

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, May 15, 2013 in the 6th Floor Council Chambers, Easton City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Charles Elliott. Present: Charles Elliott, Robert Sun, Dennis Lieb, William Heilman, Bonnie Winfield and Ronald Shipman. Also in attendance were staff members, Brian Gish; Chief Planner, Carl Manges; City Planner and Tina Woolverton, Secretary.

The agenda was approved.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2013 meeting was made by Mr. Shipman seconded by Ms. Winfield, approved by all.

**Privilege of the Floor.** None

**Special Exception – Sprint Vision Cell Tower Upgrades - One South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.** Mr. Gish said the applicant, Sprint Vision, proposes to replace six existing panel antennas with four new antennas, and install one additional battery cabinet on the roof of the Alpha Building at 1 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Additionally, an existing equipment cabinet will be replaced. Two of the proposed antennas will be attached to wall mounts and two will be placed on an existing equipment sled. To balance the new equipment configuration, ballast will be added to the current sled mounting.

The property is located in the Downtown Zoning District where Communications Facilities are permitted by Special Exception. 1 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is also located in the National Register and Local Historic Districts and the Easton Historic District Commission recommended that City Council approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposal.

Mark Harris was present to represent the applicant. Mr. Elliott asked in replacing the six existing antennas with only four if there would be a reduction in radio frequency emissions. Mr. Harris said they would be roughly the same.

A motion to approve the resolution recommending Special exception approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

**Land Development Plan – Lafayette College – Oechsle Center.** Mr. Manges said the applicant, Lafayette College, proposes the development of a three-story building for the creation of the Oechsle Center for Global Education. This approximate 19,600 square foot building will consolidate existing functions from the College including Anthropology, Sociology, Community-Based Learning, Research & Service, and Internal Affairs/Area Studies. Within the building will be offices, research space, classrooms, conference rooms, computer labs, and a reception area. Landscaping will also be incorporated with this proposal in the form of 10 Leyland Cypress, 3 Paperbark Maples, 3 Red Maples, 1 Willow Oak, 1 Southern Magnolia, 238 various shrubs, and 891 garden plantings. The proposal for the Oechsle Center includes the elimination of 8 existing trees, and the planting of 18 new trees for net gain of 10 trees. Mr. Manges said It is the College's plan to start construction once all their approvals are received. Conditional preliminary approval was granted for this project by the Easton Planning Commission on March 20, 2013.

Mr. Manges said this project is a portion of Lafayette College's overall Master Plan. The proposed Educational Services use is located in the Institutional-1 Zoning District, where it is permitted.

Mr. Gish said the construction of the Oechsle Center building would result in the elimination of 12 parking spaces along S. College Drive. The parking lot along S. College Drive was constructed to alleviate the displacement of parking from the Quad improvements project. Mr. Gish explained that the College comes before the Planning Commission with projects, and the discussions always lead to parking. He said the College commissioned a campus parking study, and staff then reviewed it and broke down into three zones. He added those calculations will become the basis going forward to calculate parking needs on future development plans.

The following memo was distributed to the Planning Commission:

TO: Becky Bradley, AICP  
Carl Manges  
Cindy Cawley  
Keith George  
FROM: Brian William Gish, AICP  
DATE: April 26, 1013  
CC: Tina Woolverton  
RE: Lafayette College Parking Requirements

Below are detailed conclusions arrived at through an internal review and meeting regarding the Lafayette College Parking & Transportation Master Plan.

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In the past years, Lafayette College has typically proposed multiple projects requiring review by the Easton Planning Commission and the Easton Zoning Hearing Board. In 2012, the College commissioned a parking study (hereafter referred to as "the Study") by Chance Management Advisors, Inc. In an effort to simplify parking calculations going forward, Planning & Codes staff members have reviewed this parking study and come to the following conclusions:

1. The Study indicated a specific number of spaces in demand based on student, faculty and staff needs. However, staff felt adjustments needed to be made. First, staff feels it's important to break these down into three separate groups: Campus Proper, North Third Street and Outlying Locations.

Campus Proper: L9NE2A-24-3, L9NE2D-2-1, L9NE3B-8-29, L9NE3B-8-27, L9NE2C-7-6, L9NE3B-8-26, L9NE3D-1-3, L9NE2D-9-1, L9NE2D-5-1, L9NE3D-1-1, L9NE3B-8-30, L9NE2D-4-7, L9NE3D-1-10, L9NE3D-1-11, L9-20-3, L9NE3B-8-7, L9NE3B-8-28, L9NE3D-1-6, L9NE3D-1-6A, L9NE3D-1-7, L9NE3D-1-9, L9NE3D-1-8, L9NE3B-8-24, L9NE3B-8-24A, L9NE3B-8-1, L9-13-2, L9-20-2, L9-31-1, L9NE3B-7-2, L9NE3B-7-1, L9NE3D-1-2

