

MINUTES
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
February 18, 2020

Present: Desmond Baker (Acting Chair), Jennifer Adkins, Lloyd Budd, Joseph Chickadel, Anthony J. Hill, and Brett Taylor (Commission Members); Robert Goff (Law Department); Herb Inden, Gwinneth Kaminsky, Tim Lucas, and Dorien Snyder (Planning).

The meeting was convened at 6:00 p.m. by Desmond Baker.

REGULAR MEETING

A. Approval of the minutes of the January 21, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting.

Mr. Baker asked the Commission to make a motion on the minutes of the January 21, 2020 City Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Budd made a motion to approve the minutes and Ms. Adkins seconded the motion. All members voted to approve the January 21, 2020 minutes.

B. NEW BUSINESS

**Resolution 02-20: A proposal to name the South Wilmington Wetlands Park Project
“Southbridge Wilmington Wetlands Park”.**

Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky from the Department of Planning and Development presented the report for Resolution 02-20, a proposal to name the South Wilmington Wetlands Park Project “Southbridge Wilmington Wetlands Park”. This presentation was accompanied by a series of slides.

Ms. Kaminsky stated that on February 20, 2020 an ordinance to officially name the South Wilmington Wetlands Park project the “Southbridge Wilmington Wetlands Park” will be introduced by Council President Hanifa Shabaaz. She further stated that the proposed name requires the recommendation of the City Planning Commission and approval by City Council in accordance with Section 2-3 of the Wilmington City Code, which addresses the “Official Names of Streets, Parks, Playgrounds, Plazas, Buildings, Facilities, Statues, Monuments, and Other Lands Reserved for Public Use”. In addition, Ms. Kaminsky stated that Section 2-3 also authorizes the Commission to establish guidelines for naming public facilities, which were prepared and adopted by Resolution 8-92, and that eleven guidelines were used to evaluate the current proposal.

Ms. Kaminsky reported that in November 2018 the City of Wilmington was awarded a nearly \$3 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to support the South Wilmington Freshwater Tidal Wetland Habitat Restoration for Flood Prevention, more commonly known as the South Wilmington Wetland Project. She presented an image showing the parks location in South Wilmington, south of A Street, between Walnut Street and Church Street.

Ms. Kaminsky said that the purpose of the park, which began construction in Spring 2019, is to create a stormwater management facility that will reduce severe flooding in the Southbridge neighborhood and create a new community open space that will include a public trail system and plazas at its eastern and western edges. She also noted that the park is expected to be substantially completed by the end of 2020 and opened to the public in Spring 2021.

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Ms. Kaminsky presented an image from the Special Area Management Plan, or SAMP, which illustrates the proximity of the historic Southbridge neighborhood in relation to the central area where the wetlands facility was proposed. She noted that Southbridge is a 1.6 square mile enclave of South Wilmington, which is a low-lying peninsula separated from the City's central business district by the Christina River, and said that Southbridge's largely residential neighborhood is bordered on the west by the wetlands park site and to the east and south by light industry. Ms. Kaminsky further stated that the central wetlands and stormwater management park concept is supported by the Southbridge community, which was actively involved in the development of the SAMP in 2006, in partnership with the City of Wilmington, the Delaware DNREC, WILMAPCO and the Wilmington Housing Authority. Ms. Kaminsky also stated that the recommendations for the wetlands park were included in the SAMP and later adopted into the South Walnut Street Urban Renewal Plan and the South Wilmington Comprehensive Development Plan.

Ms. Kaminsky mentioned that the project is located on one of the largest brownfield sites in the City, which is being remediated and that fourteen acres of degraded wetland is being restored to a high functioning freshwater tidal wetland habitat which will enhance coastal resiliency, improve soil and water quality, and restore habitat for a variety of fish and wetland and aquatic wildlife. She presented an image that shows the many features of the park, including emergent wetland marsh, shrub meadow, upland meadow, evergreen forest, upland forest, and forested swamp.

