

MUNICIPALITY OF MONROEVILLE

CITIZEN'S NIGHT MEETING

NOVEMBER 7, 2024

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nick Gresock at 7:06 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

ROLL CALL

The Recording Secretary, Sharon McIndoe, called roll and the following were present: Mayor Gresock, Joe Hyzy, Bob Stevenson, Bill Krut, Mike Adams, Bob Williams, Dennis Biondo, Alex Graziani, Bob Wratcher, Josie Rock, Joe Sedlak, Paul Whealdon, Dan Dieseroth, Darren Meyer, and Doug Bietko. Messrs. Poach and Hugus were absent.

Mayor Gresock explained this is the Citizen's Night Meeting and Agenda Setting meeting and it is not a voting meeting. He stated any action taken by council would take place on Tuesday at the Regular Council Meeting. He further explained this is Citizen's Night and residents can speak about any municipal item or issue. He added there will also be a conditional use public hearing for the Willowcrest Primo Group Land Development and there are three items that will be considered at the regular council meeting. He stated the conditional use portion is only for earth moving and he read pursuant to Section 504 VV, Major Excavation of the Monroeville Zoning Ordinance No. 2779 to permit a cut and fill operation. He reported if anyone has questions concerning cut and fill it would take place during the public hearing. He asserted the applicant will also review everything during that time. He explained the citizen's comment period would also include everything else regarding that development. He suggested anyone could express their concerns during the citizen's night comment period.

Mayor Gresock clarified that there will be no other comment period even though there is one referred to at the end agenda because it would duplicate things. Again, he explained there would be a comment period then a public hearing regarding the cut and fill operation of the Willowcrest Development but this is not a voting meeting. He stated there will also be a comment period at the Regular Council Meeting at beginning of the meeting for agenda items and another comment period at the end of the meeting for any municipal item. He advised that the comments would be Monroeville residents and there would be a five-minute time limit. He reported all comments are made part of the record and everything is recorded, everyone would be sworn in during the public hearing portion of the meeting, and the applicant will speak about the application and answer any questions or clear up information regarding it.

CHAR MYLNAR

Mrs. Char Mylnar, resident of 604 Quince Road, came forward to express her concerns. She read a statement into the record (see attached). She felt the residents should not have to make concessions for an error by council that allowed these sections to be rezoned. She submitted the petition of signatures of residents in opposition of opening Quince, Buttercup and Hazelnut Roads for

the development of the former Monroeville Airport for the development of a housing community (see attached.)

ROSE SMITH

Ms. Rose Smith, a resident of 2136 Berkshire Drive, came forward to express her concerns about the repaving of the road. She reported the municipality put a seal-coat, flush coat on Berkshire Drive and she was at the meeting last month to show an aggregate that was really big but not supposed to be used on a residential road. She felt the company made an error. She questioned whether anyone reviewed the issue or inspected the road. She inquired why the municipality chose this topping and she was informed each road is inspected and there are three types of surfaces and they could do a seal coat called a fog coat or a seal coat/flush coat could be used which is oil and chip and oil on top of the road could be milled and repaved. She was informed Berkshire Drive fell into the category for seal coat/flush coat and she inquired whether there is a public record of the municipality's grading system and how she would know if it was correct. She questioned whether the municipality is planning on doing every road in Monroeville with the seal coat/flush coat now that the municipality milled and repaved several other roads.

Mayor Gresock suggested the municipality can get her the paving program information. He also stated it is available on the website and Mr. Graziani indicated he would follow up on the other items.

