

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
October 18, 2022**

The Springfield Township Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 7:03 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. Blankin, Ms. Murray Mr. Harbison, Mr. Sands and Ms. Helwig. Also in attendance were Anne Nygard, Community Planner from Montgomery County Planning Commission, Commissioner Baird Standish and Mark Penecale, Director of Planning & Zoning.

Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes from the September 20, 2022 meeting were approved.

Old Business:

There was no old business to discuss.

Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Standish noted Mr. Gutowski's 24 plus years of service on the Planning Commission and welcomed Mr. Harbison. Mr. Standish informed the Planning Commission that Commissioner Eddie Graham has resigned as the President of the Board of Commissioners and Commissioner Jim Lee has been elected to serve as the President for the balance of this term. The Commissioner discussed the proposed ban on plastic bags and the vote to defeat the proposed ordinance at this time. He discussed the settlement agreement between the applicant the opposing neighbor in the Zoning Hearing Board Application for 1108 & 1110 Willow Grove Avenue. The Commissioner informed every one of the request for PennDot to study a portion of Stenton Avenue for traffic calming measures. He informed the Commission that the Township has been awarded two additional grants for the installation of the Walnut Avenue Trail. He thanked Mr. Brandon Ford for securing those grants. The proposed Veteran's Banners on Bethlehem Pike as part of an Eagle Scout Project was discussed and Ms. Helwig informed everyone that she has been in contact with those affiliated with the project.

New Business:

PC1: Mr. Christopher Williams, PE and Mr. D.J. Gamble presented a plan on behalf of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania for the development of a roadway on the Camp Shelly Ridge Site, located at 330 Manor Road, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444. The property owners have requested a waiver from the requirements of Land Development Review and Approval.

Mr. Williams presented the plan and stated that the proposed 1,700 feet of proposed new roadway would be 16 feet in width and include a stream crossing at the end of the roadway. The project would also include the installation of an on-site stormwater detention basin. The stream crossing would allow the camp the ability to access a portion of their site that they have not had access to over the last 6 to 8 years. Mr. Gable stated that access to this portion was through a neighbor's property, but that no formal easement existed. That access was lost when the property sold several years ago. Mr. Williams explained that there is no proposed development for the site and that the roadway is needed only for maintenance and access to a proposed rope course to be installed. He informed the Commission that the plan would involve 1.7 acres of disturbed area and would reduce the tree canopy on the site by 2.4% on the 80 acre plus site.

Ms. Helwig opened by asking if there are any deed restrictions on the property that limited development of the site. Mr. Williams responded that he was not aware of any.

Ms. Helwig questioned the applicant on why the property would be listed a "Protected Open Space" with the Springfield Township Comprehensive Plan. No answer was provided.

Mr. Harbison stated that at one time conservation easements were explored for this site, but to his knowledge no formal conservation easement was recorded.

Ms. Nygard stated that she would research the deeds and could provide her findings at the next meeting.

Ms. Helwig asked if the applicants had explored other possible locations for the proposed roadway that would not have such an impact on both the existing slopes and trees on the site. Mr. Williams stated that this is their preferred locations and that any other location would have a greater impact on the site.

Mr. Sands asked if there is a Master Plan for the property and if so, why that has not been shared with the Planning Commission. Mr. Williams stated that he is not aware of a Master Plan and that was not in his firm's scope of work.

Mr. Harbison informed the Commission that the site has frontage on Spring Lane and asked if the project engineer had considered an access road from this location, since a stream crossing would not be required. Mr. Gamble stated that Spring Lane was not the applicant's preferred location and that access from Spring Lane would be difficult to secure.

Ms. Helwig asked if there is anything on the other side of the stream. Mr. Williams stated that there are two old buildings that are unused and that the Girl Scouts have not had access to in a number of years.

Ms. Helwig asked if the removal of 2.8 acres of existing trees have been included in the calculations for the on-site stormwater management system. Mr. Williams stated no it had not.

Ms. Blankin asked what is proposed to be used to protect the existing trees that are just outside the limit of disturbance. Mr. Williams stated “standard tree protection measures”.

Ms. Helwig asked if the review comments from Springfield Township Emergency Management Board have been reviewed and there have been any alterations to the plan to address those comments. Mr. William’s stated that this roadway and stream crossing was designed for park use and is not designed for commercial traffic. He explained that both the roadway and stream crossing would support an ambulance, but not fire equipment.

Ms. Blankin asked about the location of the proposed detention basin due to how close it is to the existing stream and the number of trees being removed to allow for its construction. Mr. Williams stated that this is the ideal location, due to existing and proposed elevations of the site.

Ms. Murray asked about a possible increase in the width of the proposed roadway from 16 feet to 20 feet in width. Mr. Williams responded by saying that if the length of the EMS vehicles were known, he could review the turning radiuses of the curves and adjust the width of the proposed roadway in those areas. However, the stream crossing would not allow larger EMT vehicle to access the other side of the stream.

Ms. Blankin stated that the Girl Scouts are a wonderful organization and credited them for the services they provide and the valued open space within our community.

Ms. Helwig stated that we are blessed to have such a great organization that provides leadership to the young ladies within our community.

Ms. Helwig stated that although this property and the Girl Scouts are a credit to Springfield Township, she felt that the plan as presented contained too many questions to warrant a waiver from the requirements of the Land Development review and approval process.

A motion was made to deny the request for a waiver of Land Development review and approval. The motion was based on the following:

1. The need to research any deed restrictions or covenants that may exist on this property.
2. The Planning Commission’s concern that the removal of 3% of the tree canopy on this site was not taken into consideration in the design of the on-site stormwater management system.
3. The fact that the site has street frontage on Spring Lane and that the applicant has not explored that option.
4. That review comments contained with the STEM’s Letter were not addressed.
5. The Planning Commission’s desire to research the term “Protected Open Space” as listed in the Township’s Comprehensive Plan and the Montgomery County Land Use Map.

The motion was seconded and a vote of 5 to 0 was recorded in favor of denying the applicant’s request for a waiver from the requirements of the Land Development process.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted
Mark A. Penecale
Director of Planning & Zoning