

**MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP
March 20, 2017**

The Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, March 20th, 2017 at the Township Hall, 4975 DeMoss Road, Berks County, Pennsylvania. Glen Powell, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge to the Flag.

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Glen Powell, Chairperson
Lisa VanderLaan, Vice Chairperson
Gary Shane, Secretary
Gary Lloyd
Hunter Ahrens
Sebastian Sottosanti

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Joseph Rogosky, GVC Consulting Engineer
Ramsey Reiner, Recording Secretary
John A. Granger, Township Manager

ABSENT:

MINUTES

MOTION by Mrs. VanderLaan, seconded by Mr. Shane, to approve the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of February 20th, 2017. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA

MOTION by Ms. VanderLaan, seconded by Mr. Lloyd, to approve the agenda of the March 20th, 2017 Planning Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

MOTION by Ms. VanderLaan, seconded by Mr. Lloyd, to approve applications for review. The motion carried unanimously.

TIME EXTENSION FOR READING COUNTRY CLUB SUBDIVISION

MOTION of Mrs. VanderLaan, seconded by Mr. Sottosanti, the Commission recommended to the Board of Supervisors that a one-year time extension for the Reading Country Club be granted.

GENERAL DISCUSSION TO INCLUDE, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGE OVERLAY ORDINANCE

Peter Simone, suggested that the Commission consider uses that are more appropriate for a neighborhood-type development. He also suggested the Commission consider a Neighborhood Committee and that the application be a conditional use. This would streamline the process for the applicant who would come to the Planning Commission then go to the Board of Supervisors for condition use approval. This process would also involve considerable neighborhood discussions through the Neighborhood Committee.

Mr. Simone suggested one (1) use per lot or building as it is not the intent of this Ordinance to have a strip mall or multiple uses on one (1) lot. The Overlay District would be constructed such that the use would have to be within 250ft of a shopping center/highway office/office district. This would limit the type of development adjacent to existing commercial zoning.

Mrs. VanderLaan asked if it would be cleaner to have the zoning district within 250ft not just a specific zone such a commercial.

Mr. Simone stated, yes, it should be within a district, not just a use. He would want it near an existing commercial district.

Mrs. VanderLaan stated that the Commission previously discussed a flex business zone/light industrial zone. She asked would this not be something we would want to put near that area as well?

Mr. Simone replied that this district should be kept near zones that are currently at existence. If a new district is established, a discussion could be held at that point in time, whether or not to include the Neighborhood Village Overlay Zone.

Mrs. VanderLaan commented that the Commission has discussed and liked the idea of a Neighborhood Committee. This would permit the businesses to get an additional level of approval before the matter comes before the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Simone responded that it would encourage the applicant to meet with the neighbors before proceeding with the development.

Mrs. VanderLaan stated that a conditional use does in fact tie the hands of the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Simone stated that the Overlay District can legislate architectural style, can introduce different lighting and parking standards than typically found in the SALDO Ordinance.

Mr. Ahrens had a concern about peak parking. Would it exclude special events like Black Friday or heavy shopping days.

Mr. Simone stated that they do not necessarily spell out that in the Ordinance. It is important to pay attention to the language in the rest of the paragraph which will rely on an analysis by the traffic engineers. This is a more case by case situation.

Mr. Shane questioned the framework of the specific uses. He asked whether or not a use such as an ad agency which is not listed, could that be included in the list.

Mr. Simone stated that if the Commission had other ideas they could be added to the list. He suggested that the phrase "similar uses" not be used as it can open up uses which are not compatible with a residential neighborhood.

Mrs. VanderLaan asked about preexisting nonconforming uses and buildings. Mr. Simone stated that if you are repurposing an existing building, you may be able to do that without going through the land development process. If you are building a new building, you would need to go through the process.

Mr. Ahrens asked the difference between a luncheonette/pizzeria with seating for 25 people and other food establishments. He asked whether or not they could create an additional section for food service establishments. Mr. Simone replied that this was not a bad suggestion and that they would investigate that.

Bonnie Hafer, 170 Wegman Road, asked whether or not this would affect their property. Mrs. VanderLaan replied, no, that the topic under discussion is a buffer zone between a residential area and a commercial zone.

Mr. Powell asked if there was a consensus among the Commission as to whether or not to move forward with a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors based on the discussion or should it be reviewed one (1) more time.

Mr. Shane asked when does the Commission review the boundaries of the overlay.

Mr. Simone stated that each one would be different. An applicant could come in and want to do half a block and you could do an entire block. Mr. Shane stated therefore the boundaries are not defined until someone comes in and applies.

Mrs. VanderLaan thought that they were talking specifically about Oak Parkway.

Vince DiStefano, 35 W. 47th Street, stated that he and his brother planned to have a pizzeria located on the corner. They typically have a dry cleaner or other similar use next door. He suggested that the uses be multiple uses on one (1) lot.

There was a brief discussion with respect to the intent of the Ordinance and whether or not one (1) or multiple uses could be established on a single lot.

It was a consensus of the Commission to have this matter discussed at the next Board Meeting.

FUTURE PLANNING FOR THE TOWNSHIP

Mr. Granger stated that it is incumbent upon the Commission to think about what they would like in the Township over the next 20 years and to begin start planning for it. There is a great market potential in Exeter and it is time to begin thinking about what you would like Exeter to be in the next 20 years. Development happens incrementally over time, it does not happen overnight.

Mrs. VanderLaan stated that Mr. Granger is asking the Planning Commission to give the Township a vision for the future. Mr. Lloyd asked if this is what is being developed with the Master Plan.

Mr. Granger stated that the Master Plan does provide the residents, the Township and developers with a vision for the future of Exeter. Exeter is part way through the initial phase of this process. The Township has acquired the data and conducted a market analysis. The next phase is to make investments into developing the needs and developing the ability and fortitude to say “not today” rather than accepting a proposed development which does not meet the needs as articulated in the Master Plan. Presently, the Township is talking on a macro-level. Once the macro-level is accepted by the Board and the public, attention is focused on a micro-level. This is where the Planning Commission and the Township need to have the adaptability and wherewithal to make strategic decisions with respect to individual developments.

NEW BUSINESS

There was a brief discussion with respect to the status of the Historic Resources Ordinance and whether or not a map was to be prepared to accompany the Ordinance. There was a consensus that the existing map was sufficient.

Karen Walton, 5501 E. Lorane Road, stated that she has reviewed the Master Plan and is concerned that the Master Plan has devaluated her property. Her property is behind the Home Depot. The concept map indicates a significant retail store on her lot.

There was a brief discussion with respect to the intent of the concept Master Plan and how the Master Plan will evolve over time.

Mrs. VanderLaan stated that this area is currently zoned light industrial. The Light Industrial District does not permit residential housing.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mrs. VanderLaan, seconded by Mr. Lloyd, to adjourn the March 20th, 2017 meeting of the Exeter Township Planning Commission at 9:49pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

 - WB
Gary Shane
Secretary