

**REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION
2400 BYBERRY ROAD, BENSALEM, PA 19020**

November 20, 2019

Members Present: Harry Kramer, Tom Risich, Pete Krieger, Ed Tokmajian, Sr., Ed Devenney, Mike Gabrieli and Ron Gans, Township Engineer.
Members Absent: Joe Domzalski

The meeting came to order at 7:05 pm with approximately 20 people present in the audience.

1. Harry Kramer opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Harry Kramer for a Motion to Approve the October 16, 2019 minutes, Tom Risich approved the minutes and Ed Devenney seconded. Pete Krieger and Ed Tokmajian, Sr. abstained. Minutes were approved 4-0-2.

3. Preliminary Subdivision and Land Development for AQ Saint Katharine Drexel

Location: 1663 Bristol Pike
Tax Parcel: 02-060-015
Request: Mixed Use

Presenting on behalf of applicant, Douglas P. Maloney, Esq. of Begley, Carlin & Mandio LLP, represents Len Ponsia, Developer. In March 2019 we received the ordinance change. We are seeking approval for a site that's dear to everyone in Bensalem. This is 43.58 Acre Site is located in the MUR mixed-use residential zoning. The site is currently the location of the Saint Katharine Drexel/ Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament campus which contains 9 buildings, 3 sheds, a cemetery and associated access drives and parking. This has been a convent site since 1892. As you know, Sister Katherine was canonized and is a Saint that Bensalem is very proud of.

Mr. Ponsia emphasizes his efforts to respect the history, the spirituality, and the legacy of St. Katherine's. Mr. Ponsia is committed to maintaining the Mother House, the Mission, the Convent, the Crypt, the Chapel, Drexel Hall, Sacred Heart and other structures. We did our best to respect, utilize and repurpose the buildings on site, which we agree are most sacred, to incorporate that with the development that allows us to support these buildings for years to come. In addition to obtaining the necessary approvals, at the state level, we found a path to reconsecrate the Chapel to become a Catholic Chapel again. There is now a document to be signed by the Archbishop and by myself to reconsecrate the Chapel. The Sisters never have to leave and they will relocate the headquarters/administrative offices to 2 floors in the Mission Center for many years to come.

They will be demolishing St. Mary Hall, St. Catherine Hall, Mercedes Hall, laundry building, visitation house, masonry garage, apartment building, St. Michael Hall A and B, a small portion of the Mother House, 3 sheds, existing parking and existing drives except the portion that divides the cemetery. The buildings that will remain are the utility building and a majority of a Mother House.

The applicant is proposing the following development: an assisted living/memory care/personal care/skilled care facility (80 units total, offer special level of service) an independent living facility (175 units, Seniors that require a little more care), conversion of the motherhouse to Independent Living (48 units), an active adult leasing complex (260 units, restricted to 55 & older), 90 fee simple townhouse units (not age restricted), clubhouse for townhouses in active adult leasing units of 1300 sq. ft. and conversion of the historic structure into 13,000 sq. ft. of office space.

The applicant is proposing to subdivide lot 1 for the historic structures to remain, lot 2 for the assisted living memory care facility, lot 3 for the Independent living facility, lot 4 the active adult leasing complex, lot 5 for the existing cemetery, lot 6 for the common lands associated with the 90 townhouse units, lot 7 through 96 - on lot for each of the 90 townhouse units.

Harry Kramer opens up questions to be asked by the board:

Ed Tokmajian, Sr. ask what is being subdivided specifically. Douglas states subdividing is drawing lines to be dived up among different owners. In this case 6 major lots. Lot 6 will be divided into 90 separate lots with individual townhouse buyers. We are talking subdivision of 90 lots. We are seeking the approval of the lot lines and approvals. Ed said the deeds will be in that order? Yes and will be recorded as such

as a governing document. All documents will defer back to that plan. Ed Tokmajian, Sr. asked are you are putting 48 units in the Mother House? Len Ponsia answered yes. Ed Tokmajian, Sr. asks if the retention basins will go underground. Len Ponsia answers no.

Ron Gans clarifies: the question in general is, why do you need 6 lots? Douglas says that's so that there may be different buyers, managers, developers or investors might want to own the independent living but maybe not the active adult leasing. The Motherhouse is going to be owned by the Home Owners Association. Ed Tokmajian, Sr. said he was under the impression they were all under the Home Owners Association. Douglas says there will be a governing Home Owners Association that will own the common areas. Ed Tokmajian, Sr. asks can someone other than you own lot 6? Len Ponsia said Correct. We are not a senior living operating company, we work with Senior Operating Companies will participate with us in the assisted living memory care but maybe not in the active adult, each stands on its own financial ground. This will be a great revenue project for the Township.

