

MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 5, 2008

The Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, February 5, 2008 at the Township Hall, 4975 DeMoss Road, Berks County, Pennsylvania. Donald R. Wilson, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge to the Flag.

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Donald R. Wilson, Chairman
Richard Littlehales, Vice Chairman
John W. Bittig, Secretary
Paul L. Schwartz
Gary L. Shane
Greg T. Unger
Gregory A. Shantz

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Craig Peifer, GVC Consulting Engineer
Cheryl Franckowiak, Zoning Officer
Linda Cusimano, Recording Secretary

Mr. Wilson stated that before we started the meeting he wanted to bring up a letter that was received from Gene Venzke of the law office of Mogel, Speidel, Bobb & Kershner that stated some people in our audience could not hear what was being said and asked that we speak into the microphones.

1. MINUTES

MOTION BY Mr. Shane, seconded by Mr. Bittig, to approve the minutes of the January 2, 2008 Planning Commission Meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

2. AGENDA

MOTION BY Mr. Unger, seconded by Mr. Bittig, to approve the agenda of the February 5, 2008 Planning Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The following business was discussed:

3. INFORMAL DISCUSSION – CHRIS WENTLING

Mrs. Franckowiak stated that she asked the Wentlings to come in to the Planning Commission to discuss building on a previously approved lot in a subdivision called Parkview Acres II. The lot did not have frontage on a street and we were asking them to provide an access that would meet the fire codes and allow Clarence Hamm's Highway Department to turn their plows around, rather than using the Wentlings driveway as they did now. Mr. Wentling stated that he had two diagrams showing how they would put in a "hammer-head extension" connected to Woodland Ave. He asked the Planning Commission if they would prefer Option 1 or Option 2? Mr. Unger asked how many lots were located there? After a lengthy discussion it was found to have two undeveloped lots located there. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that obviously we would need to have Great Valley look at the design to approve it, but, was the Planning Commission in agreement that they could Planning Commission minutes

Informal discussion – Wentling continued

continue with existing non-conforming cartway width of Woodland Ave. knowing that it would just serve one dwelling? Mr. Bittig replied that it would be possibly two additional dwellings and as long as it was only those two it was probably acceptable. Mr. Littlehales asked what the current cartway width of Woodland Ave. was? Mrs. Franckowiak replied 16-feet. Mr. Wilson asked if that was the only location they could put their driveway? Mr. Wentling replied that it was because it was a side entry garage, but they were looking at a possible front entry garage. Mr. Bittig stated that they needed to watch the steep slope areas. Mr. Wilson stated that they also could not “clear cut” the trees off of the lot. They would only be able to remove a percentage of the trees. The Planning Commission agreed that as long as it met the requirements of the Fire Code that would be fine. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that she would get them together with the Highway Superintendent and who ever would be doing the Fire Code review.

4. INFORMAL DISCUSSION – DIAMOND CREDIT UNION – Scott Miller

Mr. Miller stated that he was there with Courtney Mitchell, the architect for the project and John Faust, President of the Diamond Credit Union. The project was located at the corner of Pineland Road and 422. It was approximately three acres. Mr. Miller further stated that they were aware of previous submissions for that tract and Diamond Credit Union was doing their “due diligence” for that piece of property and wanted to come before the Planning Commission to get their input because of the history on the tract. They were proposing a 3,900-sf building with drive thru and were proposing two access points, one on Pineland Road and another right-in, right-out on 422. They were also showing a 4,200-sf expansion with parking.

