



10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, Pa. 18018
www.bethlehemeac.org

Darlene L. Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning
Tracy Samuelson, Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning
City of Bethlehem
10 E. Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

May 27, 2021

Dear Ms. Heller and Ms. Samuelson,

We appreciate your consideration of the following comments regarding the proposed Wawa on Route 412 in Hellertown.

We are aware that the proposed WaWa will be raised as a measure to prevent it from flooding and should there be any existing tanks, they will be removed and replaced with state-of-the-art tanks to prevent leakage. Given its location on the floodplain and the proximity to Saucon Creek, there are also measures that could be taken to reduce the impacts of contaminants carried in stormwater and the rate of stormwater flow exiting the property. We recommend careful consideration of the stormwater plan, including a buffer (as wide as possible) of native trees and native vegetation between the store and the Creek. Wetlands, rain gardens and green roofs serve to slow and filter stormwater runoff.

In light of the impacts of climate change, including the increasing severity of rainfall events, our expectations and hopes are that new developments will go beyond the minimum tree replacement and landscaping requirements and serve as a model for other developments in the City.

The site will be convenient for many I-78 commuters and we recommend installation of electric vehicle charging stations, which may result greater patronage. Sidewalks bordering the street will also encourage customers and make the area safer for pedestrians. Trash from high usage of the site, such as cigarette butts, plastic bags and other debris from the store, could blow onto the adjacent land and be transported by wind or stormwater runoff into Saucon Creek. We urge consideration of a plan to contain and manage litter.

Regarding the building, we recommend that the developer explore energy efficiency measures beyond the building code, such as passive solar design features, advanced lighting controls, high efficiency HVAC equipment, increased insulation and advanced air sealing techniques to reduce infiltration.

Furthermore, we encourage the developer to evaluate including solar panels or at least constructing the building with adequate structural rooftop capacity and electrical rough-ins so that solar could easily be added at a later date. Northampton County recently adopted the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program. C-PACE is an innovative financial tool that allows financing for solar, increased energy efficiency and water conservation projects to be attached to the property instead of the owner. This can free up developers' finances by placing the assessment on the property and structuring repayment through property taxes.

New construction projects provide opportunities to employ ambitious energy saving strategies that will lower the business' energy costs, while at the same time reduce pollution from traditional energy sources, helping to preserve our environment and maintain the health of our citizens.

As Bethlehem City has adopted a Climate Action Plan to reduce our carbon footprint, increase our sustainability and utilize alternative energy sources, let us be mindful of these goals as they pertain to new development.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn Rothman

Lynn Rothman, Chair

On behalf of the Bethlehem EAC:

Elizabeth Behrend

Elisabeth Cichonski

Ben Felzer

Ben Guthrie

Brian Nicas

Mike Topping

cc: Bethlehem City Council

Mayor Donchez