Ed Tokmajian, Sr. asks the new plan attached to Marathons response does not have the clubhouse or swimming pool...is it no longer. Douglas said he was not sure the clubhouse was an integral part of the original design. As we go through the review process, the clubhouse generates several different performance standards, like parking, impervious surface, storm water management, we realize we have 13,000 sq. ft. of space in the Mother House that can be subject to the exact same uses of the clubhouse. At the same time we are hearing from builder and developers of townhouses, don't require a clubhouse, it becomes an expense to a homeowners association to insure it and maintain it when very few are using it. We are leaving the parking that's available to for the clubhouse. Clubhouse can accommodate all the uses we have planned for it. The Mother house can also be used for repurposing other activities. The 260 units, each owner, will pay Home Owners Association dues to cover maintenance for snow removal etc.

Mike Gabrieli states while the zoning only requires one lane of sidewalks, for a senior living facility, 2 sidewalks on either side of the street will greatly enhance the living ability for those seniors to move around and less likely a chance of needing to park or drive because they are able to walk the distance. When holidays come around, there will be movability issues with parking like Drive E. They will not have a side walk to get from the main parking lot all the way over to the other end. Len Ponsia states re the sidewalks, we have miles of sidewalks and walking trails. The townhouses have 3.5 spaces not including the garage so I feel we are offering more spaces than most developers.

Mike Gabrieli has concerns with Road D, the traffic signal, Kings Ln is used to circumvent the traffic on Bristol Pike and Hulmeville Rd. I think a traffic light is necessary because Kings Lane is a good way to get across Bristol Pike into your community development. I think the design on the opposite ends I think is going to cause a lot of issues due to a highly populated area. People will drive down Drive D to Road A to get to the signal. Len Ponsia states the movements warrant the traffic signal and that's up to PennDOT.

Mike Gabrieli has concerns with active adult leasing apartment #3 that's between the living adults facility and the townhomes...I don't understand why it's there? I feel the residents will find that unappealing. I agree with the independent living and the distance between that and the townhomes. I don't understand why the active adult leasing is right there in the middle. Len Ponsia states it needs economic feasibility to carry all the maintenance operating expenses. You need the right massing so you need somewhere between 250 and 300 units for an active adult over 55 to be academically feasible. You need to maintain as much as you can.

Tom Risich asks if the townhomes are family oriented with children. Douglas Maloney answered yes. Tom Risich added up all the cars and when fully developed this will have 1100 cars. Douglas Maloney states that was a conservative estimate that its 3 car stalls instead of 2 and a lot will be left empty. Tom Risich said I know you said it's up to PennDOT about sidewalks on your side of the street. If you walk to St Charles you will get a sprained ankle because Bristol pike is only so big. People have to walk in the street to go to Church. The only way in and out of this project is Rt 13. Is there any way to exit through Station Ave? Douglas said we do not have frontage on Station Ave. If you acquire enough right of way, to leave through the back entrance, that will relieve a lot of traffic. I also see the pool was taken out, what is going to take its place? Douglas answered an open fire pit, passive recreation and open space. Tom Risich asks if the historic value of the Mother House is in jeopardy, if this is not approved for one reason or another will it all be knocked down? Len Ponsia answered yes without us I don't know if this would remain. Tom Risich states can you imagine how many construction vehicles, electricians, carpenters, plumbers, several hundred workers coming into and out of the site daily.

Harry Kramer asks when looking at the plans you are taking the cemetery as open space calculation? I would have left it out. Len Ponsia answers yes but we are providing 19 acres.

Ed Devenney I'm not happy with the waiver list. Sidewalks...I would like to see them for safety reasons. The traffic issue...looking at the police report...Office Mueller recommend a traffic light at Kings Ln stating that the four way intersection would create a problem. As a 36 year fire fighter and Chief, we are second due on this property, my major concern is the traffic light needs to go there. I've seen major accidents there. You are going to have children in these developments that will go to St Charles School. Len Ponsia states traffic, like water, will always find the path of least resistance. We are not successful in convincing PennDOT to install traffic lights. We said we are going to provide safe crosswalks. Ed Devenney inquires about the fire apparatus radius. Len Ponsia replied we created fire emergency lanes around every building and it's not a code requirement. Ed Devenney states as my scope, as an incident commander, if you have an incident at the independent living facility, you are getting anywhere to 10-15 pieces of apparatus. What do I do with all the residents if I need to evacuate the building? Then we go back to traffic that generates from this. If you say that St. Charles School agreed, it could be an evacuation site. I think the scope of this project is too big with traffic & emergency response. The waiver list needs to be worked on.

