

**BOROUGH OF GREEN TREE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 15, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Green Tree Planning Commission met on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sycamore Room of the Green Tree Municipal Center, 10 West Manilla Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15220.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Cheryl Bakin, Chair
Al Erwin
Robert McWilliams
Jesse Robinson-Evans
Christine Short
Jessica Swiech
Nicholas Weirick

Also Present:

Todd Carter, Code Enforcement Officer
Judy Miller, Borough Manager
Kate Diersen, Esq., Borough Solicitor
Edward Schenck, Mayor
Ron Panza, Council Member (7:45pm)
David Rea, Council Member
Craig Romanovich, Council Member
Kim Beck, Stenographer

HEARING OF THE CITIZENS

There was no one present who wished to be heard.

PUBLIC MEETING ON THE REVISED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Ms. Bakin welcomed everyone to the public meeting for the revised Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission is meeting this evening to receive feedback and input from the public before submitting the plan for approval by Council. The Planning Commission will take the comments from tonight's meeting and consider making necessary adjustments or changes to the plan as needed.

Ms. Bakin explained that a representative from PennDOT was in attendance to discuss preliminary information regarding proposed changes to the interchanges located in Green Tree. She emphasized that tonight's meeting was not about PennDOT and any questions from the residents in attendance should be about the Comprehensive Plan. PennDOT will hold an official meeting for the public in the future where this information can be discussed with officials.

At this time, Ms. Bakin opened the meeting for public comment.

Steve Pavlack – 129 Rhodes Avenue

1. Mr. Pavlack thanked the Planning Commission for work they have put into updating the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Mr. Pavlack noted that on page eight, the Comprehensive Plan references enhancing the quality of housing in the Borough. He stated that he believes other municipalities require rental property owners to apply for a permit and have their property inspected to ensure that the property is up to code prior to renting. Mr. Pavlack also stated that there is at least one Airbnb operating within Borough limits. He asked if the Planning Commission had any information on this. Ms. Bakin stated that they did not have any information regarding this concern, but that the Planning Commission would consider researching this.
3. Mr. Pavlack stated that as great as this meeting to discuss the Comprehensive Plan document is, nothing can be done without real estate taxes. Although the Borough has a nice appraisal of most

houses within Borough limits, Mr. Pavlack does not believe that the land value is always calculated correctly. He thinks that the Borough is missing out on a lot of tax money and should consider creating a committee to review the land value appraisals.

4. Mr. Pavlack recommended that the Planning Commission consider removing the mention of considering wind as an energy source. He said that if the Borough would allow a turbine to be installed within Borough limits, nearby property values would decrease.

Mayor Edward Schenck – 1154 Greenridge Lane

1. Mayor Schenck stated that while reading through the Comprehensive Plan he realized how many assets the Borough of Green Tree has in just 2.1 square miles, including several apartment buildings, three viable hotels, office complexes, cemeteries, churches, a railyard, a tunnel, Trumbull Drive Bridge, a nature center, six parks, two schools, a Police Department, a Fire Company, and a Public Works Department.
2. Mayor Schenck stated that he will send the Planning Commission a list of minor changes he found while he was proofreading the document.
3. The septic system on Warriors Road that is referenced on page 48 should be updated, as these streets have been connected to the public sewer system. Mayor Schenck noted that there are other streets in the Borough that are not tied into the sewer system that should be referenced. Ms. Bakin stated that a paragraph was inadvertently deleted from the Comprehensive plan and the list of streets not currently tied into the sewer system will be added back in.
4. Mayor Schenck noted that page 42 references that residents can sign up for weekly email updates, but on another page, it is stated that the email updates have been discontinued. Page 42 will need to be updated to reflect this change. Mayor Schenck stated that the Borough is getting a new system where you will be able to get email updates, but the system has not started yet.
5. Mt. Pisgah Church is now located on Noblestown Road and is no longer within Borough limits. Mayor Schenck is unsure whether the Church of the Latter-day Saints is currently in operation.
6. Mayor Schenck stated that the Borough is under a consent decree and will be spending a large amount of money on stormwater updates.
7. The Borough has a drug take-back located in the Municipal building for residents to drop off unwanted prescription medications.
8. The Comprehensive Plan references possibly putting up a parking lot on Greentree Road to help revitalize the central business district. Mayor Schenck said that Mt. Lebanon has two major parking lots along with on-street parking. He realizes that constructing a municipal parking lot in Green Tree would be expensive, but it would help revitalize the area and help prevent vehicles from backing out onto Greentree Road.
9. Mayor Schenck is in favor of the idea of developing the Borough-owned vacant lot on Hawthorne Avenue into a site for passive recreation.
10. Page 87 references a sound barrier along I-376. Mayor Schenck hopes that PennDOT can address this concern.
11. Mayor Schenck has updated information for the property owned by St. Margaret's Church that he will give to the Planning Commission.