KEVIN WHITFIELD

Mr. Kevin Whitfield, a resident of 608 Dahlia Drive, came forward to express his concerns about the Willowcrest Development. He distributed information of what was discussed at the planning commission meeting (see attached). He pointed out numbers that were not specifically noted in the traffic study and the information he had derived from the traffic study but it is not all listed. He reported his purpose is to raise council's awareness of how much the Willowcrest Development will increase traffic that will impact the safety and specifically pedestrian safety in Garden City. He disagreed with the percentages of the daily trips that are identified for each street which does not account for human behavior. He felt the daily trips on Dahlia and Hazelnut would be significantly more than what is defined in the traffic study because of a driver's choice to take a different route. He reported what was not explained to the residents who questioned the traffic study was that it was to analyze the impact flow but has nothing to do with the impact of pedestrian safety and it concluded that there is no significant impact to traffic flow and traffic safety with results being less than an additional two second delay at any intersection which is on Page 8, Paragraph 2 of the traffic study. He agreed and suggested no one was concerned about it that. He referred to the average daily trip increases on Dahlia, Valley View, Hazelnut, Quince, Blueberry and Buttercup Drives which should be considered with the pedestrian safety. He stated the residents are concerned about the traffic increases and pointed out Chinaberry Drive is not even part of the traffic study and it leads to the Evergreen Park. He felt the first number to consider is the impact from Garden City Drive on Dahlia to Valleyview and he reviewed all the numbers with all the streets listed. He was uncertain why this information was not listed but he felt human behavior should be considered. He reported he has not inflated numbers or hide numbers but he is presenting it in a form that can be observed better. He felt the traffic study was not presented in a straight forward fashion of where current traffic is located, the current average traffic, the total and the percentage increased. He suggested this is a clearer impact of the traffic so council can understand the resident's concerns.

PAT GORMLEY

Mr. Pat Gormley, a resident of 706 Greenleaf Drive, came forward to express his concerns. He was specifically concerned about the ground water regarding this development. He reported the engineering studies prepared by the developer have confirmed what the residents know that there has been a significant increase in mine runoff coming down the hill behind the houses on Greenleaf Drive through their properties onto the street. He stated it was not addressed as a main point of the study but they have photographs that it is caustic water running down the street and corroding the cast iron grates owned by the municipality for storm water. He reported it has not been there for 36 years that he has lived there but in the years since the other end of the development has happened on the old golf course side the water has changed. He stated the mine that runs under the property has a significant amount of water that flows through old mine areas and it is caustic. He pointed out when the development was done on the other side it changed the flow of the water. He reported their backyards are now swamped with water and it flows through their house foundations and the utilities underground and down the front yards into the street. He again stated it is caustic and corroding municipal devices and it did not happen before. He felt the municipality needs to ask pointed and hard questions of the developer about why it is happening and will it get worse when the property behind them is developed when pilings are drilled into the mine area and will change the flow of water. He stated it has caused problems for the residents up to this point and they want to know what will happen in the future before it is approved.

Mr. Gormley was concerned with the chain of liability if there should be problems further down the road. He inquired about what would happens if there is a problem related to the ground work in that mine years after the development is completed. He questioned who would hold the liability when the developer sells the property to the builder and he assumed the liability would be handed off. He felt it is common in real estate development for the developer to set up limited liability corporations so they do not remain liable for these kind of problems. He wanted to know who would be responsible for damage to his house years after the development is complete that undermines his property, utilities and pets because there is bad water running through the area currently. He suggested the people who make the profit from this should retain the liability with bonding.

Mr. Gormley reported he has lived here a long time and this issue is very personal. He felt council is their only avenue to address the questions and if council does not represent him no one will. He suggested council needs to stand up for the residents on these questions.

CARLA CHIANESE

Ms. Carla Chianese, a resident of 413 Hazelwood Drive, came forward to express her concerns. She read a statement into the record (see attached). She stressed this is not in the best interests of the community and Garden City. She felt it would not enhance the natural environment, nourish a healthy community or make meaningful use of available resources. She highlighted reasons to deny the Willowcrest Development: 1) the planning commission denied it; 2) the increase in traffic in a safe, pedestrian friendly neighborhood; 3) the antiquated infrastructure on their roads; and 4) the decision making is the best way to meet the municipality's goals and protect taxpayers' dollars. She felt this development goes against the Monroeville's Mission, Vision and Values. She reported there are 1,100 residents in Garden City and most them do not want this development.