North Third Street: L9NE3D-3-3, L9NE3D-3-1, L9NE3C-1-8, L9NE3D-9-2, L9-31-2, L9NE3D-7-1, L9NE3D-5-2, L9NE3D-8-2, L9NE3D-9-4, L9NE3C-1-4, L9NE3D-3-2, L9NE3D-3-4, L9NE3D-6-1, L9NE3D-5-1, L9NE3D-9-3, L9NE3D-9-1, L9NE3C-1-1

Outlying Locations: All other campus properties within the City of Easton

- Planning & Codes staff felt it was also necessary to consider Lafayette's current staffing in addition to proposed new faculty/staff. To this count, College vehicles and visitor spaces were included per those listed on the "Existing Parking Lots: February 2013" document. Planning & Codes staff also felt it was important to reduce the figure for total available spaces according to those being lost to developments of the Oechsle and Welcome Centers. Staff determined the demand to be as follows:

\* = Hamilton House and McKelvy House, and is assumed to be at saturation

\*\* = Includes College-owned vehicles and visitor spaces

Location	Student	Faculty	Staff	Other**	Demand
Campus Proper	739	134	416	53	1,342
Number of Persons	2,462	248	616	59	3,385
North Third Street	0	17	11	0	28
Number of Persons	0	31	17	0	48
Outlying Locations*	20	1	0	0	21
Number of Persons	41	1	0	0	42
Combined	759	152	426	53	1,391
Number of Persons	2,503	280	633	59	3,475

\*\*\* =

Additional Staff/Faculty members projected by 2017 were divided equally between the Campus Proper and North Third Street.

- The Study addresses new demand generated by the proposed Oechsle Center for Global Education and the Welcome Center with Admissions, in addition to future projects not yet submitted for review (Marquis Quad Residence Hall, Farber Hall Demolition, Kunkle Hall, and Life, Earth Environmental Science Building Phases I & II). Reflecting this, the available spaces are:

Location	Demand	Supply	Available
Campus Proper	1,342	1,380	61
North Third Street	28	137	109
Outlying Locations*	21	21	0

- The Study employed the following methodology for calculating student parking demand: Total Students x 33% (Students with Parking Permits) x 90%. While the 90% figure was questioned initially (staff felt 95% may be more accurate), it was determined that the figure was determined through observation, and the published figure should be used. However, if this calculation is to remain valid, the number of student parking permits issued by the College cannot exceed the demand of the student population listed in the study. Based on a total of 2,462 students located at or adjacent to the campus proper, no more than 821 passes may be issued, unless the College chooses to withdraw spaces from its available parking supply, or specifically designate parking spaces to the North Third Street lots.
- Proposed parking allotment/reassignments seem reasonable and beneficial.

6. While the Study accounts for regular daily use, special events (athletics, speakers, symposia, etc.) are not addressed. The College is encouraged to develop a more robust plan for handling these events considering options such as expanded off-site parking with shuttle services, opening all spaces on campus for a defined period (before, during and after the event), relocating College-owned vehicles preemptively, ahead of events, creating incentives for students with on-campus vehicles to relocate during events, etc. Many of these approaches may already be utilized by the College, but were not included in documents provided to City staff.
7. The College is encouraged to develop expanded parking at the Hummel Lumber site, such as construction/development of parking facilities beyond simple surface lots. All new spaces exceeding the 25 currently at this site would be added to the Campus Proper's supply.
8. Many of the College's parking issues are behavioral in nature, not caused by functional or facility deficiencies. The College will need to consider ways to modify behavior to defuse future parking conflicts, not simply consider inventories and demands. This will require increased enforcement of its parking policies, including ticketing and other regulatory actions against violators.
9. The total parking supply and demands represent a snapshot in time. Going forward, any campus project either adding or subtracting from the supply at this point (with the exception of projects referenced directly by the study) will be tallied in a continued manner against these figures. Should, at any point, new demand exceed supply, zoning relief would be required. As campus parking demand is generated not so much by specific structures as it is faculty, staff and student totals, for all developments at the Campus Proper Parking Area, the College must demonstrate any changes to faculty, staff and student totals, and parking spaces will be allocated against the aforementioned tallies, using the formulas elaborated upon in both the plan and this document. Given pending proposals for the North Third Street Parking Area, allocation and base tallies for parking will be addressed at a later time. For all properties outside of the College Proper and North Third Street Parking Areas shall be assessed under traditional parking calculations.

Mary Wilford-Hunt, Director of Facilities Planning and Construction and Mitch Wein, Vice President of Finance and Administration were present. Mr. Elliott asked if the only changes to the plan since the previous plan were to address preliminary plan conditions. Mr. Manges said that is correct, and a revised E & S plan has been sent to NCCD and approved.

Mr. Sun questioned where other college visitors were taken in account at. Ms. Wilford-Hunt said in some cases for special events the college will close early to free spaces for the visitors. Mr. Sun questioned how much parking was needed for this development. Ms. Wilford-Hunt said no additional spaces were needed as this building would house departments currently on campus, but in other buildings, without adding staff or students.

Mr. Elliott asked if an ordinance amendment would be required to adopt the parking methodology going forward. Mr. Gish said one would be required.

Mr. Elliott requested a revision to the resolution removing item #4, as NCCD approval has been granted.