Ms. Kaminsky said that the project also includes the separation of 36 acres of Combined Sewer Overflow pipes into stormwater and sewer pipes, to reduce flooding frequency and increase storm capacity and that in anticipation of the wetlands park project, fifteen parcels of land within the central wetlands area bounded by A, Walnut, and Church Streets and Garasches Lane were rezoned including the six park parcels owned by the City of Wilmington and nine parcels along A Street directly abutting the park.

Ms. Kaminsky stated that comments were sought from the City Departments of Public Works, which has been managing the project, and Parks and Recreation, and neither department objected to the proposed name. Ms. Kaminsky also stated that the Department of Planning supports the renaming, noting that it is consistent with the relevant naming guidelines adopted by the Commission.

Ms. Kaminsky explained that the proposed name for the South Wilmington Wetlands Park project was evaluated in accordance with the naming guidelines adopted by the City Planning Commission Resolution 8-92 and that of the eleven guidelines, six applicable guidelines have been met, as follows:

- (1) The name reflects the location or physical setting of the area and provides a sense of place;
- (2) The name reflects a place that is important to the residents;
- (3) It does not duplicate other existing facilities;
- (4) The name has been reviewed and approved by other city departments;
- (5) The name does not conflict with the location or type of facility being named; and
- (6) The meaning of the proposed name will be retained over time.

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Ms. Kaminsky noted that the February 18, 2020 Planning Commission meeting agenda was posted in the lobby of the Louis L. Redding City/County Building, placed on the City's website and sent to the standard Commission mailing list recipients on February 11th.

Ms. Kaminsky further noted that Resolution 02-20 recommends that the South Wilmington Wetlands Park Project be named "Southbridge Wilmington Wetlands Park" and reiterated that the wetlands park facility is located in South Wilmington adjacent to the Southbridge Community which supported the creation of the park during the Special Area Management planning process.

Ms. Kaminsky concluded by stating that the proposed name meets the applicable criteria contained in the Naming Guidelines and has been reviewed by applicable City departments and once approved, the formal name will be entered onto the Official City Map and other relevant documents.

Mr. Baker asked Commission Members whether they had any questions or comments. Mr. Baker asked in the event that there is a flooding of the wetland, how will the wetland relieve itself and the neighborhood. Ms. Kaminsky stated that the City is separating the combined sewer overflow into separate stormwater and sewer and when it floods the water will enter the stormwater system and subsequently the wetlands park. She further explained that the water would eventually return to the Christina River. Mr. Baker asked if it would have the ability to flood the neighborhood. Ms. Kaminsky reiterated that the City is separating the systems to alleviate the flooding condition.

Mr. Baker asked if there were any additional questions or comments. There being none, Mr. Baker asked for a motion to approve Resolution 02-20: A proposal to name the South Wilmington Wetlands Park Project "Southbridge Wilmington Wetlands Park". Mr. Hill made a motion to approve Resolution 02-20 and Mr. Taylor second the motion. With all members being in favor, Resolution 02-20 was approved.

Resolution 03-20; MS-20-01: Major Subdivision application from Vandemark & Lynch, Inc. on behalf of the Boy's Club of Wilmington, which proposes to reconfigure four existing parcels by moving the lot lines which separate them. The site is generally bounded by Pine, North Church, East 17th, and East 14th Streets.

Mr. Lucas presented from the Department of Planning and Development the report for Resolution 03:20; MS-20-01: Major Subdivision application from Vandemark & Lynch, Inc. on behalf of the Boy's Club of Wilmington, which proposes to reconfigure four existing parcels by moving the lot lines which separate them and that the site is generally bounded by Pine, North Church, East 17th, and East 14th Streets. This presentation was accompanied by a series of slides. Mr. Lucas noted that not only does the application propose to reconfigure the four parcels owned by the Boy's Club of Wilmington, the application further proposes to dedicate portions of those privately owned lands to the City to become part of East 14th Street and to transfer to the Boy's Club of Wilmington, a 0.062-acre portion of land located north of and directly adjacent to the 14th Street right-of-way. He also stated that no construction is proposed by the plan.

