

MINUTES OF MEETING
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
June 16, 2009

The Springfield Township Planning Commission (PC) held its semi-monthly meeting on the date noted above.

Chairman Bob Gutowski called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM, present were Angela Murray, Amanda Helwig, Joe Gerber, Mary Holland, David Sands, Bob Gutowski, James Mascaro, Joseph Devine. Absent: George McDowell

Commissioner Doug Heller and Rob Dunlop the Staff Liaison represented the Township and Jean Holland represented the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) this evening.

Minutes

Minutes of the June 2nd, 2009 meeting were read. A motion to approve was made by Angela Murray, seconded by James Mascaro to approve with minor grammar correction. All in favor.

Board of Commissioner Update

D. Heller

Com. Heller updated the Commission that funds have been allocated with matching funds from the state to complete renovations to the first floor of the Black Horse Inn so that the Springfield Township Historical Society will be able to make it their new home. Secondly, the Cresheim Trail project looks like it is moving forward. There was good dialogue with the public regarding the topic and only one section of the trail between Penn Oak Road and Willow Grove Avenue is still under some contention. Lastly, discussion continues on the Lloyd Estate. Developers are currently meeting with the neighbor groups and will in the future appear before the PC. It is of note that most of the structures are on the Cheltenham side of the estate.

New Business

The June 16th Meeting of the PC was a workshop session with honored guest Michel LeFerv from the Bureau of Historic Preservation, PHMC. Mr. LeFerv was present to host an informal discussion and review of the draft Historical Preservation Ordinance. Also present from the public was Jenna Solomon, a resident of the Township and Historical Preservationist with interest in Springfield's proposed Ordinance.

Mr. LeFerv opened with a brief background in his 32 years of experience with historical preservation. He stressed with the PC that these types of ordinances can take a long time to pass and to be implemented in communities. Consideration must be taken to property owners throughout the process. He brought with him a CRGIS survey (Cultural Resources Geographic Information System) of the municipality and found 47 undetermined properties eligible for the National Register. Six are currently listed on the National Register.

The PC took the opportunity to walk through the ordinance with Mr. LeFerv and make minor alterations. Discussion focused mostly on the age debate of 50 versus 100 years as criteria for being on the Historic Inventory List. While the National Registry has chosen 50 years as an essential ear mark, it should be noted that the age is not necessarily a defining factor whether or not a resource qualifies. J. Solomon pointed out the Philadelphia has chosen 30 years as an ear mark for their consideration of properties.

Looking at the ordinance as a whole, Mr. LeFerv guided the PC to first establish a Preservation Plan based on guidance of the Springfield Township Comprehensive Plans goals. With the Plan in place the Ordinance can be created to establish the Historic Review Board or proposed Historical Commission. It is the Historical Commission that will make the recommendations as to what resources should be added to the Historical Inventory. The Inventory does not need to be populated with properties immediately rather established.

Strongest recommendations to summarize what the Township should be aiming for came in words of advice. As a group, we should be looking to identify what we really want to preserve, which seems to be the pre-suburban community. It is essential to have clear public input what the community feels are noteworthy of historic preservation. Education of the public throughout the process is a key concept, and the following should be not ignored as public concerns and items to be addressed:

- 1.) The creation of the Historic Preservation Ordinance will incur costs to create and administer.
- 2.) The creation of the Historic Preservation Ordinance will affect property owners values, compensation / incentives should be considered.
- 3.) Public Rights will at times outweigh Private Rights and sensitivity must be given.
- 4.) Failure to meet with civic and social organizations to explain the purpose of the Ordinance will hurt acceptance by leaders in the community.
- 5.) Failure to alert local Government bodies of the purpose and intent of the Ordinance will result in adverse potential rulings.

Mr. LeFerv will be supplying the PC with verbiage as to the creation and duties of the Historic Commission.

Old Business

The Tecce Tract will be coming back to the PC on July 21st. The developer is now requesting an amendment to their current zoning to be in compliance with Federal Age Restricted Guidelines of 80% Age Restricted and permitting 20% Age Targeted. Also scheduled is the proposed 2 Lot Subdivision of the Navo Tract.

Angela Murray proposed the meeting to adjourn, seconded by Mary Holland. All in favor.
Meeting adjourned 9:23 PM.

The next PC meeting shall be July 21st, 2009.

Amanda M. Helwig, Secretary