

MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
JUNE 2, 2009

The Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, June 2, 2009 at the Township Hall, 4975 DeMoss Road, Berks County, Pennsylvania. Donald R. Wilson, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge to the Flag.

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

ABSENT: William Rush

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

1. MINUTES

MOTION BY Mr. Bittig, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2009 Planning Commission Meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

2. AGENDA

MOTION BY Mr. Unger, seconded by Mr. Littlehales, to approve the agenda of the June 2, 2009 Planning Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The following business was discussed:

3. RITE AID VARIANCE REQUEST

The Rite Aid variance request was discussed where the developer would reduce the amount of variances needed and the following motion was made:

MOTION BY Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Shane to recommend the Zoning Hearing Board approve the variance request as amended. The motion carried with Mr. Littlehales, Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Shane, Mr. Bittig voting in favor and Mr. Wilson, Mr. Unger voting opposed.

4. EXETER SCHOOL ANNEXATION – SKETCH PLAN FOR RECORD – Grant Smith

GVC reviewed the Exeter Township Elementary School Minor Subdivision Sketch Plan for Record (reference letter dated May 27, 2009).

- Mr. Smith will correct plan note #18 and get the required signatures.

MOTION BY Mr. Bittig, seconded by Mr. Littlehales to recommend the Board of Supervisors grant approval for the Exeter Township Elementary School Minor Subdivision Sketch Plan for Record subject to addressing all outstanding comments in the May 27, 2009 GVC review letter. The motion carried with Mr. Wilson, Mr. Shane, Mr. Littlehales, Mr. Bittig, Mr. Schwartz voting in favor and Mr. Unger voting opposed.

5. EXETER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – PRELIMINARY PLAN – Grant Smith – Gary Bannon

GVC reviewed the Exeter Elementary School Preliminary Plan (reference letter dated May 29, 2009).

- Mr. Smith will add the Zoning Hearing Board decision on the plan.
- Mr. Smith will tie the conservation easements to property corners or side lot lines.
- Mr. Smith will amend the grading plan for the area located to the rear of the soccer fields to meet the five-foot range. The other areas will be using the slope as a function of the building/amphitheater. They would work on trying to make that area meet the requirements.
- The School District is requesting a waiver of a Water Resource Study. After infiltration tests are completed the School District will proceed with the waiver request along with the needed documentation.
- The School District is requesting a waiver of curbs and sidewalks and will work with the architects with a trail/walkway system on the site as asked for by the EAC in lieu of adding the curbs and sidewalks. The next submission will show the trail/walkway system on the site.
- Mr. Smith will expand on the information in the Phase I Site Assessment as required.

Public Comment

Robert Nye, University Rifle Club, asked if, for safety reasons, they intended to put a fence around the pond. Mr. Smith replied that they are working on fence alternatives for the pond area.

Michele Barrett, 120 West 47th St., stated that the Conservancy was looking to see if there would be any opportunities to create natural habitat and wildlife study environment learning areas in the County. Mr. Bannon replied that along with looking at adding trails/walkways on the site they were also looking at a potential environmental center for the pond area.

Linda Focht, 50 Glen Oley Drive, asked if they would put up a fence around the pond, would there be a provision to allow wildlife to access the pond. Mr. Nye replied that there was a stream that ran on the property that the wildlife would have access to.

- The Engineers will submit a compliant lighting plan.
- Mr. Smith will revise the landscaping plan to address the screening of the property and asked for consideration to be able to use plant materials that were not on the approved tree list. The Planning Commission agreed that since the EAC was revising the tree list they would be amenable to that.
- Mrs. Franckowiak expressed concern about providing sufficient parking for events at the school.

MOTION BY Mr. Unger, seconded by Mr. Schwartz to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the Exeter Township Elementary School Preliminary Plan subject to addressing the outstanding comments in the May 29, 2009 GVC review letter and obtaining the PennDOT HOP during Final Plan stage. They also recommend approval of waivers from SALDO Section 6.203; curbs and Section 6.204; sidewalks, contingent on the developer providing a trail/walkway system on the site that is acceptable to the Township at Final Plan Stage. The motion carried with Mr. Littlehales, Mr. Shane, Mr. Bittig, Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Unger, voting in favor and Mr. Wilson voting opposed.

6. REVISED TREE LIST

Mr. Schwartz worked on a revised tree list for the Planning Commission to review. He listed trees native to Pennsylvania and their characteristics and whether they were or were not recommended for use.

Revised Tree List continued

Public Comment

Janet Graden, 4489 Delmar Drive, asked if Mr. Schwartz consulted a horticulturist at Penn State Berks as they could help. Mr. Schwartz replied that he asked Penn State for help but had not heard back from them. Ms. Graden stated that she would take the list to her contact at Penn State and ask for help. Mr. Schwartz stated that he would contact the Penn State Farm extension for help and bring that back to the Planning Commission for review. Mr. Peifer stated that it should be in the Ordinance that the trees be purchased from a Pennsylvania Nursery as trees brought in from other states tend not to survive due to the difference in climate.

7. INFORMAL DISCUSSION – WALKWAYS/TRAILS – Jordan Bausher

Mr. Bausher presented detailed information provided by Mr. George Fasig concerning walkways and trails and provided copies to all of the Planning Commission members. Mr. Bausher further stated that Mr. Fasig has offered to have his fall semester graduate class do a plan of a pathway along Schoffers Road as a class project free of charge and the Township would need to request this by mid-August. He would like to see walkways that would connect several communities to Pennsylvania Ave and on to the Reading Country Club and the Exeter Commons Center. At next month's meeting Mr. Bausher will present information for financing for the project. Mr. Wilson felt that they would need to present Mr. Fasig's plan to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

Public Comments

Robert Nye, University Rifle Club, wanted to comment on the memo from Mr. Bausher. He felt that the memo did not present the following items: protection for the rights of the private property owners; destruction of trees; the adverse lay-out of Schoffers road; and no measure of the amount of foot traffic or bike traffic in the vicinity of Schoffers road was included. Mr. Nye then provided information that he compiled of people walking on sidewalks or biking in the Township on Sunday May 31, 2009.

Michele Barrett, 120 West 47th St., stated that she was the president of Walk-Bike-Berks; they were advocates for walking and biking infrastructure to help people have choices for how they traveled from one place to another. She passed out maps that showed the following: Safe Routes to School funding; Smart Transportation PCTI Funding and Safe Routes to School Academy Mini Grants. Mrs. Barrett also provided American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement and Benefits of Safe Routes to School in Pennsylvania. She further stated that communities that worked together to request grant money were the most successful in obtaining them.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Mr. Bittig, seconded by Mr. Shane, to adjourn the June 2, 2009 meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission at 8:45pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Bittig
Planning Commission Secretary

lrc

Correspondence to:

BOS: Exeter Elementary School Minor Subdivision

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ZHB: Rite Aid variance request