JUINITA PLASKON

Mrs. Juanita Plaskon, a resident of 738 Greenleaf Drive, came forward to express her concerns. She reported she attended the meetings in 2004 to protest the development of the proposed senior living plan and now 20 years later she is protesting this development. She voiced her concerns about the lack of transparency and reported she does not want a Greenleaf access point which she just found out about because she does not want the increased traffic. She inquired about a traffic study for Greenleaf Drive and if it is a proposed plan. She stated she would be directly impacted by the proposed development because her property abuts the old airport property. She was concerned about the increased noise as a result of the removal of the forested area and felt it would affect her quality of life and it is not acceptable. She mentioned the pollution would increase if trees are removed and she gave an explanation.

Mrs. Plaskon was concerned about the water runoff from this proposed development because she is located at the bottom of the hill behind the development. She reported they have ponding in their back yard when there is a heavy rain. She inquired where all the excess water would go when the trees are cut down in the proposed plan and she mentioned the water coming out of the existing mines. She questioned whether anyone from the planning company or the municipality has done a site visit to these homes to see the swamp water in their backyards. She pointed out the developers have not even begun the work of clearing the land and there are already issues. She reviewed the problems it could cause. She mentioned the mine subsidence issues and reported the land has been and continues to shift around her home. She reported she has spent a substantial amount of money on wall braces, French drains and sump pumps to keep their basement dry. She was concerned about what would happen when the developer starts to move the earth. She reported her neighbor had a sink hole in the back yard less than two years ago. She stated someone from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection was at her home last month and she was informed it is imperative to carry mine subsidence insurance in Monroeville. She pointed out it would cost close to \$90,000-100,000 to lift a home and rebuild a foundation underneath. She asserted mine subsidence insurance should be in the amount of the replacement value of the home. She stressed to the residents in Garden City that they would have to have hefty premiums to make sure their homes do not get swallowed up by a sink hole.

Mrs. Plaskon questioned what damage their homes will incur if the proposed development is approved along the property border and what assurances they could get from the municipality that the development will not cause further structural damage to their homes. She inquired whether she would need flood insurance because of the development and who would be responsible to fix any damage. She questioned who was liable and felt these are questions the residents have and they deserve answers as taxpaying citizens and homeowners.

Mrs. Plaskon suggested it is not logistically sound to disrupt the quality of life of their established neighborhood for the sake of growth and money. She recognized the need for development but felt it must be responsible. She suggested this is not a responsible plan and it was dismissive to think the members of Garden City should not have a say in what the neighborhood should and will look like in the future.

Mayor Gresock referred to transmitting information and that all those things would be discussed at the public meeting. He reported the site plan, the cut and fill operation and the subdivision would be discussed and everything would be made public.

DEBRA BECKER

Mrs. Debra Becker, a resident of Valleyview Drive, came forward to express her concerns about mine water on Valleyview and Greenleaf Drives. She asserted the presentation that the developer will give at this meeting is not the same as the one presented in front of the planning commission. She stated there was no prior discussion of Greenleaf Park being opened and the Planning Commission denied the initial approval. She questioned why it is not being sent back to the Planning Commission with the updated information concerning the opening of Greenleaf Park. Mayor Gresock answered one condition would not send it back to the planning commission.

Mrs. Becker read a statement written by her son opposing this development because opening the dead-end streets would make traffic unsafe for all of them to play and ride their bikes. She noted none of the roads proposed to be opened have double lines on them and they are already narrow streets with no double lines, speed bumps or sidewalks. She again referred to her son's statement which stated the opening of the streets would make it very unsafe and he and his friends like to play in the neighborhood.

Mrs. Becker reported this development was denied by the planning commission then when it was scheduled to be considered by council, orange signs were posted on the telephone poles near the dead-end streets then they were removed when the applicant tabled the application and no new posters were put up. She reported the residents only found out about the meeting because they received an email that day from their councilman and she felt there is a lack of communication from the municipality. She pointed out she was very concerned because currently there is nothing on the agenda concerning this issue. She suggested it should have been reposted.