Mr. Lucas mentioned that the proposal is considered a major subdivision, and is subject to review by the Planning Commission, because the site is larger than 2.5 acres

Mr. Lucas described how the site is generally bounded by North Pine Street, North Church Street, and the Brandywine Creek and that the site is comprised of four existing parcels with the majority of the site zoned R-3, One-Family Rowhouses while noting that a small portion of the site near North Pine Street is zoned W-4, Waterfront Residential/Commercial. He further stated that the site currently contains the Fletcher Brown Boy's and Girl's Club, a disused quarry, and vacant land.

Mr. Lucas stated that the Department of Planning and Development and the Department of Public Works met with the applicant to discuss the preliminary plan and proposal and that the Department of Public Works reported that the portions of those privately-owned lands intended to be dedicated by this plan were previously dedicated as a City street in 1940, and therefore do not need to be dedicated by this plan.

Mr. Lucas conveyed that the ownership of a 0.062-acre piece of land proposed for transfer by the plan has not yet been determined and that this piece of land is currently being referred to as the "wedge". He also stated that once Public Works determines the ownership, the subdivision plan can be amended as necessary and resubmitted for final review and that the applicant can also seek ownership through the appropriate process at that time.

Mr. Lucas noted that the preliminary plan was circulated to City departments for comment and that the comments were provided by the Departments of Public Works, Licenses and Inspections, and Planning and Development as follows:

The City's Zoning Manager reviewed the plans and provided the following comments:

- In the Property Matrix, correct the zoning for parcels A, B, and E, as the M-1 portions of these parcels were rezoned to R-3 in 2012. Correct the zoning boundary on drawing accordingly.
- Because parcel lines cannot pass through existing buildings, the parcel line dividing parcels B and C must be adjusted accordingly.
- Newly proposed parcels lines must meet zoning setback regulations for existing structures.

The Department of Planning and Development requires the following revisions:

- Remove any notes on the drawing referring to the intent to dedicate lands for public use.
- Amend the purpose statement to remove the intent to dedicate lands for public use.
- Once the ownership of the 0.062-acre "wedge" piece of land has been determined, ownership and other information on the plan must be updated as necessary prior to final submission.

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Mr. Lucas stated that on Tuesday, February 11, 2020, a public notice of the Planning Commission's meeting agenda was posted in the lobby of the Louis L. Redding City/County Building and on the City's website and was sent to the recipients of the standard Commission mailing list.

Mr. Lucas further stated that the Department of Planning and Development recommends approval of Resolution 03-20, which recommends approval of the preliminary major subdivision plan submitted by VanDemark & Lynch, Inc., on behalf of the Boy's Club of Wilmington and that as with all preliminary plan approval, final approval and recordation of the plan is contingent upon the applicant addressing any issues and comments listed in the Planning Department subdivision report.

Mr. Baker asked if there were any questions or comments from the members of the Commission. Mr. Hill asked for clarification of the location of the street previously dedicated to the City. Mr. Lucas stated that the location was at the bottom arc, and that the parcel boundary lines extend into the public right-of-way, as is the case in other instances in the City.

Mr. Baker asked for clarification of the Department of License and Inspections' Comment #2 addressing the location of the existing building dividing parcels B and C. Mr. Lucas stated that there is an existing small pump house at the southern end of the parcel. Mr. Baker also asked for the depth of the quarry. Mr. Lucas stated 90 feet.

Mr. Taylor asked if the quarry serves as storm water retention for any of the contiguous properties. Mr. Lucas stated no, not to his knowledge. Mr. Lucas stated that the flooded quarry is naturally fed through underground springs.

Mr. Baker asked if there were any additional questions or comments. There being none, Mr. Baker asked for a motion to approve Resolution 03-20; MS-20-01: Major Subdivision application from Vandemark & Lynch, Inc. on behalf of the Boy's Club of Wilmington, which proposes to reconfigure four existing parcels by moving the lot lines which separate them. The site is generally bounded by Pine, North Church, East 17th, and East 14th Streets. Mr. Hill made the motion to approve Resolution 03-20; MS-20-01 and Mr. Taylor second the motion. With all members being in favor, Resolution 03-20; MS-20-01 was approved.

C. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Baker called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hill moved to adjourn, and Mr. Chickadel second the motion. All members being in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.