David Rea, Council Member – 33 Elmhurst Road

1. Mr. Rea thanked the Planning Commission for their tireless efforts in putting together this updated Comprehensive Plan. He said that it has been several years since the first plan had been adopted. Mr. Rea stated that out of all the volunteer opportunities in the Borough, he believes that the Planning Commission probably puts in the most time collectively.
2. Mr. Rea noted that page 91 of the Comprehensive Plan references an Implementation Plan, and asked if the Planning Commission will be adding more information to this section after tonight's meeting. Ms. Bakin confirmed that this section of the Plan will be updated.
3. Mr. Rea stated that the Comprehensive Plan refers to Potential Funding Sources as Appendix H, but there is no Appendix H listed. Ms. Bakin explained that the funding sources have changed and decreased from 2010. The Planning Commission is in the process of searching for new funding sources but has not identified many currently.

Tom Bakin – 884 Greentree Road

1. Mr. Bakin stated that there are two different windmill technologies. Most people are familiar with the large three-blade windmills, but there are also cylindrical windmills that are only 5 to 6 feet in diameter. These windmills are scaled for individual buildings, not utility-scale.

Mr. Erwin stated that the first Green Tree Comprehensive Plan was 398 pages long. The Planning Commission has gone through the plan line by line to eliminate a lot of unnecessary information. They intend to review the Comprehensive Plan every two years to make sure that the suggested items are being addressed by the Borough. The Planning Commission has met with multiple businesses in the Borough and took input from residents through two surveys to compile information to include in the updated plan. Mr. Erwin thanked all the residents who attended tonight's meeting. Ms. Bakin said that when the first Comprehensive Plan was written a consultant was hired. The process took approximately 15 months to complete and cost the Borough over \$30,000. For this updated plan, the Planning Commission took on the project without assistance from a consultant.

PENNDOT PRESENTATION

Mr. Anthony Annett was in attendance to represent PennDOT.

Mr. Annett explained that PennDOT is currently in the preliminary engineering stage which he expects to continue through 2024. At that point they will enter the final design phase which will probably run from 2025 through 2026. At this time, PennDOT is hoping to have the interchange project ready to bid in 2026, with construction to begin sometime in 2027. They are expecting construction to take around 2 years to complete. Mr. Annett stated that this is a very preliminary timeline that is contingent upon available funding and other interchange projects in the area. The goal is to have the Banksville interchange project mostly completed before beginning the Green Tree interchange project to avoid having multiple interchanges under construction at the same time.

Mr. Annett explained that the main purpose of this proposed project is to reduce congestion of the overall interchange. Doing this will hopefully improve mobility, safety, and connectivity of the interchange. Mr. Annett discussed the preliminary plans for the Green Tree interchange which include reconfiguring the ramps and eliminating the substandard ramp lengths that are there right now. PennDOT also plans to make some improvements to Mansfield Avenue and Poplar Street because they anticipate some changes in the traffic patterns due to this reconfiguration. PennDOT is also considering replacing the Greentree Road bridge.

