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To: Honorable Members of the Bethlehem Township Board of Commissioners
Melissa Shafer, Township Manager
From: Nathan D. Jones, AICP, BCO Director of Planning and Economic Development
Date: August 16th, 2017
Re: Planning, Zoning and Construction Departmental Report

Departmental Activities:

-The Planning, Construction and Zoning Department continues to be in the midst of the busiest season of the year for building, zoning and resale permits and inspections. The Department is preparing for a great loss with the retirement of the Township Zoning Officer in several weeks and has prepared for this transition by posting for the position to begin interviews for a replacement and by temporarily appointing the department director as head zoning officer to ease the transition. Several impressive candidates have submitted resumes and letters of interest.

The Department is also currently working on the following:

- Finalizing ground work on the mini-grant funds received to upgrade and improve trailheads for the D&L Trail in Bethlehem Township working with DPW to install post and rail fence, signs, benches and new garage receptacles.
- Redevelopment and economic development planning efforts along the three main corridors of the Township by researching funding opportunities available at this time with the LVEDC and Northampton County.
- Planning for the final design and eventual execution of a comprehensive gateway signage and wayfinding signage program by identifying key locations for signage, potential partners and funding opportunities, as called for in the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- Working with the Public Works Department and Township Stormwater Engineer to begin planning efforts for upcoming stormwater permitting (MS4) and possible ordinance modifications, project work or educational endeavors that will be necessary in the near future. One such item will be sediment/ siltation reduction within watersheds leading to the Lehigh River.

Recent Submissions:

-Please note: the Planning Commission shall meet on August 21st at 7PM.

-LIDL US Operations, LLC at Freemansburg Square Sketch Plan: A sketch plan has been submitted for a modification of plan at the Freemansburg Square project on the south side of Freemansburg Avenue across from Madison Farms. The proposal includes a new LIDL Supermarket in addition to a hotel at the back of the lot. The corner land/lot has been excluded from this submission for future consideration. This submission signals a fairly major modification to the previously approved and recently extended Freemansburg Square Project. This sketch is currently before the Board of Commissioners; please see your packets for further information. **As this item is a sketch plan, no action is necessary.**

-4217 Fritch Drive, New Commercial Building Sketch Plan: A sketch plan has been submitted for a double-frontage lot on both Fritch and Tracy. The proposal would include a new primary spec commercial/industrial building at the site. Please see your packets for further information. **As this item is a sketch plan, no action is necessary.**

-Ryan Homes @ Madison Farms Modification of Design Guidelines and Plan: Ryan Homes has approach the Township with the written support of site developer, KRE, to modify previously approved site design guidelines that were adopted for the whole of the Madison Farms development. The proposal specifically modifies single family home design and layout. Representatives from Ryan Homes have stated that only one single family home has sold so far at the site and have asserted this is due to the detached garage designs currently approved at the site. Representatives have stated that both attached garages and some back yard space are necessary to sell the singles at the site. The proposal consists of front-loaded garages with arbors over top. Additionally, the modification also includes site improvements for residential structures with sides visible from cross streets or the commercial zone of the development. These modifications would add architectural enhancements to the buildings' gable ends in the original spirit, but not the formally adopted, design guidelines of Madison Farms. Please see your packets for further information. **This item is now before the Board of Commissioners for consideration.**

-Nancy Run Estates Phases 7-10: The applicants have submitted a revised plan based off of comments by the Township Engineer and Township Staff. As before, stormwater management for the site remains a critical item to be addressed. It appears the applicants are continuing to make progress on their design. The applicants have noted the intent to request to come out of Administrative Review and seek a recommendation for approval from the Planning Commission this month. **The Board of Commissioners have a deadline of October 31st, 2017 to take action on this plan submission.**

Major Project Updates:

-Brodhead Road Distribution Center: Brodhead Holdings, LP has an approved plan from the Board of Commissioners and is now working to meet conditions of approval and third party permitting requirements. There appears to be a delay in this permitting process to date and private Brodhead Road improvements have been postponed until plans can be recorded and building permits issued.

-Angelic Sisters of St. Paul: This project has been approved and is working to meet the conditions of approval and technical design requirements to be able to record the plan and commence construction.

