

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 7, 2021**

The Springfield Township Planning Commission met in a regularly scheduled meeting at 7:05 P.M., in the Boardroom of the Springfield Township Administration Building, located at 1510 Paper Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA 19038. Present at the meeting were Ms. Murray, Ms. Blankin, Mr. Sands, Mr. Devine and Mr. Quill. Also in attendance were Commissioner Baird Standish, Aaron Holly, Community Planner from Montgomery County Planning Commission and Mark Penecale, Director of Planning & Zoning.

Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes of the November 16, 2021 meeting were approved as submitted.

Old Business:

There was no old business to discuss.

Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Standish informed the Planning Commission that the Board of Commissioners had a rather lengthy meeting on Monday, December 6, 2021. The bulk of meeting was spent discussing 380 & 402 Haws Lane and the proposed development of the site. The Commissioner stated that as many as 60 residents attended the meeting, with the majority of those residents imploring the Commissioners to purchase the property and block the development of the site. The Commissioner discussed his desire to avoid a legal battle over the site and informed the Planning Commission that no decision has been made. In addition, he stated that he has been in contact with the property owner and requested time to allow the Township to explore options for the possible purchase of the properties. That request was denied. Commissioner Standish stated that he expects the developer to move forward with the development of the site as a behavioral health facility.

New Business:

Ms. Murray was the acting Chairperson for this meeting and announced that there were two proposals on tonight's agenda. Prior to calling on the first applicant, she polled the 25 plus residents in attendance on their interest in the two proposals. By a show hands, all those in attendance were present for the Sketch Plan proposal for Willow Grove Avenue.

PC1: This was the application of Federal Realty Investment Trust for the property located at 1890 Bethlehem Pike, Flourtown, PA 19031, better known as Flourtown Shopping Center. Mr. Alex Tweedie, the project engineer, presented a set of plans for a pad site addition of 2,450 square

feet for use as a bank. He explained the prior approvals this proposal has received from both Springfield and Whitemarsh Townships. He explained the 2,000 square foot reduction in the size of the proposed building was due to the location of the flood plain limits within Whitemarsh Township. Mr. Tweedie explained the prior Springfield Township Zoning Hearing Board approval and the impact that has on the revised plan. He stated that due to the reduction in the size of the proposed building and the removal of 5 on-site parking stalls, traffic circulation around the proposed expansion was able to be improved and additional landscaped green space was able to be added. In addition, he stated that sidewalks have been added from Bethlehem Pike to the development area to allow for pedestrian travel through the site.

Mr. Quill asked how the removal of the five on-site parking stalls would affect the site.

Mr. Tweedie responded that with the reduction in the size of the building and the redesign of the plan, the overall parking on the site is a greater ratio than what was approved by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Ms. Blankin asked about the design of the drive-thru lane and the distance of the drive-thru lane to sidewalk that serves Mr. P's Pizza.

Mr. Tweedie stated that the distance between the drive-thru lane and the outer edge of the existing sidewalk is 12 feet. He explained that this area would be green space. In addition, he explained that the drive-thru lane serves as a drive-up ATM Machine only and that there is no drive-thru service window.

Mr. Devine asked if it was possible to add a second speed hump in the area of the proposed development to help slow traffic down and make it safer for pedestrians that now have to park and cross the drive lanes in front of the strip center.

Mr. Tweedie explained that one drive table already exists and is not proposed to be removed. In addition, a stop sign is proposed and two new crosswalks will be installed.

Mr. Quill echoed the need for additional traffic controls in this area.

Mr. Tweedie informed the Planning Commission that his firm has submitted proposed traffic safety improvement to Township staff and that those improvements would be installed at some point in the future. He stated that those improvements were not directly related to this proposed expansion.

Mr. Penecale asked if there was a time line established for the installation of those proposed improvements and stated that they are directly related to this development. Mr. Penecale pointed out that the applicant applied for zoning relief for the entire site and submitted a Land Development Plan that shows the entire property, so improvements to the entire site are open for consideration. He advised Mr. Tweedie to have a time line available, prior to the presentation of this plan to the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Blankin asked if the landscaping proposed to be installed would all be native species.

Mr. Tweedie stated that a revised landscape plan was submitted with plans for the reduced building footprint and to date he has received no comment back from the Township Engineer.

Mr. Holly stated that he is happy to see that additional crosswalk installed in front of the Mr. P's site, but would like to see additional signage and/or pavement marking to reduce the speed of vehicles in this area.

Planning Commission recommended approval of the Land Development application and the requested waivers filed by Federal Realty Investment Trust for the property located at 1890 Bethlehem Pike, Flourtown, PA 19031. The recommendation to approve the plan and the requested waivers received a favorable vote of 5-0. The Planning Commission offered this recommendation with the following conditions:

1. The traffic improvements and traffic calming measures presented to the Township be installed as a condition of this Land Development approval.
2. The conditions listed within the Township Engineer's review letters dated April 21, 2021 and November 29, 2021 be addressed to the satisfaction of the Board of Commissioners of Springfield Township.

