

MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 20, 2015

The Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, April 20, 2015 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
Gary L. Shane, Secretary
Mehmet Arslan
Glen Powell

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Joseph Rogosky, GVC Consulting Engineer
Linda Cusimano, Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Cheryl Franckowiak, Zoning Officer

1. MINUTES

Mr. Powell mentioned that under the March 16, 2015 minute approval, he was included in the motion to approve the Minutes; Mr. Powell stated he was absent from that meeting. Ms. Cusimano stated that she will make the correction.

MOTION BY Mr. Bitting, seconded by Mr. Shane to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2015 Planning Commission meeting as they were corrected. The motion carried with Mr. Wilson, Mr. Bitting, Mr. Shane and Mr. Arslan voting in favor and Mr. Powell abstaining.

2. AGENDA

MOTION BY Mr. Powell, seconded by Mr. Arslan, to approve the agenda of the April 20, 2015 Planning Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

3. FILIPPINI ANNEXATION SUBDIVISION II PRELIMINARY PLAN – John Hoffert, PLS

GVC reviewed the Filippini Annexation Subdivision II Preliminary Plan (review letter dated April 17, 2015)

The plan proposes four (4) residential annexation parcels, one (1) new residential lot, and one (1) open space residue parcel. All the lots are located within the Exeter Golf Club Estates subdivision which is situated to the East of Shelbourne Road and north of Pennsylvania Avenue.

- #2 under SALDO: The Township has verified that there are three (3) properties that were previously approved as part of the Annexation Plan of 2013 and have been conveyed as depicted on the plan. This plan may need to be revised and re-recorded. Mr. Hoffert suggested the Planning Commission consider rescinding the 2013 plan and supersede it by the proposed plan. Mr. Hoffert further stated that the solicitors will need to agree on the language of the proposed plan for it to supersede the 2013 plan.

- #3 Section 330-45: Fee-in-Lieu-of; Mr. Hoffert stated that at the March 16, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting it was agreed to look into accepting a Fee-in-Lieu-of; this was accepted at the Board of Supervisors at their March 23, 2015 Meeting, however; the Board did not know the exact amount of the Fee-in-Lieu-of. Mr. Hoffert further stated he may need to request a time extension at the May Planning Commission Meeting.

Mr. Wilson stated that it's the consensus of the Planning Commission to supersede the approved 2013 plan with the proposed plan.

At this time Lisa VanderLaan suggested moving the Agenda items around so that members of the audience didn't need to sit through her presentation regarding the Steering Committee Update, if they didn't want to.

4. INFORMAL DISCUSSION – SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION FACILITY

Justin Istenes, AEM Architects discussed the site plan to expand the school district bus transportation facility. They are proposing a 4 bay garage with an office or a room for the Transportation Director and his Assistant, a training room and bathrooms with parking for the staff with the potential for overflow parking if needed. The building would be a pre-engineered metal building with block to tie into the existing school. **Aristides Otero, Stackhouse Bensinger**, stated the area being discussed is along the western side of Owatin Creek Elementary School where the auxiliary parking lot is; which is currently being used by the district primarily as a play area. Mr. Otero further stated there are some existing storm facilities, including a bio retention facility and a retention basin or wet pond; could possibly utilize the pond for the project. There are a couple of items currently on the site that would be affected, primarily the stone walking trail. Mr. Wilson questioned the location of the entrance for buses; Mr. Istenes stated the buses would enter the transportation facility from SR 562. Mr. Wilson stated that he remembered with the original discussion they would use the same entrance as the school. Mr. Bittig questioned if there has been any discussion with Penn DOT; a Highway Occupancy Permit from Penn DOT would be required for this work. He also questioned if they have researched the environmental aspects of a fuel station with DEP. Mr. Bittig stated that since the property is located at the headwaters of a protected commonwealth waterway, Antietam Creek tributary #1. For the fuel station you would need containment vessels and equipment to clean up any fuel spills would be required. Mr. Bittig then asked if they would be washing the buses at this location; Mr. Istenes replied that yes, they will be washing buses and will be doing in a way to conserve water. He also questioned if there would be enough parking for both the employees and the buses; Mr. Istenes stated that they will have adequate parking, they have allotted for 80 parking spaces.

