

MUNICIPALITY OF MONROEVILLE

PLANNING COMMISSION

APRIL 19, 2023

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mr. Leonard Bertoni at 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence observed.

ROLL CALL

The Recording Secretary, Sharon McIndoe, called roll and the following were present: Bruce Walker, Paula Montgomery, Heidi Lawrence, Ronald Mussung, Leonard Bertoni, P. Lorraine Lewis-Burke and Paul Whealdon.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There being no corrections, additions or deletions to the minutes of March 15, 2023, a motion was duly made by Mr. Walker to approve them, as submitted, and Mr. Mussung seconded it. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

REORGANIZATION

Mr. Bertoni announced the new officers as follows: Leonard Bertoni, Chairman; Heidi Lawrence, Vice Chairman; and Bruce Walker, Secretary. Whereupon, Mr. Walker duly made a motion to approve the new officers and Ms. Lewis-Burke seconded it. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

23-3-C

TERRY SMITH

The applicant is requesting Conditional Use Approval to operate a Child Care Facility pursuant to Monroeville Zoning Ordinance, No. 1443, as submitted, Section 401.9. The property is located at 2510 Mossie Boulevard, Tax Parcel 857-R-024, in the C-2, Business Commercial Zoning District.

Mr. Whealdon reported the applicant withdrew the application.

23-2-ST

MUNICIPALITY OF MONROEVILLE

The applicant is requesting Side Plan approval to construct a pedestrian bridge, pavilion and restroom facility. The property is located at 1268 Abers Creek Road, Tax Parcel 1108-P-047, in the S, Conservancy Zoning District.

Mrs. Martha Frech along with Mr. Kerry Frech from Streamline Engineering came forward representing the applicant. Mrs. Frech explained they have been hired by the Municipality of

Monroeville to do the site plan and the joint permit application through the state for the pedestrian bridge across Turtle Creek.

Mrs. Frech explained the location of Valley Park along Abers Creek Road, Saunders Station and the Heritage Trail, Turtle Creek, a residential area and the wooded area. She reported it is currently a skate park and there are a lot of parking areas where it is impervious and gravel. She stated the property is 14.2 acres and they are going to work on approximately 1.3 acres of the park area. She referred to the pedestrian bridge that spans across Turtle Creek going from Valley Park and connects to Heritage Trail. She reported the span of the structure would be approximately 91.5 feet across Turtle Creek then there is a ramp from the Valley Park area to the bridge of approximately 65 feet. She added the elevation difference from the park up to the level of the bridge is four feet so to make it handicapped accessible they have to have a five-foot landing. She stated there is a span of 30 feet then a five-foot landing then another span of 30 feet to get up to the bridge. She pointed out they are tight because they have the Heritage Trail and she pointed out a five-foot landing but there are ramps on either side to blend in with the Heritage Trail.

Mrs. Frech reported they did a hydraulic analysis to see how the bridge structure and the other elements in the park would affect the 100-year flood plain. She stated they show no increases in the 100-year flood plain so they would not have any requests from FEMA for changes and it has to go through DEP.

Mrs. Frech showed a rendering from Links Bridges of what the bridge may look like. Mr. Frech explained the bridge and felt it would be aesthetically pleasing and durable. He stated it would be a steel and aluminum tress structure and the decking is fiberglass with a gel coating to cut down on the abrasion of the fiberglass. He reported they are one of the few manufacturers that put the gel coating on top of the fiberglass. He explained it is fiberglass that looks like wood.

Mrs. Frech reported they are not showing an increase in the 100-year flood plain because the skate park and its fence would be removed which acted as an obstruction. She stated the existing conditions of the park is a skate park with asphalt and a lot of gravel areas. She pointed out they are not touching the soccer fields next to it. She reported they plan to replace the asphalt with top soil and grass then place pavers to make a more decorative walkway. She stated there would be a paved lot and there will be two structures, a his and hers bathroom and a 30 by 30-foot pavilion.

Mrs. Frech referred to an elevation and plan view of the bathroom. She explained having a 19-parking space lot they are required to have at least two handicapped bathrooms. She proposed having a handicapped ramp to the bathroom. She reported the bathroom is elevated a few feet so the first floor will be above the 100-year elevation. She stated the first floor of the bathrooms are slightly above the 100-year year flood plain. She explained that they comply because the toilets are above the regulated one and a half feet for the 100-year. She reported they do not have to have a landing because the elevation distance only requires a 30-foot ramp which makes it ADA compliant.