Mr. Wilson asked if they were using the first two properties to do the project? Mr. Miller replied yes and he also had a copy of the GVC review letter for a previous project at this site and he read through the letter and the issues were pretty clear. Mr. Bittig stated that he was concerned with the site distance onto Pineland Road; it was currently open on the curve area, but what if the neighbor (Mutschler) put a structure in that location? Mr. Wilson stated that previously we asked that they tried to align their access onto Pineland Road with the driveway across the street at the Mutschler’s garden center. Mr. Miller replied that they could look at that. Mr. Bittig stated that he could not speak for PennDOT but he did not feel that they would allow the right-in right-out on 422. Mr. Miller replied that was their wish list, that was what they would like, but they would obviously have discussions with PennDOT. Mr. Wilson asked what they were proposing in the green area? Mr. Miller replied that would be for their stormwater management facility. Mr. Wilson stated that area always retained water and it was a large drop-off area. Mr. Miller stated that the location of the building was best for visibility from 422 and for better circulation. Mr. Bittig asked what their water source was? Mr. Miller replied that was a part of their due diligence. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that previously the water company was in to upgrade the pipes in the area across 422 from that property, but they also discussed running water to the northern side of 422. She further stated that she would check with the water company tomorrow and get the information to Mr. Miller. Mr. Wilson stated that those properties were previously serviced by wells. Mr. Miller asked if there was a problem with getting sewer service? Mrs. Franckowiak replied that no, there were no issues with the sewer. Mr. Miller asked if there were traffic impact fees? Mrs. Franckowiak replied no, but they would need to do a traffic impact study. Mr. Peifer stated that they would be caught by the Ordinance because of the location of the property, the size would not trigger that, but being on 422, the Ordinance would say submit the study unless they would get a waiver. Mr. Miller stated that they would just need the scope of the study. Mr. Wilson stated that he wanted to let them know that there were at least 4 wells on the site and that household trash was thrown and buried on the site. Mr. Miller asked what that was? Mr. Wilson replied tin cans, refrigerators and other household trash. Mr. Miller thanked the Planning Commission.

5. INFORMAL DISCUSSION – GOLD’S GYM – Carol DeLuliis

Mrs. Franckowiak stated that Gold’s Gym was planning to retrofit the old Pathmark/Big Lots site. They were doing a change in use from retail to personal service/indoor recreation and according to the Ordinance it could trigger full-blown Land Development. She further stated that she did not feel that they needed to do that but she wanted them to come before the Planning Commission to see what issues they would need to address, parking, lighting, etc. She previously viewed Valhalla Gym as personal service establishment and felt Gold’s would be the same. Mrs. DeLuliis stated that they had nine clubs in Pennsylvania, two in Florida and they were used to putting their clubs in old supermarket locations. Usually they have more than one club in each market, so their plan was to put in three clubs in this area. Mrs. DeLuliis further stated that she was an Exeter Township resident and was excited about this location. She checked the Wyomissing location and at their busiest time there were 75 people and there were plenty of parking spaces. Mondays, Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays were their busiest days and the busiest time was around 5:30. Most people were there 45 minutes to one hour. Previously there were discussions about the pool and the concern of swim meets. They talked with Exeter School District about helping with the cost of the pool so they would be able to use it for swim meets, but the School District would not step up to the plate. Because of that they would be building a Jr. Olympic size pool, not a full sized one. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that a lot of residents were clamoring for a pool for the kids to practice and for swim meets and that was our concern about the amount of people that would attend a swim meet. Mrs. DeLuliis replied that a swim meet would last around 2 hours, they gave the School District first rights of refusal and asked them to step up to the plate to help with the cost and they would make the prime time just for them. They refused that. The School District did call and ask if we could put in starting blocks so students could practice there. So the parking lot would not be filled to capacity at any time. Mr. Littlehales asked where they would be getting the water for the pool? Mrs. DeLuliis replied that they were actually looking at salt water, and whatever water they decided on they typically had the water trucked in. Mr. Peifer stated that they might want to talk to the sewer authority to see if they could discharge that type of water into the sanitary sewer system. Mrs. DeLuliis replied that they would do that. Mr. Shane asked if the club would be open 24 hours? Mrs. DeLuliis replied yes, that was another reason they would not be packed because they were open longer than other clubs. Mr. Littlehales asked if they would have anything unique at the Exeter location? Mrs. DeLuliis replied that they did not do “cookie cutter” clubs; they would have a cardio theater and a pool, which was different than the other locations. They would also have a shake bar. Mrs. Franckowiak asked if she knew what the owner intended to do with the other 10,000-sf area not being developed? Mrs. DeLuliis replied that they intended to develop that later, with possibly tanning, massage, etc. Mrs. Franckowiak replied that was good to know, as we did not want a subdivision of the building, which could cause a problem with parking later on. Mr. Wilson asked if the pile of dirt behind the building was cleared out? Mrs. DeLuliis replied that she would check into that. Mr. Unger asked if we wanted full-blown land development plans? Mrs. Franckowiak stated that she did not see the need for that, but we would need to tell them all of the items of concern that they would need to address, such as; parking, lighting, etc. Mrs. DeLuliis asked if lighting wouldn’t be a landlord issue? Mrs. Franckowiak replied that we just looked at the fact we could get the lighting to be brought up to the standards of our new Lighting Ordinance. We also needed a full count of the parking spaces provided on plans showing the parking spaces. Then she could do a count for what was required for all of the uses at that location and be sure that we have sufficient parking. They might also need to re-strip the spaces to match today’s ordinance requirements. Mrs. Franckowiak then asked about traffic, would we need a study for that? Mr. Peifer replied that if they have the required amount of parking spaces, then we would not need that. Mrs. Franckowiak then asked if the Planning Commission felt the need for a full land development? After a lengthy discussion the Planning Commission agreed that they would just need to address the parking and lighting issues. Mr. Wilson stated that he was also concerned that the trucks that parked in the lot overnight right now could cause a parking problem for them. Mrs. DeLuliis replied that they would look into taking care of that.

