

MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
DECEMBER 5, 2011

The Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, December 5, 2011 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
John W. Bittig, Vice Chairman
Richard Littlehales
Gary L. Shane
Christy Staudt

ABSENT: William R. A. Rush, Secretary
Greg T. Unger

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

1. MINUTES

MOTION BY Mr. Littlehales, seconded by Mr. Bittig, to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2011 Planning Commission Meeting with a change for the sidewalk discussion for Rt562 & Shelbourne Road to clarify that we recommend they consider sidewalk, but not in any specific location. The motion carried unanimously.

2. AGENDA

MOTION BY Mr. Shane, seconded by Mr. Littlehales, to approve the agenda of the December 5, 2011 Planning Commission meeting with the addition of Eddie Riegel – informal discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. SERVICE ELECTRIC BUILDING ADDITION – PRE/FINAL PLAN

GVC reviewed the Service Electric Building Addition Preliminary/Final plan (reference letter dated December 2, 2011).

- The certificate of Accuracy & Ownership would be executed on the plan.
- The applicant has applied for E & S control plan approval and are waiting for BCCD response.
- Cardinal drive would be restored after the storm sewer construction and would be included in the cost estimates for the Improvements Agreement. Mr. Shaner will provide cost estimates to GVC for review
- The applicant provided a letter from MB Investments stating that Service Electric could use their storm sewer for runoff.
- Mr. Rogosky received the compact test results and would have them reviewed for fire protection compliance.
- The applicant will install a new fire hydrant in a location acceptable to the Township.

Mr. Shaner asked for a waiver of Lighting Ordinance so they could utilize the existing light fixtures.

Mr. Rogosky stated that they were asking to use the existing lighting. Previously there was a lighting problem on the property that the Township addressed, they were not fully compliant, but it was better. Mr. Shaner stated that Mr. Naugle was involved with the previous lighting modification to prevent a nuisance, they would be taking two existing lights and placing them on the building, so there would be no additional lights, just a change in location. Mr. Littlehales stated that someone would need to inspect that after the fact. Mr. Rogosky further stated that they have placed a note on the plan that if in the future the Township finds the lighting objectionable, they would make any changes required by the Township.

Public Comment

Joe Gumeniski, 130 Fairview Chapel Road, stated that he wanted to look at the Service Electric plan and to express his concern over their lighting. He had a previous complaint when Service Electric changed their lights. Since the Township came in and required Service Electric to address the complaint, the glare has been tolerable. One light since then has been redirected and now that the trees do not have leaves it is again a problem. He wanted to be sure that any changes in the lighting would not cause more of a problem for him. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that she felt most people didn't realize that we had a lighting ordinance that would require a review and compliance prior to installing new lights. She further stated that it came to our attention because of the glare onto motorists on SR422 from the lights on Service Electric's property. Mrs. Franckowiak then stated that she has been making everyone who comes in for a building permit application to conform to the new lighting ordinance and allowing Service Electric to waive that requirement would not be fair, everyone should be made to do this, if not then change the ordinance so it would not be a requirement to update lighting. Mr. Wilson stated he agreed and that he did not support the waiver. Ms. Staudt asked if the Township could go back to have them make changes. Mr. Rogosky replied yes, the note would cover that. Mr. Littlehales stated that the aiming of the lights was the key. Mr. Wilson stated that he felt that with the ordinance in place they should comply. Mr. Littlehales stated then they would have to start over at "square one". Mrs. Franckowiak stated that when the Ordinance first came into effect there was a clause that everyone needed to be in compliance in three years and that would have taken a lot of work to accomplish, so rather than that, whenever someone comes in with a Land Development plan or building permit that would trigger compliance with the Ordinance. Mr. Wilson responded that now would be the time to comply.

MOTION BY Mr. Littlehales, seconded by Mr. Bittig, to recommend the Board of Supervisors waive the requirement of replacing/modifying the existing site lighting in the area of the proposed building addition with the note being placed on the plan. The motion carried with Mr. Shane, Mr. Bittig, Ms. Staudt, Mr. Littlehales voting in favor and Mr. Wilson voting opposed.

Mr. Rogosky stated that they should come before the Board of Supervisors for all waiver/deferral requests prior to plan approval so that the dates for waiver approval could be placed on the plan. Mr. Shaner replied they would do that and then asked for Conditional Plan approval.

MOTION BY Mr. Shane, seconded by Mr. Bittig to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the Service Electric Preliminary/Final plan subject to all outstanding issues being resolved and waivers received. The motion carried with Mr. Shane, Mr. Bittig, Ms. Staudt, Mr. Littlehales voting in favor and Mr. Wilson voting opposed.