Further discussion ensued. Mrs. Becker hoped that there would be no retaliation from the municipality. She suggested the municipality needs to work on communication and she pointed out there is no diversity on council. She felt the residents need to do their part because there needs to be a change.

LOIS DRUMHELLER

Mrs. Lois Drumheller, a resident, came forward to distribute information. She pointed out these are the same developers presenting the application for Willowcrest that developed Maplecrest. She showed a picture of wetlands that were previously denied. She reported the wetlands detected by the presenter of Maplecrest was Graham Ferry. She pointed out in 2019 the Maplecrest Northfield east of the border where there is a residential home of Mr. and Mrs. Henningsen there are two wetlands, SP16 which is on the Henningsen border and SP17 which was further north but now they are gone. She was concerned with any irresponsible development because they need to do their homework on how to move wetlands. She requested from her house of representative the step by step process any developer has to go through when they are working around wetlands such as permits and DEP requirements. She indicated they were listed for her. She requested by informal file review all the information required for the Maplecrest Development because it is a development down the road done

by the same developer as the applicant for Willowcrest. She pointed out that development had three phases but nothing has been done after Phase I for at least a year. She reported the information she has shows that the water flow is coming from acid mine drainage. She reported the red markers in the photograph mark the border between Maplecrest Northfield and Ridgeview Estates. She stated there was a lot of acid mine drainage that mixed into a lot of earth that was moved in that development and it was not disposed of properly. She mentioned another issue with a development that the applicant did prior to what is proposed tonight. She was concerned about one gas well not being properly capped on one of the streets because the resident that lives next to the wetlands warned the developers at that time. She mentioned how no one wants an uncapped gas well or Rustic Ridge. She wanted to know if the residents there now understand that 40 feet in their back yard may be that kind of situation. She was concerned with not having the third phase done.

SUZANNE KROMKA

Mrs. Suzanne Kromka, a resident of Willowhedge Drive, came forward to express her concerns. She reviewed her history in Monroeville and explained her backyard would abut one of the cul-de-sac in the new development. She shared the same concerns with the water issues in the yards. She mentioned the traffic and she hoped the traffic studies looked beyond Garden City and the immediate streets in the neighborhood involved. She suggested it should look of the north side of Route 22 because there has been an explosion of growth. She pointed out there has been a new apartment complex at the end of Evergreen, the luxury apartment off of Old William Penn Highway, the new Maplecrest Development and the new 55 and over apartment building. She reported there is also a new Plum Development off of Davidson Road, Patriot Homes, with 158 homes that will add to the already congested traffic issues. She stressed that traffic will travel along all of those same narrow two-lane roads that were never built to be major arteries and handle that amount of traffic. She felt if council is looking out for the citizens' safety this would be a great oversight. She stated it cannot be undone once it is done. She asserted this is section of Monroeville is already the most densely populated area with the least amount of green space. She reported it is difficult for them to ignore the disparity of concern for green space on one side of Route 22 compared to the other side of Route 22 especially since the developer is talking about going through what little park areas there might be at the end of Greenleaf. She questioned where the green space is and the concern for the environment. She reported Monroeville Park is beautiful but anyone living on the north side of Route 22 does not go there to use it. She suggested the residents would love an area to walk their dogs or take a walk and felt the little piece of Monroeville Airport is the last piece of green space in that section of the community.

Mrs. Kromka inquired whether the development could be shrunk down to include a walking path and buffer spaces for green area. She felt community development is not just pushing dirt and pouring concrete but about developing community. She stated there are hundreds of residents that live around that little piece of ground that would enjoy utilizing that space. She reported residents cannot walk on Logan's Ferry Road and drive to Evergreen Park to walk because the traffic is so horrible.

Mrs. Kromka quoted House Representative Markosek, "as our communities grow, it is important to preserve outdoor spaces that can grow along with them. I am please to see an investment in Monroeville where folks in Monroeville can go to enjoy the great outdoors".