Mr. Annett stated that PennDOT is currently performing a noise analysis to determine where they will need to install sound barriers along I-376. At this time, he does not have any additional information regarding

where these barriers will be installed. Once they determine where the sound barriers will be necessary, affected residents will be contacted for their input. Mr. Annett continued to discuss the preliminary plans for the interchange project.

Mr. Robinson-Evans asked if PennDOT would be considering pedestrian walkability when redesigning the Greentree Road bridge. Mr. Annett stated that their goal is to try to minimize impacts both to the vehicles traveling across the bridge and to pedestrians traveling across it. The proposed bridge improvements will maintain the sidewalks on both sides of the structure.

Mr. Romanovich asked if PennDOT would taking into consideration the economic impact these road closures will have on the businesses located in Green Tree. Mr. Annett said that PennDOT will try to minimize these impacts during construction. The anticipated plan is to be able to maintain through traffic during the construction phase. There may be short-term closures or stoppages on parts of the parkway, but these will be temporary.

Mr. Annett answered some questions and concerns from residents in attendance regarding widening of roads, installation of retaining walls, how the new ramps will affect traffic, and other concerns. Ms. Bakin reminded the residents in attendance that PennDOT will be having an official meeting to discuss the project once they have finalized their plans. Residents will be invited to attend this public meeting and voice any concerns with PennDOT at that time.

SP-03-22

987 Greentree Road – Proposed Jersey Mike’s Sub Shop

Mr. Luke Gindlesperger of H.F. Lenz Company was in attendance to represent 987 Greentree Road.

Mr. Gindlesperger stated that they have received Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) approval from PennDOT. This approval will allow Jersey Mike’s to cut off access to Greentree Road, so all traffic will enter and exit the property via Leon Road. They have received zoning variances for the parking lot which will allow them to minimize the number of parking spots on site to 11, and a sign variance to allow them to have a 30-foot sign on the front of the building. Mr. Gindlesperger noted that they will need to apply for a Conditional Use for a restaurant less than 3,000 square feet in the Neighborhood-Commercial zone.

Mr. Gindlesperger was asking if they had addressed the issue of customers attempting to make a left-hand turn onto Greentree Road, which could cause problems as there is not a light at this intersection. Mr. Gindlesperger stated that when he originally met with the Planning Commission last December, it was recommended that they remove the entrance and exit from Greentree Road and move it to Leon Road to try to alleviate some of the traffic concerns. They are working with a very small lot and moved the entrance as far back on Leon Road as possible.

Motion:

Mr. Erwin made a motion, seconded by Ms. Short, to approve the land development and site plan for 987 Greentree Road as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR REPORT – Ms. Bakin

1. Ms. Bakin had nothing to report at this time.

REVIEW OF UPDATES TO PERMITS AND PROJECTS IN THE BOROUGH

1. Mr. Carter does not have an update regarding the possible conversion of the hotel at 500 Mansfield Avenue into apartments. He is waiting for an agreement of sale or owners’ approval.

2. A building permit was issued for the owners of Chipotle.
3. Mr. Carter is waiting for a response from 495 Mansfield Avenue regarding building plans.
4. Jersey Mike's Sub Shop will need to apply for a Conditional Use Approval and schedule a meeting with the Planning Commission.
5. Construction has started on the self-storage unit at 11 Parkway Center. They obtained their sign variances at the recent Zoning Hearing Board meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Ms. Bakin stated that when the Comprehensive Plan was put on the website, an action item regarding extending public sewer lines to area not currently served was omitted. The Planning Commission has gathered a list of addresses that are not currently connected to the sewer line to include in the Comprehensive Plan.

Motion:

Mr. Robinson-Evans made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weirick, to put Action item 1.2 back into the Comprehensive Plan with the list of streets that was provided to the Planning Commission.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Ms. Short made a motion, seconded by Mr. McWilliams, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 pm.

Motion carried unanimously.

Cheryl Bakin, Chair

Jessica Swiech, Secretary