

Lowe's Preliminary Plan Okayed

by Susan L. Serbin

After 25 months as a work-in-progress, Lowe's Home Improvement received preliminary plan approval from Edgmont supervisors. Although the project at Edgmont Shopping Center still requires final plan submission and approval, the Jan. 16 action was a major step forward.

The agenda item read "preliminary action or extension," perhaps giving pause to representatives of Lowe's and property owner National Realty Developers. Supervisor Chairman Ron Gravina approached the item saying last minute information coming into the township for review was "not to my liking." However, the detail of the last memoranda given by project leader Jim Eder of Chester Valley Engineers was clarification of the lighting plans. Most of the plan-tweaking grew out of a meet-

ing among Lowe's and township professionals earlier in January to smooth out site improvement issues.

The project for the Lowe's and a stand-alone bank at the western side of the shopping center began as a concept shown to the township at the end of 2005. The Lowe's, which is about 150,000 square feet inclusive of indoor and outdoor uses, created controversy for nearby neighbors who objected to the size and potential for traffic and noise problems. Separate zoning and conditional use hearings on a multitude of issues were lengthy and exacting. The public attendance and attention to the plan diminished as the process went on.

Supervisors were not willing to advance the plans with issues left unresolved. The preliminary plan approved had no less than two dozen conditions, one of which

was for the 48-point conditional use decision to supersede any items which may have been overlooked or remained questionable.

The final plan submission will include information on the sanitary sewer design for the project, a final landscaping and lighting plan and third-party approvals such as PennDOT highway occupancy permits.

David Malman, the township solicitor for the project, said the board does not want to see a final plan with a "laundry list" of outstanding issues.

After the unanimous approval by supervisors, project attorney Joseph Damico thanked the board and township professionals for the time, attention and special meetings to help make this the best project possible for Lowe's. "We all worked together for the betterment of the shopping center and the township," said Gravina.