Peter Krieger asks why you would want a waiver against the request to providing a formal community impact statement. Douglas Maloney stated the impact statement is a planning document that doesn't require any improvement, costs money and the majority of the project is seniors. This is not putting a demand on township schools and playgrounds. We thought it was a needless expense and a waste of resources. Len Ponsia stated this property, for decades, was a tax exempt site. What we provide in rateables speaks for itself. Peter Krieger states I feel you addressed a lot of problems but not the impact to the community, that this large project will not enhance Bensalem. This project will be horrendous for the lower end of the township. I feel you are going to have to scale down the apartments or townhomes. It's a shame we lost it and someone will go in there and develop it. It's too big for the surrounding community.

Ed Tokmajian, Sr. asks on this project if it doesn't go through as it is here...its concerning on the financial end if you can support the project. As far as Historic Structures before the demolishing happens, in the zoning ordinance you had to go to council? Len Ponsia answered yes. What we proposed to maintain and keep, is the same thing we promised before. We received the necessary approvals from the State Level much quicker because they saw the enormity of the project and endorsed the fact that we were trying to achieve so much. Ed Tokmajian, Sr. said you still need the endorsement from council and zoning. Len Ponsia replied yes that why what we submitted is consistent. That's exactly part of what we are asking for approval to develop the site, keep certain buildings, remove certain buildings, to allow the development part to achieve the economic financial so we can accomplish the goal of the project. There is an overriding request that says any buildings we want to remove in addition to the State Level approvals require your approval as well. Ed Tokmajian, Sr. state in the new MUR states that the sidewalks shall be provided on at least one side of all internal roads, additional sidewalks and walking trails shall be installed to provide for proper pedestrian circulation. So it's asking for what we are asking for. Len Ponsia refers back to the walking trails he spoke of earlier. Ed Tokmajian, Sr. said you are trying to over develop the property due to financial issues. Try to improve on the project. The waivers are concerning. You were short 13 parking spaces? Len stated area 34 will now have them.

Harry Kramer stated we spoke about the sidewalks at the previous meeting. I live in a 121 home development it really makes for safety to have them on both sides.

Mike Gabrieli states he lives in Village Green and most people like the sidewalks on both sides.

Harry Kramer announces public portion open.

Al Litz, 1044 Wildman Ave

I have a son with a brain injury. Chris rides his bike up and down Bristol Pike. Five years ago on Memorial Day, he was hit on the street where you're going to have the outlet on, by a priest, after a mass at St Katharine's. He got hit again 3 weeks ago farther down by WaWa. We really need to have sidewalks so Chris will not have to ride in the street. The EMT said if it wasn't for the helmet, he would have had a serious injury. As far as the plan, I think it's large, too large, but I think it's the best plan for Mother Katherine's.

Eileen Keefe, 1318 Rosalie Ave

My main concern is the traffic. Is there a way to access this development other than Bristol Pike? It's too big. Please find a way to access this through Station Ave. We need to get this traffic off of Bristol Pike. Too close to Station Ave & the train station. It would be wonderful if the development could provide a way to walk to the train. If there can't be a light at Kings Ave, please supply a blinking yellow light with pedestrian signs overhead, with a crosswalk so a traffic has to come to a 35 mph limit. Also the waiver list go on and on. I'm confused about the trees. Len Ponsia stated the trees they are providing will be greater than when they started. I would like to see this township and planning board to see that this developer installs curbs and sidewalks all along Bristol pike up until the end of the 43 acres. There was a hit

and run fatality near St Charles in May. It would be nice that these residents could also get to WaWa. Please get a grant for the curbs, sidewalks and lights. Harry Kramer suggests looking into the Bristol Pike Beautification project to be extended further to the end of Route 13. The project was to go from Philadelphia down to Tullytown.

James Farrall, President, Board of Director of The Blessed Margaret of Castello Home for Crisis Pregnancies

We have two homes near St. Katherines on Hulmeville Rd & Langstroth Ln. We have had an incredible relationship with St. Katherine's for 35 years. It's no mistake that their service to children, primarily indigenous American Indian children and children of color, are the vast majority of babies born in our crisis pregnancy homes, who are, children of color. It's a beautiful dedication and communication to them that we carry on their legacy. I thank Mr. Ponsia for putting together a beautiful plan to retain these historical buildings when 299 other developers could not care. Sidewalks and traffic lights are legitimate concerns. Please do not lose sight of the big plan.