Mrs. Frech explained the other structure is adding a pavilion at the location. Mr. Frech showed a view of the bridge and the wood finish. He reported the restroom is a prefabricated two-unit structure constructed of concrete. He explained it is brought in, hooked it up and it is good to go. He stated it already has electric, water and sanitary sewer hookups built in. He explained the electrical, plumping and mechanical things are elevated off the floor above the 100-year flood plain. He stated it is

concrete and vandal resistant, water resistant and the wood finish is put into the concrete and looks like wood. He explained it would be ADA complaint and has a drinking fountain on the outside as required by the Allegheny County Health Department and sinks. He stated there is a chase room between the restrooms where the mechanical and electrical equipment would be located. He explained it is a two-unit structure and connected to the ALCOSAN Sanitary Sewer which runs along Turtle Creek on the park side which is required by ALCOSAN and the Monroeville Municipal Authority because it is within 150 feet so it has to be tied into a sanitary sewer.

Mr. Frech reported the pavilion is an open structure with a roof with some manufactured concepts and it would measure 30 by 30 feet. He proposed to have four picnic tables in that area. He stated it is an open structure and supported on pillars which offers minimum flow resistance and is water resistant and vandal resistant.

Mr. Massung inquired about the width of the bridge and Mrs. Frech answered four feet wide. Mr. Massung questioned whether there would be walls or railing and Mrs. Frech answered affirmatively. She stated the rail would be 42 inches high.

Mr. Bertoni inquired about the distance between where someone would park their vehicle to where the trail would start and Mrs. Frech estimated approximately 200 feet. Mr. Bertoni questioned whether there is a danger for the vehicles getting flooded and Mrs. Frech stated the existing area is in the flood plain which includes the soccer fields and parking area. She explained the flood plain extends from Turtle Creek all the way to the hillside of Abers Creek Road. Mr. Bertoni inquired whether it would be 200 feet for the water to get to where the cars would be parked and Mrs. Frech answered affirmatively. Mr. Frech added the parking will be located up along Abers Creek Road. Mrs. Frech stated they proposed to have bollards to prevent vehicles from driving up to the pavilion. Mrs. Montgomery pointed out this would push the current parking out closer to the road than it is currently.

Mr. Massung questioned whether the bollards proposed would be like the ones already on the trail and Mrs. Frech indicated they could do that. Mr. Massung inquired whether it extends into Murrysville in Westmoreland County and Mrs. Frech concurred. She reported Murrysville informed them they would not have to go through any planning or approvals. She added Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation is in support of this project with no additional requirements. She reported they are going through sewer modules and the joint permit application for Chapter 105 and Chapter 106 because they are working in the flood plain. She stated they got the water approval from the Monroeville Municipal Authority for hookups and they are doing a National Pollutants Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit because they are more than one-acre.

There being no further discussion, Mrs. Montgomery duly made a motion to approve Site Plan Application No. 23-2-ST and Mrs. Lawrence seconded it. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

23-3-ST

H.F. LENZ COMPANY

The applicant is requesting Site Plan approval to construct climbing walls and a BMX track. The property is located at 675 Old Frankstown Road, Tax Parcel 975-L-100, in the S, Conservancy Zoning District.

Mr. Andy Baechle, Allegheny County Parks Director, came forward to respectfully request site plan approval. He explained this will be located at Boyce Park in the parking lot by the swimming pool where they will have the three B's, bikes, blades and boards. He reported it will be seven boulders of different heights with the highest being 14 feet and three will have roofs. He stated they were hoping to have a traditional climbing wall but they wanted to be free and open to the public and the traditional wall would require a monitor.

Mr. Bertoni inquired about the difference and Mr. Baechle explained a climbing wall would be higher and have ropes that people attach to. He reported these walls are boulders that people climb up and the highest is 14 feet. He added they would have fall surface underneath like a playground area. He reported if feasible they want to put a pump next to it which is a bicycle park with undulating hills then next to it would be the seven boulders. Mr. Bertoni was concerned about the height at the highest point and what precautions were made if someone falls. Mr. Baechle indicated it would be the fall surface.

Mr. Luke Gindlesperger, HF Lenz Company, came forward to explain the safety structure. He reported it is a rubber nugget padding which has criteria for a certain depth for how high someone is on the wall. He stated it would be 18 inches deep of a fall rubber then underneath that a dirt layer before getting to the foundations of the walls. He asserted there would be plenty of padding and the 18 inches should cover the 14-foot fall. He stated the landscape architect would be more knowledgeable regarding the safety structure. Mr. Baechle added it is a formula.

