

Special Council Meeting  
April 27, 2017  
Chancellor Center

President of Council Robert Walker called a special meeting of Newtown Borough Council to order at 7:00 P.M. on Thursday, April 27, 2017. President Walker asked those in attendance to join him in a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Councilors Grunde-McLaughlin, Gusty, King, McDermott, Rodowicz, and Walker; Solicitor Bolla; Mayor Swartz

### **President's Introduction – Robert J. Walker**

President Walker stated that the purpose of this meeting was to get input from the community regarding a potential amendment to the TND Ordinance, allowing for a Senior Assisted Living Facility on the Steeple View property. He asked that residents share their thoughts about this project, and handed the meeting over to Solicitor Bolla.

Solicitor Bolla noted the importance of the project and this request, and reported that this is a voluntary request before Council where no deadlines apply. He stated that the Applicant has already come before Council and the Planning Commission on more than one occasion. Solicitor Bolla asked that Newtown Borough residents and business owners speak first, stating that no vote would be taken at this meeting.

### **Steeple View Presentation – Allan Smith & Timothy Duffy, Attorney**

Allan Smith, Developer, introduced himself and shared the past projects he has developed in Newtown. He described the Preliminary Plan that has been approved by Council, pointing out that three of four condominium buildings are now being proposed to become one senior assisted living center. He reported that, in the process of getting the Preliminary Plan approved, some people were unhappy that the condominiums were four stories high. Mr. Smith had responded that the fourth story was required to provide the fifteen million dollars in public improvements; these include the parking garage, greenway, and Piazza. Mr. Smith reported that Council approved the Preliminary Plan based on its attributes, although the Planning Commission recommended against it.

Following the Preliminary Plan approval, Mr. Smith was approached by LCB Senior Living to construct a three story facility; he believed that would be agreeable to those concerned with building heights. He reported that 48 condos would be replaced by one building with 90 units, 70-75 people would be employed with a payroll of \$1,800,000, and traffic congestion would decrease. Mr. Smith noted that he would receive less revenue from the sale of the senior living facility, but is more concerned that rising interest rates could negatively effect the economic foundation of the project to the point of falling apart. He stated that the sale to LCB would happen faster than selling the condos, providing the cash needed to fund the public amenities more quickly. Mr. Smith suggested that including a senior assisted living facility was an improvement to the

Preliminary Plan, but acknowledged that it is the decision for the public and Council to make.

Attorney Duffy described what is included in Newtown Borough's Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Ordinance, noting that senior assisted living facilities are not. Mr. Duffy noted that, under the Borough's Comprehensive Plan, it is stated that the Borough recognizes the aging baby boomer population and a need for appropriate services and living facilities. He described the location of this proposed facility as ideal to service this population.

### **LCB Senior Living, LLC Presentation – Michael Stoller & Steven Puliafico**

Michael Stoller, Principal and CEO, and Steven Puliafico, President, were introduced by Mr. Duffy to discuss their business and vision for Newtown Borough.

Mr. Puliafico shared that LCB began in 2011 but has roots back to 1994; LCB had once owned 3 facilities in Pennsylvania. Today, LCB owns and operates 23 communities in 5 states and has over 1,700 associates on their staff. Mr. Puliafico stated that they provide all types of care, and described their services and amenities in detail. He shared a visual presentation that demonstrated how their facilities blend with their surroundings. Mr. Puliafico described the residents as active consumers, walking to local shops and restaurants. LCB encourages their residents to engage in the community, and invites the community into their facilities as well.

Mr. Stoller noted that residents and family members are actively involved in their communities and, along with their employees, will support area restaurants and establishments. He claimed that the LCB facility would have no impact on municipal services, and shared the estimated economic impact the project would have on Newtown. Mr. Stoller stated that annual expenditures of \$1.3 million will be spent on goods and services in the local community. Based on estimates that the senior housing facility would also add 75 new jobs and \$1.8 million in dedicated salaries, Mr. Stoller projects that the mix of condominiums and senior housing would create nearly \$3 million annually for Newtown.

In response to Solicitor Bolla's question, Mr. Stoller stated that 25% of the population would receive memory care and suffer from either Alzheimer's or Dementia. Approximately 20% of residents would be independent and walk, but not drive. Those who need assistance with daily living would make up the remainder of residents.

Mr. Stoller shared an economic projection over a five year period, comparing the original use mix approved by Borough Council in the Preliminary Plan to the proposed use mix. In taking into account real estate taxes, real estate transfer fees, and earned income taxes, LCB projected that the original use mix would generate \$793,000 and the proposed use mix would generate \$470,000. Mr. Stoller acknowledged that the proposed use mix is less, but is more than offset by the \$3 million resulting from employees' salaries and goods & services purchases.

## Public to be Heard

Comments and concerns from the public in opposition to allowing a Senior Assisted Living Facility included:

- Doug Levin, Resident, reported on his observations while living across the street from the Newtown Friends Boarding Home. He advised that Council decide based on what would provide the better economic benefit to Newtown. He does not see the residents across the street walking into town and patronizing the shops and restaurants, although they have the capability to do so and fall into the assisted living demographic.
- Michael Sarkis, Resident, decided to move to Newtown for its historic charm, and was attracted to the concept of the Steeple View project with its vibrant town center and addition of condominium residents. He suggested that the best use for developing the limited space at the center of town is for an active population.
- Emily Richetts, Resident, shared her significant experience with assisted living and memory care residents. She expressed the appeal and vibrancy that owner occupied condominiums would provide to Newtown, in conjunction with high end retail stores. Ms. Richetts has observed the lack of adult children visiting parents in memory care units, and noted the elderly's reluctance to sometimes leave their facilities. She stated that this location is not ideal for Newtown. When recently searching for a facility for her mother, she found many viable options in the area.
- Gerry Couch, State Street Business Owner, acknowledged the quality of Mr. Allan Smith's projects. He noted that the finances look more attractive for the first years with the LCB facility, but condominiums would provide a more robust and favorable economic impact over time. He believes there is not a shortage of senior assisted living facilities in the greater Newtown area.