Robert Homolka, 3213 Whitney Court

I've been a Bensalem Township resident for over 50 years and former president of the Historical Society of Bensalem. I'd like to speak on a couple of historical points on this project, one of them is a mention of sidewalks on route 13, where there is a historical mile marker. There will be impact to that marker. I have made mention in previous meetings to work around it. Please make sure the Developer preserves the mile marker. I'm concerned that the marker will not be disturbed. It was put in prior to the American Revolution. The other point is the laundry building constructed in the 1890's. The applicant's demolition plan includes the laundry building. This building is included on the National Historic Register. I recommend this building not be demolished because of the fact it is on the register. Mr. Ponsia stated he received approvals from State Level. The State Level allowed us to remove it because it sits in the main area to be developed. Mr. Homolka said the National Historic Register is part of the Federal Level and asking the council that it not be demolished.

Harry Kramer stated he will defer that information to Council.

Harry Kramer announces public portion closed.

Harry Kramer invites Philip W. Wursta of Traffic Planning & Design to speak.

I've been the Traffic Engineer since 1989. There is a lot of mention to the Rt 13 Beautification Project. That was not PennDOT project this was a Township Project through State grants through the Senator & State Rep. The funds were depleted. When there is any development slated for Rt 13, we always recommend sidewalks. This is independent of the development of itself as far as what you are building on it. All we are dealing with is frontage of the road. This is not reflective with density, occupancy, impervious surface etc. We are trying to make Bensalem more pedestrian friendly. Traffic signals on Rt 13 have always been an issue as an alternate rt to 95, State Rd and Street Rd. Rt 13. We have a terrible interchange at 95 and the last interchange to be redone. Rt 13 is undergoing a township sponsored program with PennDOT to provide a computerized signal system for the entire stretch of Rt13 called an adaptive signal system. Studies show this is working. This will be installed on all of Hulmeville Rd and Bristol Pike. This connects all of the lights and interconnects the timings for the traffic volumes. The issue at Kings is that traffic will back up at the intersection of Hulmeville. There is not enough traffic volume at Kings to install a traffic light. This is not enough traffic to warrant a light. If traffic backs up we suggest traffic ponding or raised crosswalks to slow people down. This development's projection is 2000 cars a days. The peak hour volumes in the morning are 52 cars coming in and 57 leaving. We feel the applicant has met the requirements.

Pete Krieger asks where are the school buses going to stop? Philip states this is a school district issue. The roads are sized to accommodate the size of a school bus so they will either walk out to the Pike or the bus will drive through the development.

Ed Devenney states Holy Ghost had flashing traffic lights to alert traffic someone needed to cross...is this something we could implement? Philip states the flashing lights are under PennDOT's jurisdiction but they are owned and maintained by the township and the own that process. We want to give everyone a safe crosswalk but it may not be at every street. Pedestrians need to go down to Hulmeville at St Charles which is the safest crossing. We need to get people off the roads and onto the sidewalks.

Harry Kramer talks about the review letter...sidewalks should all be five feet wide throughout this site...I assume this is an ADA wheelchair requirement. Philip said yes you can reduce this in certain locations to narrow down to four feet.

Harry Kramer states for the record for the traffic impact fee is \$103,422.86 and assume this will be paid.

Harry Kramer suggests a Motion from the Board. Ed Tokmajian, Sr. is not in favor of the waiver check list or design and makes a Motion to deny the application for the Preliminary and Final Subdivision and Land Development for AQ Saint Katharine Drexel. Peter Krieger seconds.

Harry Kramer states the Motion on the floor is to deny the application, state your vote:

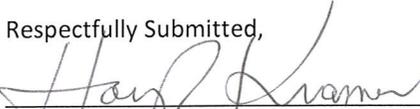
Ed Tokmajian, Sr.	Deny
Mike Gabrieli	Deny
Tom Risich	Approve
Ed Devenney	Deny
Pete Krieger	Deny
Harry Kramer	Deny

The Application is denied 5-1.

5. Adjournment

Harry Kramer requests a Motion from the board. Ed Tokmajian, Sr. made a Motion to Adjourn. Ed Devenney seconded. Motion approved 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



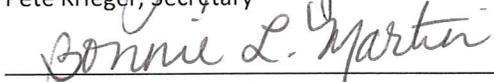
Harry Kramer, Chairperson

12/18/19
Date



Pete Krieger, Secretary

12/18/19
Date



Bonnie Martin, Recording Secretary

12/18/19
Date