4. ELMCROFT/SENIOR CARE, INC. – SPECIAL EXCEPTION

Senior Care, Inc. requested a Special Exception from Section §390-18, UR District, C – Uses permitted by Special Exception (4) Nursing Home of the Exeter Township Zoning Ordinance No. 713. They want to modify the permitted use by special exception to include "nursing home" in addition to the current use "personal care home". Mrs. Franckowiak stated that the Zoning Hearing Board met and the Special Exception was granted with the condition that they remain a 64 bed facility. The Planning Commission needed to review and comment in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance.

MOTION BY Ms. Staudt, seconded by Mr. Shane, to recommend the Zoning Hearing Board approve the Special Exception even though it has already been granted. The motion carried unanimously.

5. SET JANUARY 2012 MEETING DATE

The Planning Commission agreed to meet on January 3rd at 7:30pm following the Board of Supervisors reorganization meeting.

6. INFORMAL DISCUSSION – EDDIE RIEGEL

Mr. Riegel stated that he owned several properties in Exeter, one being the Rhino building Services building on Perkiomen Ave. He also owned 35 W 47th St. He wanted to see if the properties located along Oak Parkway from W 47th street to Gibraltar Road could be rezoned commercial to allow him to use the W 47th Street property as an office building for his Seafood Shanty restaurant which is opening in Spring Township. Also he would like to put in a test kitchen to work on new dishes for the restaurant. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that if the Planning Commission would be in support of this they could put in a zone much like the restricted office commercial located on Perkiomen Ave in Reiffon. Mr. Wilson disagreed stating that if we would do this then the properties on Grant Street in Reiffon would want to become commercial because they sit next to commercial properties too. Mrs. Franckowiak disagreed as Oak Parkway already has existing commercial properties and Grant Street did not. Ms. Staudt stated that if we would rezone that area we should look at access management and shared parking. She further stated that there is funding to look at land planning and this was a great planning opportunity. Mr. Riegel agreed with the idea of shared parking and the rear alley is a great access for the properties and he would like to see that opened up for all the business's in that area. Mr. Littlehales agreed that it should run all along Oak Parkway. Mr. Wilson stated that we have empty commercial properties all over. Mr. Littlehales replied that we needed to increase our business tax base. Mrs. Franckowiak agreed, when you look at our zoning map with the huge area that is Exeter, we only have a small sliver running through the center that is commercially zoned.

Public Comment

Lisa VanderLaan, 5560 Boyertown Pike, stated that she spent a year full time looking for a piece of property that would be unique for what she needed. She felt that it made sense to do land planning to make SR422 corridor look attractive to bring commercial business's into the Township. Ms. Staudt stated that a gentleman from Delta Development would love to come in to speak of grant opportunities for land planning to the Planning Commission or the Economic Development Committee or possibly a joint meeting would be good.

Jordan Bausher, 391 Ritter Lane, asked what the tax implications would be if the zoning would change for the properties on Oak Parkway. Mr. Bittig replied that they would remain the same until the use of the property would change.

Mr. Riegel stated that he felt that the properties should be developed as commercial to help grow the commercial core. He further stated that whatever the Township decided he would respect that and thanked the Township for their time.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Ms. Staudt stated that she was to attend the Neversink Conservancy meetings for the trail project to access Neversink Mountain and with everything that has been going on she felt that what she would bring out of it would get lost so she asked if another Planning Commission member was interested to be the Planning Commission liaison. The next meeting was on December 14th. Mr. Shane replied that he would be interested and asked Ms. Staudt to send him the information.

Ms. Staudt stated that she would leave the Lorane sidewalk project for another time. Mr. Littlehales inquired. Ms. Staudt stated that it was a safety improvement to allow children to walk to school. It was a non safe crossing at this time. After a brief introduction, a lengthy discussion ensued involving the PC, Zoning Officer and members of the public. It appears as though there is much miscommunication and misunderstanding about this project. The recommendation is that the Planning Commission, BOS, School District, and the public get together for a meeting where a presentation can be given and questions can be answered in a public forum.

Mr. Wilson asked if there was anything else to be brought before the Board. Mr. Littlehales stated that we talk about commercial development in the Township and we have two great opportunities for commercial development that were being totally ignored. He has tried to go online and can't find anything from the Economic Council to promote either of our two overlay districts. Mr. Wilson stated that the Board of Supervisors had discussed re-evaluating the EAC, Historical Commission, and the EDAC to see if any changes needed to be made with them. Mr. Littlehales asked if we needed to rewrite the overlay districts. Mr. Wilson replied no.

Mrs. Franckowiak replied that with the Economic Development Committee, she didn't feel they were aware of the overlay districts in the Township. Ms. Staudt stated that she offered to be a liaison with the Economic Committee but was told that was not our job, so she wanted to clarify that. Mrs. Franckowiak stated that we should have a joint meeting with the Economic Committee and the Planning Commission to help them understand our Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Districts. Mr. Littlehales replied that he would look forward to that after the first of the year.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Ms. Staudt, seconded by Mr. Shane, to adjourn the December 5, 2011 meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission at 8:30 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



John W. Bittig
Vice Chairman

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