Mr. Puliafico reported that skilled care is not provided in LCB facilities.

- Tony Godwin, Resident and Business Owner, stated that he agreed to give up the municipal parking lot behind his property at 110 S. State Street in exchange for the approved Preliminary Plan for condominiums; the Preliminary Plan offers over 100 new residents to support the businesses on the street. He described his experience with clients living in senior assisted living housing, and didn't believe they would be a substitute for condo residents due to limited mobility and lack of desire to shop and dine on State Street.
- Paul Salvatore, Resident, questioned the source for the Economic Impact projected numbers that LCB presented, and asked if he could have a copy of the information for the next Work Session. Mr. Allan Smith stated that the condominiums will sell for approximately \$800,000; Mr. Salvatore noted that the transfer fees at points of sale and resale of the condos would be a financial

benefit to the Borough. It was noted that the average age of the residents is 84 years, and life expectancy is 89 years old. Mr. Salvatore stated his experience as a Board Member for an independent living facility at the County level, and stated that these residents don't typically spend money out shopping in the community.

- Bonnie Waldinger, Resident, is excited about the Steeple View project but prefers the condominiums over the assisted living facility. She doesn't believe the LCB residents will be shopping and dining in the Borough, and also believes there is enough housing available in the area now. Ms. Waldinger was also concerned about parking, traffic congestion at employee shift changes, and the impact on emergency municipal services.

Comments and concerns from the public in favor of allowing for a Senior Assisted Living Facility included:

- Robert Weiss, Resident, has worked in the long-term care industry as an Administrator for a number of years. He pointed out the difference between assisted living and nursing home facilities, noting the latter is more of a medical model where the need is greater. He shared statistics demonstrating the need for more assisted living facilities, and suggested it would decrease congestion in the Borough, create new jobs, and help other businesses. Mr. Weiss suggested the consideration of a capital contribution fee when people move into Newtown to offset the loss in tax revenues.
- Rob Wagner, Resident, moved to Newtown last summer after looking for a home in the Borough for a number of years. He is in favor of the senior assisted living facility to allow the project to move ahead faster. He believes people will be coming from all over Bucks County to support the businesses; he does not believe that losing some condo owners will have a great impact on the vibrancy of the development.

Mr. John Kuhn, LCB Representative, was allowed five minutes to share projected economic activity and, since he was restating the estimated numbers shared earlier, Solicitor Bolla asked to proceed with gathering input from the community.

President Walker invited non-Borough residents to share their opinions.

- Mr. Alan Fidler, Chairman of the Newtown Township Planning Commission, pointed out two main issues he experienced in dealing with the new Birches Senior Assisted Living Facility in the Township; one issue is regarding the safety and security of the residents, and the second is planning to provide ample parking for a large number of guests and service providers. He noted that as people age and become less secure in their surroundings, they tend to stay close to home.
- Lynn Brennan, Township Resident, has been excited about the Steeple View project and prefers it to remain in favor of the condos. She cautioned the

audience regarding the ability to manipulate projected, estimated financials to favor one side over another.

- Tyler Hoff, Township Resident and Executive Director of the Newtown Friends Home, does not see the LCB proposal as competition since their focus is on residents with different income levels. Mr. Hoff shared that some of his independent living residents will walk into town, but not his assisted living residents. He preferred Mr. Smith's vision of the four condo buildings.
- Lynette Kellen, CEO, Chandler Hall, agreed with earlier comments that the LCB residents wouldn't be shopping and dining in Newtown Borough, and stated that there are a number of senior assisted living facilities currently available to serve these needs in the community.
- Gene Oregetti, Birches Owner, stated that 83 years old is the average age in his facility; half of their residents have dementia and the other half are assisted living residents. He noted that most employees are not from the Newtown area, although that would be his preference. He stated that most residents prefer not to leave the facility for meals or activities.

Councilor Rodowicz noted that Council has received some additional letters from Newtown Borough residents to take into consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy S. Musto  
Borough Secretary

#### ATTENDEES

Warren Woldorf  
Ted Schmidt  
Jeff Werner  
Mary Hunter  
Paul Salvatore  
Margaret Danese  
Bob Bartels  
Lorraine Pentz  
Mike Sellers  
John & Maryjane Leonard  
Diane LeBas  
Allan Smith

Jeanette Rogers  
Nancy & Randy Scurlock  
Tony Godwin  
Michael Stoller  
Steven Puliafico  
Mark Craig  
Bill Heinemann  
Rob Weiss  
Michael Sarkis  
Emily Richets  
Gene Oregetti  
Jerry Couch

Timothy Duffy  
Sally Thompson  
Heather Lewis  
Dave & Mary Callahan  
Eileen Dutton  
Marlowe Gordon  
Marty Ginty  
Chris Brill  
Gina Tognini  
Marc & Bonnie Waldinger  
Donna Gusty  
John Fraher

Rosemary Tottorotto  
Marvin Cohen  
Alan Fidler  
Lynn Brennan  
Tyler Hoff  
Carol Richardson  
Geno Peruzzi  
Maureen Casey  
Michael Hackman  
Cheri Peters  
Doug & Peg Levin  
Lois Molloy