Planning Commission minutes

Informal discussion – Gold’s Gym continued

Public comment

Jordan Bausher, 391 Ritters Road, stated that brought up to him a very interesting opportunity. The School Board had discussed the need of a pool as far as 6 months ago. They previously talked about things they needed someone else to supply; a bowling alley, a golf course (which they now have) and a pool. All of those items were not practical for a school district to own. The Township needed to address what recreation needs we had and who was responsible to provide for that. What the School District should supply and what the Township should supply with their efforts in taking property from developers for their use. We needed a Township plan that did a better job on supplying recreational needs for the residents. This was an excellent opportunity to fill one gap. Mrs. DeLuliis replied amen, and with a couple of changes and additional funds they could make that an Olympic size pool.

Louise Swartley, 31 Troxel Road, asked what defined an Olympic size pool? Mrs. DeLuliis replied that would have ten lanes, where the Jr. Olympic size had seven.

6. ACT 167 STORMWATER ORDINANCE

Ms. Cusimano stated that the County provided an editable copy of the new Act 167 Stormwater Ordinance. Mr. Wilson asked what we needed to do with that? Ms. Cusimano replied that we needed to review it and then adopt it by the March deadline. Mr. Littlehales asked what would happen if we did not adopt it by that date? Mrs. Franckowiak replied that we could lose our Penn Vest grants if we did not adopt it by the date set by DEP. Mr. Bittig stated that we needed something in the ordinance that controls the total amount of discharge from a site. Mr. Peifer stated that their office was reviewing the Ordinance. He further stated that the Ordinance stated that if someone showed it was a bad idea to infiltrate, they only needed to treat that volume with another BMP, no other direction than that. He was thinking that was fine, but we should tell them that they needed to put in volume control BMPs. Mr. Bittig replied that we needed to do that.

Mrs. Franckowiak asked if we could do any changes? Mrs. Cusimano replied that there were certain areas where we could make changes. Mr. Peifer stated that we also needed to “shoe horn” our design criteria back into the Ordinance. Mr. Shantz stated that he did two Act 167 Stormwater Ordinances in Montgomery County and the language they included was to re-incorporate the existing stormwater ordinance requirements. It also stated that the more stringent Ordinance applied. Mr. Peifer stated that we had pulled that out of the SALDO because the whole Township was in the Schuylkill River Watershed. It made sense to put everything in one spot. Mr. Bittig asked if Mr. Shantz could look to see what needed to be changed? Mr. Shantz replied that Mr. Bittig was doing a fantastic job with Mr. Peifer and felt confident they would be able to make the needed changes. Mr. Wilson asked what the time frame was for adopting that? Mr. Peifer replied that we needed to adopt it by March 21st. Mr. Bittig replied that would not happen in this Township. Mr. Littlehales asked what the consequences would be if we didn’t adopt before then? Mrs. Franckowiak replied that we could lose our Penn Vest grants. Mr. Bittig replied our recycling grants. Mrs. Franckowiak responded that we need that grant so we wouldn’t want to mess with that. Mr. Bittig stated that he would work on the Stormwater Ordinance and have that reviewed by Mr. Peifer and then go from there.

Mr. Wilson stated that we needed to get our Zoning Ordinance finished. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that we needed to get the sign ordinance changes to incorporate that in the zoning. The Planning Commission asked for dates to be sent out by way of email and see what would work for a workshop.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Mr. Unger, seconded by Mr. Littlehales, to adjourn the February 5, 2008 meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission at 8:45pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Bittig
Planning Commission Secretary

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