A motion to approve the revised resolution granting final conditional approval was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Shipman, approved by all.

### **Final Land Development and Reverse Subdivision Plans – Redevelopment**

**Authority – Simon Silk Mill.** Dave Horton, of Pennoni Associates, the City's third party engineer, said the applicant, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Easton, has proposed to consolidate five parcels into two lots for the development of the Simon Silk Mill site located along North 13<sup>th</sup> Street. The applicant has also proposed to convert two existing buildings (K & J on the Building Site Plan) into a Mixed-Use Residential/Business and a parking accessory structure respectively. The Mixed-Use Residential/Business building includes an 11,070 square foot first floor commercial area, and 36 apartment units (1 & 2 bedroom) located on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> floors. Two surface accessory parking areas are also being proposed with this application. One parking area will have 47 spaces, and the other parking area will have 14 spaces. To accommodate the 14-space parking area, the applicant has proposed the demolition of Building M. In total, 83 parking spaces will be created with this phase of the project. These proposed changes will take place on both Lot #1 and Lot #2, and are considered Phase I of the project. Proposed site improvements for Phase I of the project also include construction of a boulevard, extending 1,370 ft. from North 13<sup>th</sup> Street to Bushkill Drive. The applicant intends to dedicate this boulevard to the City of Easton.

An underground wet well (Sewage Pump Station) is also part of this application. Currently there is no waste water system on the site, and the wet well will pump the wastewater from the proposed project to the Easton Area Joint Sewer Authority line on N. 13<sup>th</sup> Street. A generator and a control panel for the wet well will be located above ground within a steel enclosure. The wet well, generator, and control panel will be located on Lot #2 at the southern portion of the property.

Mr. Horton noted the retaining wall along the Bushkill Creek is in dire need of repair, and is a safety hazard for potential residents and visitors alike. One section of this retaining wall is missing completely, and other parts of the wall are severely cracked. The applicant shall indicate on the plans that this retaining wall will be repaired during Phase I of this project.

The site currently contains 18 buildings, with a gross floor area of 306,986 sq. ft. From the late 1800s to the 1970s, these buildings were used for textile manufacturing. The existing buildings are no longer in operation, and currently sit vacant.

Mr. Horton said the overall development plan, as proposed, will be consistent with several related plans including the Bushkill Creek Corridor Initiative which includes a series of inter-related projects: Lafayette College's rehabilitation of the buildings along N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, connecting to the Simon Silk Mill by the Karl Stirner Arts trail. The Bushkill Creek Corridor Initiative is the largest multi-partner city re-visioning and investment project in the history of City with over \$15 million in investment to date between the three projects. Final direct and indirect investment is anticipated to exceed \$100 million.

The project is located in the River Corridors & Other Green Areas Zoning District, where the proposed uses are permitted by right, and the Mixed-Use Residential/Business use

is permitted by Special Exception. However, the site is also located in the Street Corridor Overlay District where Mixed-Use Residential/Business (A12) uses are permitted by right; therefore, no Special Exception is required for the use. The property is also situated in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defined 100-year and 500-year floodplains, placing it in the Flood Hazard Overlay District per Article XXV §595-140(A), thus requiring Special Exception approval for development in a floodplain.

Proposals for the future development of the site include the conversion of other existing buildings on-site, along with the creation of additional surface parking and a parking deck structure. The applicant has indicated there is no timetable for future phases of this project. When the other phases of the project are ready, the applicant will be required to submit additional development plans.

Mark Bahnick, project engineer was present. He said they have continued working with staff on the sanitary sewer and the forced main will now be aligned to Bushkill Drive. Mr. Shipman questioned whether phase 1 is residential and commercial. Mr. Bahnick said it is. Mr. Shipman questioned the status of the PennDOT permit. Mr. Bahnick said they have continued working with PennDOT and close to finalizing. Mr. Shipman questioned the amount of stormwater discharge to the creek. Mr. Bahnick said it will actually lesson, as impervious surface is being reduced on the site.

Mr. Sun noted the area around the site is often dusty due to the nearby recycling plant. He questioned whether it was possible to make the owners pave the dirt areas along the roadway. Mr. Panto was present and said options would be investigated.

Mr. Elliott recommended a revision to the resolution adding a condition of PennDOT approval as #7, adding a condition of submission of revised plans showing the revised sewer force main to Bushkill Drive, and renumber the previous #7 as #9.

A motion to approve the revised resolution was made by Mr. Shipman, seconded by Ms. Winfield, approved by all.

**Comprehensive Plan Re-write Update.** Mike Handzo, the Lehigh University Community Fellow working with the Planning Department was present. He said his work on the Comprehensive Plan Re0write has been a wonderful experience. He said staff is near the end of the information gathering stage and has met with nearly 600 individuals. He added there are currently 40 single-spaces pages of input from the meetings. He said there is an on-line survey, as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts. Ms. Winfield asked if there were any surprises from the feedback. Mr. Handzo said only the high level of engagement from the community.

**EAC Update.** Mr. Elliott said the request at the last EAC meeting was a project to include more tree plantings, and dialogue has been ongoing with the City Forrester.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.