Public Comment

Jennifer Harvey, 105 Pennsylvania Avenue, stated she has a few concerns; she has asked the school board to prove that they've looked at all their options; the school boards response was that they have. She is also concerned that the school district throws money away.

Erika Gustus, 5130 Oley Turnpike Road, stated she has only been in the School District for 2 years, but she is very impressed with the Owatin School building and the bus drivers. She stated that the proposed facility is very nice, but she has concerns regarding why the money couldn't be spent to improve the current facility. She also questioned what happens to the other projects that have been slated, and where is the money going to come from for those projects. Mrs. Gustus felt the environmental studies should have been done before this was presented, so the residents would know what the impact to the environment will be. Mrs. Gustus felt that the school district should focus on improving things that are already issues; those are things that should come first.

Janet Resh, 180 Boone Road, stated that she has been a bus driver for 27 years and she felt pulling out onto Shelbourne Road is very dangerous; there have been many accidents there. Ms. Resh felt it would be a good thing to have a new bus garage; there are no bathrooms and not enough parking at their current facility.

Tammy Gray, 4921 Oley Turnpike Road, stated that she is a bus driver and this project has been pushed off for decades. Mrs. Gray stated that the current facility is in disarray. She felt very strongly that a new bus garage is needed.

Mr. Arslan questioned what this is based on; Mr. Bittig stated it is based on what the School District is proposing; he stated that at this point the Planning Commission is here to offer guidance through the process, but they don't get involved until the School District goes through the Zoning Hearing Board and come to us with the Preliminary Plan.

Mr. Wilson stated that the Special Exception ruling was not for a transportation facility; this property was originally envisioned for having more than one school on it. He stated that the Planning Commission hasn't delayed the building of the transportation facility; prior to now, the school district hadn't proposed they wanted this facility. Mr. Wilson had concerns with the entrances; it would be his recommendation to route the buses through one entrance. He is also concerned about the environmental impact on the headwaters of the creek along with the two (2) ponds that are there; the trail was put in to give access around the wetlands. Mr. Wilson stated that he is not in favor of spending \$3,000,000.00, but as a member of the Planning Commission he cannot consider the cost to the tax payers in this community; all he can consider is how this fits the SALDO & Zoning Ordinances. He mentioned that the residents can present their cases to the Zoning Hearing Board, Board of Supervisors and School Board.

Erika Gustus, 5130 Oley Turnpike Road, questioned why the school district hadn't submitted an alternate proposal; what would the Planning Commission need to consider for rehabbing the current facility to make it adequate. Mr. Shane stated that proposal would not come from this commission, it would need to come from the school district; this commission would review it. Mr. Bittig stated that depending on what the school board proposed; if it be for rehabbing the current facility, it may not come before the Planning Commission. He stated it may be something that only requires a building permit. Mr. Wilson stated that we only review what is presented to us.

Robert Wambold, 1122 Stonehenge Drive, stated this is his first time attending a Planning Commission meeting; he asked if the procedure could be explained to him. Mr. Wilson stated the procedure; the first step is an informal discussion with sketch plans, the applicant would come back with a preliminary plan which Planning Commission would review with their engineers and if the preliminary plan is approved, the applicant would then come back in with their final plans. Mr. Wambold questioned the cost of adding turning lanes on SR 562 for the proposed transportation facility; Mr. Wilson stated that cost would be determined by Penn DOT. Mr. Wilson stated that Penn DOT would need to perform a traffic study to see if SR 562 could handle the volume of traffic this project would create.

Robert Quinter, President of the School Board, 3501 Woodlawn Avenue, discussed the reason for building a new facility. The current facility which dates back to the 1950's is no longer adequate; they have analyzed the current site; it would be required to build an underground storm system and they would not be able to park the buses there. In addition, they have looked at several other areas, which would cost the

school district at least an additional \$100,000.00 in operating cost each year. Mr. Quinter stated building a new transportation center at this location is the most cost effective plan. He stated that none of the pending projects would be deferred due to building a new facility; the maintenance of the equipment and buildings will be done.

