



The Patriot-News

Officials reject Lobar proposal - Page 2

Carroll Twp. supervisors refused Monday to resurrect plans for South Mountain Commons, a proposed commercial development that was derailed by a judge's ruling last year and has since been given two extensions to correct its land-development plan.

The supervisors voted unanimously to deny a preliminary approval, which means Philadelphia-based developer Lobar Properties will have to either start over with planning for the more than 130 commercially zoned acres or abandon it altogether.

The acreage is located west of Route 15 and north of the current Route 74 intersection near Dillsburg. Developing the area for large anchor stores and accompanying retail space was first pitched in 2004.

As of Wednesday, officials from Lobar had not responded to telephone and e-mail inquiries about the project's future.

George Palas of Philadelphia, an attorney for Lobar, argued at Monday's meeting that concerns raised in a September order by York County Judge Stephen Linebaugh relating to stormwater management, setbacks and buffer zones could be resolved after the board granted a preliminary approval.

Linebaugh overturned the plan after a preliminary approval voted on in 2007 was challenged by Wayne, Catherine and Brad Pealer and the Carroll Citizens for Sensible Growth.

Palas claimed the concerns raised in the court order should be added to conditions already noted in the township's preliminary OK.

He assured the board all conditions would be resolved before final approval.

In November, however, Lobar spokesman Paul Hedin said the developer was working to come up with a new plan "that will conform to the judge's order."

To accomplish that, Lobar was granted extensions in November and March, but a new version of the plan was not offered at Monday's meeting -- the last day of the final extension.

The citizens' group contends that Lobar wants to turn the 130 acres into 11 commercial lots -- including space for stores like Wal-Mart and Lowe's -- and relocate part of Route 74 so that it would empty onto Route 15 several hundred yards north of the current intersection.

Palas said of the citizen's group, "There's no secret that Mr. [Brad] Pealer and his group oppose Wal-Mart. But there is no Wal-Mart. There is no contract with Wal-Mart."

In response, Pealer showed a map of the proposed development from Lobar showing specifically where Wal-Mart and Lowe's -- as well as dozens of town houses -- would be located.

Pealer said his group isn't just against having a Wal-Mart on the edge of Dillsburg. "We're against the whole thing. It's trying to fit a square peg in a round hole."

Local resident Dean Wanders said he is concerned about traffic the commercial plan would bring to the area.

He wondered how a proposed seven-lane access into the development off of Route 15 would affect traffic flow on the busy north-south highway.

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