Mr. Whealdon inquired whether it would be a welded together mat or loose. Mr. Gindlesperger explained for all the boulder walls with the dark orange areas it will be loose rubber like pellets on a turf field just bigger. He referred to the play space that will have one consistent layer or playground padding around swing sets and slides. Mr. Whealdon was concerned that the loose stuff would get kicked away in the high traffic areas and end up with a divot so they may lose some of the safety factor. He inquired how often it would be maintained. Mr. Gindlesperger felt the parks would be continuously be maintained. Mr. Baechle stated it would be maintained as needed and added this is their first climbing wall. Mr. Gindlesperger stated the fall areas have a lip around that will take a fall.

Mr. Gindlesperger reported there are a series of area drains to the low spots through the whole pump track and the low spots around the climbing area. He explained in the actual loose material safety surface there are underdrains so the water will get piped to the basin and a majority of the site pipes to the large basin. He further explained how the water gets piped to a rain garden which goes to an existing 24-inch pipe that handles all the upslope drainage area. He stated their goal by mitigating the site is their flow will be less in the post development than in the pre-development for the 1.6 acres. He reported all of the skate park is piped to a single point. He explained how the previous tennis courts at the location was all impervious so they would not be sending any more flow than was experienced years ago.

Mr. Whealdon questioned whether the pump track and the climbing wall all get drained to the rain garden which discharges to an existing pipe. Mr. Gindlesperger answered affirmatively and explained it would be through a series of sheet flow and pipe flow to the rain gardens.

Mrs. Lawrence inquired what the rain gardens consist of. Mr. Gindlesperger answered bio-soil mix and rain garden plantings that are good at handling water. He explained all of the requirements

from the DEP and the municipality has sediment limiting requirements. He stated when the water hits the bio-soil it acts as a filter and will infiltrate down through. He further reviewed some of the details. He reported everything will go to the 24-inch pipe that is currently experiencing more flow than the proposed design will allow to exit the site.

Mr. Bertoni inquired about the safety of the climbers on the wall. He questioned whether there would be warning signs advising the participants to wear safety equipment or be accompanied by a parent. Mr. Baechle indicated there will be signs that say Use At Your Own Risk. He reported there will be easy and hard ones and explained it is cement slabs with boards that are made in a circle which can be climbed around or up. He added there will be a handicapped route and the routes will be changed. He again stated it would be Use At Your Own Risk and it will be signed.

Mr. Gindlesperger added the walls will have hand-holds that will be adjustable. Mr. Baechle reported they are screwed in and can be changed. He pointed out the three tallest have roofs because they did not want anyone climbing over the top and behind it. He mentioned they will be color coded for easy and difficult routes.

Mr. Walker inquired whether there are six boulders and Mr. Baechle answered there are seven. Mr. Walker questioned how many climbing wall parks are in existence and Mr. Baechle asserted this would be the first that is free to the public. He reported there are about six gyms in Pittsburgh that have indoor climbing walls that are similar and they have offered advice. He again stated this would be the first in the region.

Mr. Bertoni questioned whether there are plans to put them in some of the other county parks and Mr. Baechle responded they wanted to see how this one goes. He added this one is expensive. He explained the walls are expensive and he hoped to have enough money to put the pump track in. He reported all sports are either ball sports or gravity sports and they are trying to bring in a sport that is an individual sport that involves gravity. He mentioned how there will not be anything like it in their nine parks.

Mr. Gindlesperger reported they plan on renovating the existing restroom facility.

Mr. Massung inquired about the cost. Mr. Baechle estimated the cost of the wall was \$800,000 and he was uncertain about the cost for the two paths. Mr. Massung questioned when they would begin. Mr. Baechle answered they have already bought the wall which is being designed and he was hoping to have it complete by the end of the year. He asserted it would be started in the summer. Mr. Gindlesperger added it would be after they have all the permits in line and he mentioned the earth moving permit and National Pollutants Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) which has been submitted and under preliminary review.

Mrs. Lawrence inquired about the phasing of the project. She asserted it would start with bouldering and she questioned when the pump track would be done. Mr. Baechle indicated if they can afford it they will do both at the same time. He was hoping to have a ribbon cutting by November.

Ms. Lewis-Burke inquired about the timeframe the public will be able to use the facility. Mr. Baechle answered that park is open from dawn to dusk and they are open every day of the year. He stated it will be closed if it is unsafe or wet. He explained it will be fenced in and when it is wet the gate will be locked but it will be open every day to the public. Further discussion ensued.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Massung duly made a motion to approve Application 23-3-ST and Ms. Lewis-Burke seconded it. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the planning commission, at this time, a motion was duly made Mr. Walker to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. and Mr. Bertoni seconded it. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Bertoni
Chairman

LB/sam