NANCY GORMLEY

Mrs. Nancy Gormley, a resident of 706 Greenleaf Drive, came forward to express her concerns. She reported as soon as she found out that day that Greenleaf Drive was included in the plan she started knocking on doors. She stated a lot of her neighbors are older and could not attend. She could not believe the park will be accessed for a road and she was concerned with the basketball courts being moved. She felt safety is an issue. She reported there are swamps in their backyards and the residents are afraid the movement of dirt and the increase in roads and driveways will cause larger swamps. She pointed out it just started a few years ago. She reported the traffic speeds down her street and it is really bad. She stated one neighbor told her she has been pestering the police chief about the traffic speed and the running of the stop sign at Laurel and Greenleaf Drives. She was concerned about the safety of the children and pedestrians on the street when the motorists do not stop for the stop signs. She pointed out there are no sidewalks on their street and they really pick up speed by the time they get to the bottom of the hill where she lives. She expressed her concern about a rumor that one of the municipal employees told her friend it was a done deal and she felt that is wrong. She requested council to be respectful of the people they represent.

JOE VENTRENSKA

Mr. Joe Ventrenska, a resident, came forward to express his concerns about the traffic on Dahlia Drive and the other three roads proposed to go to this development. He felt Dahlia Drive is not wide enough to accept the extra traffic from the development and suggested it should be a wider road for that many cars. He mentioned buses and municipal garbage and recycling trucks. He reported people play on Dahlia, Hazelnut, Buttercup and Valleyview drive. He asserted there is a lot of traffic that goes to the park from Dahlia to Chinaberry to the park. He reported he lives behind the park and there are a lot of people that go there to use it.

BILL SYREK

Mr. Bill Syrek, a resident of Greenleaf Drive, came forward to express his concerns. He reported he lived there for 51 years and attended all the council meetings in 2004 concerning the airport development. He inquired about what happened to the information they were told that there would be no more multi-family dwellings on the airport property. He stated the police testified that if they open up the roads going into Garden City on Greenleaf Drive and the other streets, motorists traveling on Logan's Ferry Road will take a short cut through the airport which will increase traffic.

Mr. Syrek reported his back yard is like a swamp in the winter and he has had water coming out of the ground because of mine subsidence but nothing has ever been done about it except that he takes out mine subsidence insurance. He suggested this needs to be reviewed. He reported the developer says there will be traffic on the roads coming out of the airport property. He suggested there would be motorists coming from Plum Borough into the airport property to take a shortcut onto Old William Penn Highway. He asserted they have enough traffic on Greenleaf Drive and do not need any more. He explained three accidents that happened across from his house because the traffic is traveling too fast through the neighborhood. He suggested rumble strips to slow people down and he felt this development would be nothing but problems.

ROBERT BLANNER

Mr. Robert Blanner, a resident of Sweetleaf Drive, came forward to express his concerns. He agreed with all the earlier comments and he mentioned the sewer capacity. He reported he has had to deal some issues and he is aware some of the areas have been cleared out with machines. He was concerned with pedestrian and children's safety and children's access to green space. He reported there are no sidewalks and he runs on the streets with his kids because they are safe and there is no traffic. He pointed out stops signs are optional in Garden City and adding more cars would make it a freeway. He reported the traffic on Old William Penn Highway and Duff Road will be at a standstill and drivers are aggressive. He mentioned how he had almost been hit multiple times. He suggested the traffic generated from the new middle school will add to the congestion of the area from buses, parents, teachers and staff at certain times of day. He pointed out the traffic generated by the new apartments that have been added has not been studied yet. He felt this development does not benefit from any of those factors and puts the residents at more of a risk. He asserted it is actually dividing the citizens in Garden City because everyone is now fighting about what part should be opened. He stated everyone is there for one thing which is to figure out what streets should be opened.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no one else come forward at this time, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander J. Graziani
Municipal Manager

AJG/sam