PC2: This is the Sketch Plan submission of Mr. Jay Overcash for the redevelopment of 1108 & 1110 Willow Grove Avenue, Wyndmoor, PA 19038. Mr. Overcash presented a rendering of a 13 unit townhouse development fronting of Willow Grove Avenue, with an ingress & egress drive out to Queen Street. Mr. Overcash stated that the plan presented tonight was a revised plan that reduced the number of proposed units to 13, from 14 units. This was done due to widening of Queen Street that reduced the lot width. He explained that the proposed townhouse units would be three storied in height, with three bedrooms and three bathrooms. The proposed exterior finishes would be brick and/or stone and each unit would have a two car garage with two additional on-site parking stalls in front of each garage. In addition 14 over flow parking stalls are proposed for use by guests of the property owners. He informed the Planning Commission that the proposed development would require a variance from the required front yard setback and that this is proposed to allow for a larger buffer for the properties that front on Pleasant Avenue. He stated that this development would reduce the impervious coverage on the site by 6,500 square feet and that even with the reduction in the amount of impervious coverage, this development would still require on-site storm water management.

Mr. Sands asked how the zoning related issues of use and setback be addressed.

Mr. Overcash stated that he would file a Zoning Hearing Board application for the required relief.

Mr. Sands asked how the common areas would be maintained.

Mr. Overcash stated that this development would have a Home Owners Association to address the common areas, snow removal and the like.

Mr. Quill asked what the projected selling price would be.

Mr. Overcash stated that the proposed units would be offered for sale and that \$165.00 a square foot finished a projected sale price would be in the area of \$650,000.00 per unit.

Mr. Quill stated that in his opinion, Willow Grove Avenue "is in need of work".

Ms. Kathryn Pischke, owner of 7806 Queen Street stated that she would like a traffic light installed at the intersection of Willow Grove Avenue & Queen Street.

Mr. Matthew Rudd, the project engineer stated that Willow Grove Avenue is a PennDot right-of-way and that in his opinion, the addition of 13 townhouse units would not generate enough traffic to warrant a traffic signal. In addition, he stated that in his opinion, the current use of the property generates more traffic each day, than 13 new residential units.

Ms. Pischke asked if Queen Street could be made one-way.

Mr. Overcash stated that a request of that nature would have to be made to the Township, as Queen Street is a Springfield Township right-of-way.

Mr. James Marlin, owner of 7804 Queen Street stated that the alterations made to Queen Street were done in 1962 to allow for a greater radius for fire equipment access. Mr. Marlin stated that turning onto Willow Grove Avenue during certain times of the day are difficult now and that any increase in traffic flows will compound the problem. Mr. Marlin believes that the access point for this development should remain on Willow Grove Avenue and not increase traffic flows on Queen Street.

Mr. Phillip Antonio stated that this area needs greater visibility at the crosswalks and the intersections to make it safer for pedestrian traffic. He believes PennDot should be available at a Township Meeting to discuss these issues.

Mr. Edward Welsh, owner of 8001 Southampton Avenue objects to this development and stated that Wyndmoor is a bedroom community. He is concerned that the construction of a 35 foot high building across the street from his home will eliminate sunshine on his home.

Mr. John Popper, 7909 Queen Street stated that he is very much in favor of this development and likes the idea of an owner occupied development. He has questions concerning on-site parking.

Mr. Overcash explained that each unit will have a two car garage, with two additional parking spaces in front of the garage and an additional 14 parking spaces are proposed for this development. There will be 40 surface parking stalls and an additional 26 garage spaces.

Marie McConnell, 8003 Southampton Avenue has concerns about the view from Willow Grove Avenue, with the proposed building being moved closer to the street. She questions what else Mr. Overcash has planned for Willow Grove Avenue. In addition, she questioned why townhouses are proposed.

Mr. Overcash stated that this is currently the only proposed development he is moving forward with at this time.

Ms. Blankin stated that every community should have a mixture of housing types to meet the needs of its residents. She stated that there has been a change in the housing market over the years and certain buyers want home ownership without the all outside maintenance a standalone single family dwelling brings with it.

Ms. Maria Maher, 7812 Queen Street stated that she supports the redevelopment of this site, but questions the need to direct all the traffic out to Queen Street. She believes that access out to Willow Grove Avenue would help the development. She stated that if the lone access is out to Queen Street, safety measures will have to be added to the intersection of Willow Grove Avenue & Queen Street.

A resident from 7808 Queen Street stated that he supports the project, but would like to see a vision plan for all of Willow Grove Avenue. He asked if 13 units is the bottom line to make this development possible and why one of the existing access points on Willow Grove Avenue is not being reused.

Dr. Robert Sansone, 7808 Queen Street has concerns on this proposed development having access to only Queen Street. He stated that Queen Street is already congested and adding the traffic from an additional 13 homes will only compound the problem. He asked if any other type of housing was considered for this this redevelopment. He would like to see three or four single family dwelling developed here.

Ms. Murray reminded everyone in attendance that Mr. Overcash's proposal was a Sketch Plan and that the Planning Commission would not be issuing a formal recommendation on this proposal.

Ms. Murray announced that the Planning Commission Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 21, 2021 would be cancelled. The next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 4, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted
Mark A. Penecale
Director of Planning & Zoning

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