Mr. Wilson thanked everyone for attending and invited them to stay for the rest of the meeting; he directed everyone to the School Board for answers regarding the proposed transportation facility. Mr. Quinter stated that the next School Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 28, 2015 at 7:00 PM.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Lisa VanderLaan stated that Bill Fox, Chairman of the Steering Committee, gave a committee update to the Board of Supervisors at their last meeting. Ms. VanderLaan presented the Planning Commission with maps and discussed minor changes that committee has made.

- Riverfront District; the mapping committee reviewed and added two additions to this zone; adding land to the zone that is currently zoned residential.
- Light Industrial District; they've added an overlay district. That will allow flexibility; could be developed as Light Industrial or Riverfront. Ms. VanderLaan stated that the committee is looking at a more unified Commercial District.
- Town Center; Ms. VanderLaan stated there was concern amongst the committee regarding the Town Center Concept; 2.1 miles was proposed, that is too large. She stated the committee felt an overlay district was an attempt to unify that portion of the zoning; they're addressing the underlying zoning and ordinarily define a Town Center Concept the way it should be. Ms. VanderLaan stated the Restricted Office Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, Highway Commercial and Shopping Center Commercial District's will all be zoned into one Commercial District.
- Daniel Boone Recreational District; Ms. VanderLaan stated that she discussed the Planning Committees comments regarding creating the Daniel Boone Recreational District with the Steering Committee. Ms. VanderLaan stated that Mrs. Rossman from the County felt that was a very good idea; and by changing this to recreational it will further protect this area from being developed residentially.
- BCO (Business Commercial Office) Flex; Ms. VanderLaan mentioned this would be commercial zoning, but not retail. Mr. Shane stated that he has concerns with not allowing retail in this district. Ms. VanderLaan stated that there is nowhere else in the Township for this type of district. Mr. Arslan questioned what the Steering Committee's plan is to draw in new businesses. Ms. VanderLaan stated that Exeter Twp has a reputation of not being business friendly and the Township has very difficult zoning. Ms. VanderLaan stated that each of these zones are a concept; she asked the Planning Commission members to give guidance to the Steering Committee of what they see that is working or not working in different areas of the Township. Mr. Shane questioned why the committee is restricting retail in the BCO / Flex District. Ms. VanderLaan stated the committee is not trying to restrict retail; they are trying to attract other type of businesses to Exeter Township. Mike Jupina, Vice President of the Exeter Township School Board, questioned if the Berks Economic Partnership is assisting the Steering Committee with this plan. Ms. VanderLaan stated that Pamela Shupp from the Berks Economic Partnership is serving on the committee.
- School District; Ms. VanderLaan mentioned that there has been discussion regarding the zoning for the School District and making it more in line with the Township zoning; currently the school district is required to get a Special Exception to build a school; by changing the zoning, it could possibly give relief to the tax payers by giving some relief to the school district regarding the current requirements.

- Ms. VanderLaan stated that the committee would like to request that the Planning Commission appoint another member to the committee; Planning Commission appointed Mr. Arslan to the Steering Committee.

Mr. Arslan questioned where the motivation is coming from to change the current zoning, has someone or a business requested this be changed; Mr. Wilson explained that no one or business has requested the Township to change their zoning; he stated the Township is hoping that by changing the zoning it will attract more businesses and offset the tax deficit.

- Ms. VanderLaan presented the Commission with a map of the thoroughfares through the Neighborhood Commercial and Restricted Office Commercial; she pointed out the properties that cannot be built on. Ms. VanderLaan also discussed the AP District; she advised the Planning Commission that 92% of the zone is not compliant with the current zoning.
- Ms. VanderLaan stated the committee left rural undefined; the only zone of all the residential zones other than Agriculture, Rural Conservation that is not heavily developed.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Mr. Shane seconded by Mr. Arslan, to adjourn the April 20, 2015 meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission at 9:24 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gary L. Shane,
Secretary
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