future public meetings about the parcel.

At 8:20 p.m., Mr. Bashore called a 5-minute recess to allow the neighbors to exit, then called the meeting back to order.

Review of Sketch Plan of D.R. Horton re: Construction of 130 attached and semi-attached townhouses for residential use on 30+- acres at 200 North Church Street (in the R-5 Residential Zoning District).

All parties acknowledged that under the borough code, the Planning Commission's review of this sketch plan is for informational and guidance purposes only and that no comments are intended nor should be taken as implicit or explicit approval nor a recommendation of approval of said plan. The final approval, including any conditions, or rejection of the plan rests with Borough Council.

General comments from D.R. Horton:

- * The developer is D.R. Horton, a public company founded in 1978 and headquartered in Arlington, Texas, with offices in 31 states, including 3 in PA (Harleysville, York and Sewickley). (NYSE: DHI)
- * Mr. Caprino advised that Horton has a conditional agreement of sale with Chrystal Springs to purchase a large portion of the property upon the Borough's approval and recording of a subdivision/land development plan.
- * Horton plans to subdivide the 30+- acres into two parcels: approx. 7 acres, comprising the existing apartment buildings, would be subdivided and owned and maintained by Chrystal Springs; the remaining 23 acres would comprise 130 attached/semi-attached townhouses, with a Homeowners Association agreement to be negotiated with the Borough, and according to Mr. McKenna would require no changes to or variances from the Borough's zoning code.
- * The townhouses would be 20' wide (61 units, selling in the low to mid-\$300,000s) or 24' wide (69 units, selling in the upper \$300,000s), include front-facing 1- and 2-car garages, and would have different elevations and architectural styles.
- * All roadways in the development zone would have a 32' cartway and a 50' right-of-way and would be dedicated to the Borough.
- * Construction would begin about 7-8 months after the plan's final approval, with the townhouses being built in phases, a few clusters at a time.

General comments/questions from Borough officials:

- * Mr. Brade asked if the original springhouse could be preserved as a monument to the neighborhood's history. Mr. Caprino responded that he would look into it and try to preserve it.
- * Mr. Carnes advised that an escrow agreement would have to be approved by the Borough as part of a formal SALDO plan application.
- * Ms. Smith and Mr. Bingham noted their concerns about parking in the newly expanded neighborhood. Mr. McKenna responded that 326 total parking spaces are anticipated: 260 on driveways/garages plus 66 on-street spaces.
- * Mr. Bashore asked if Horton is flexible with the number of units (i.e., would they consider less than 130?). Mr. Caprino responded that they could be flexible "up to a point."
- * Mr. Bashore asked if Horton would be installing a traffic light at the existing entrance to the apartment complex; if they would look at realigning the entrance's intersection with Rte. 10 and Sadsbury Road; and if they would be willing to realign the intersection of Rte. 10 and Chapel Road as envisioned in the Borough's comprehensive plan. Messrs. Caprino and McKenna responded that they would comply with PennDoT's highway occupancy permit.
- * Ms. Smith asked if Horton would be willing to install a walking trail or sidewalk out of the right-of-way along Rte. 10 to Chapel Road. Mr. Caprino responded that they would comply with PennDoT's highway occupancy permit.
- * Mr. Bingham observed that he didn't see a stormwater management area in the sketch plan. Mr. McKenna responded that such an area would be located on the northwestern part of the subdivided property.
- * Mr. Carnes noted concerns about the look and shape of the existing apartment buildings. Mr. Caprino acknowledged the concerns. Mr. Bingham responded that the Borough would have to depend on the goodwill of Horton and Chrystal Springs to make any improvements under current regulations.
- * Mr. Carnes advised that the submission of a Preliminary-Final plan application would be the next step.

General comments/questions from neighbors and the public:

- * None.

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 Mr. Marran and passed 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Dave Bashore, Chair

(NOTE: *These minutes were approved 4-0 by Planning Commission on 3/28/24.)*