

Hawley Silk Mill Sets Timeline for Hearings

By Thomas Renn

Wayne Independent - Mon Aug 03, 2009, 06:07 PM EDT

Hawley, Pa. - Developers will begin seeking approvals for their plans for the former Silk Mill on Welwood Avenue.

Attorney Anthony Waldron, one of the Hawley Silk Mill LLC partners, updated Borough Council on the project. Waldron said they will seek a Conditional Use hearing probably in August to change the non-conforming use to retail and office use. Waldron said the building was never approved for the antique sales, its last use.

It will still be a non-conforming use as Hawley Silk Mill expects to build only about half of the parking spaces (160) required for the size of the buildings the partners expect to use. That would be all they need to request a variance on parking. It would be an improvement over the estimated 30 spaces used by the prior owners.

Waldron said there are four buildings remaining on the property after Hawley Silk mill sold the warehouse between Route 6 and Welwood Avenue. It was taken apart and removed. The lower warehouse, Cocoon building and Main building will remain. The three car stone garage on Welwood will also remain, but may be removed later to provide more parking.

Close part of Welwood Ave.?

With the Conditional Use hearing, he said they would also like to discuss the closure of Welwood. Hawley Silkmill wants to close Welwood from Route 6 down to just above the lower warehouse. A gate would close the lower end, but the upper end will be torn out and the only piece left would be a driveway for the bakery and flooring store located on or near Welwood.

So far, residents in the area have been in favor of the closure, noting Welwood was dangerous for several reasons, especially the odd intersection with Route 6. Their concerns included the increase in through traffic on other streets as drivers search for a short cut to replace Welwood, which gets heavy use from people going to Church Street and then on to Columbus and Route 590.

The residents wanted to know what could be done to deter drivers from using Atkinson or Academy streets to get to Church Street.

Council, however, was concerned about the safety of closing Welwood, when so many people shoot off Route 6 down Welwood at high rates of speed. Joe Hudak, Kiley Associates who prepared a traffic study on closing Welwood, said they would use a combination of tools to alert and warn travelers of the closure. Those tools include advance signage, beacons chevrons and make the signs the larger size used on roads with faster speeds. They would also run a media campaign.

Waldron said PennDOT has agreed in theory to transferring the right of ways for the triangle between Route 6 and Welwood, which will be part of the parking plan for the Silkmill. The process to actually transfer those rights of way, taken when Route 6 was realigned many years ago, will take six months.