-Traditions of America at Green Pond: The Tentative Plan Hearing process concluded on April 11th following the three hour public comment portion of the hearings. At this point, remaining entrances in the record, review, findings of fact and decision by the Independent Hearing Officer will occur over the next several months. A final decision should be rendered by the end of August. Should the Tentative Plan eventually be approved, a Final Plan submission for the proposed 55+ Planned Residential Golf Course Community shall need to be submitted to the Bethlehem Township Planning Commission for review and comment.

-PPL Laydown Yard: PPL has informed the Township that the project proposal is currently “on hold” until further notice. Township Staff will be ready to restart discussions and review should PPL decide to move forward once again. The project consists of a large equipment storage yard on the east and west sides of Farmersville Road, south from Freemansburg Avenue. The yards would hold poles, transformers, cables, etc. for PPL and would act as a staging area and repair supply area following traffic accidents or weather emergencies that cause regional power outages.

-Birchwood Commons is currently under construction and has recorded their plan and taken occupancy of Buildings 1 & 2. It appears approval for the 12th Street Extension design will be in hand shortly with infrastructure enhancements and work should be underway in the near future as well.

-Master site planned **Madison Farms** remains active & under construction with work underway on commercial building fit outs and apartments. Phase Two residential work has commenced with Ryan Homes constructing model single family, carriage and townhomes at the site. The other recent approval of the West Village MOB and restaurant modification is under construction although a tenant remains to be found for the restaurant space. A permit submission has been made in the apartment section for the development with the installation of a large and fully planned and landscaped dog park for Madison Farms residents. Several new tenants continue to fill retail and office/service space at Madison Farms with Pearl Vision, Steak n’ Shake and Lehigh Valley Health Network currently working on site “fit-outs” or recently taking occupancy. Township Staff continues to work with KRE to find a user for the restaurant pad site next to the LVHN Building.

-St. Luke's Hospital Anderson Campus is under construction for the Medical Office Building "MOB" on the site. As part of the St. Luke's Anderson Campus, traffic construction improvements continue on Freemansburg Avenue. Bridge work for widening and expanding the road is under way and planning, design and permitting for the "Phase C" portion of work east of the Route 33 interchange is being finalized. The Planning Department and Public Works Department are working to address median plantings on Freemansburg Avenue regarding care, maintenance and possible future planting. While the hospital, emergency room, cancer center and forthcoming medical office building/ pavilion are all completed or soon to be completed, the site still has capacity for a large scale build out for numerous buildings/ pavilions and other possible uses per township zoning ordinance in the years to come.

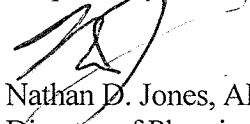
-The Annunciation Hellenic Church is approved and has plans under review for finalization and eventual recording. The project is also obtaining its third party agency approvals at this time for traffic, stormwater and others. The project consists of a sanctuary, fellowship hall, offices and classroom space. As proposed and approved, the project is phased with the construction of the fellowship hall expected first, followed by the sanctuary and eventually the offices and Sunday-school class room spaces.

-Mill Creek Corporate Center has submitted a Phase One Preliminary Plan of the proposed professional campus just north of the PennDOT Park and Ride. The project includes Class A office space, a hotel, a restaurant and a bank as the core of a new proposed business campus. Proximity and access to the Park and Ride as well as Route 33 appear to be major drivers for this proposal. The Planning Commission reviewed a brief presentation on the project several months ago and provided feedback to the applicants and tabled the Plan. Further design review for matters involving the Township Overlay Districts, stormwater management and traffic management are necessary for the plans to progress. This site design has been taken into account with the overall William Penn Highway Corridor Traffic Study currently underway via the Township Engineer and PennDOT. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission recently released a review letter with comprehensive review and comments for the master planned site expressing recommendations for more site access to the Park and Ride and improved walkability in the road networks and building massing. The proposal also includes extensive walking trails and a public dog park off of Church Road to the north, which has been looked upon favorably by the Planning Commission and Township Staff.

-Meyer Lane Apartments is finalizing construction and residents should take occupancy of the new apartments shortly.

For updates on any other plan submissions, project status or information; please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,



Nathan D. Jones, AICP, BCO
Director of Planning and Economic Development
Bethlehem Township, PA