

MINUTES OF MEETING
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
February 2, 2010

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 7:05 PM, with the following members present: Angela Murray, Amanda Helwig, Joe Gerber, Bob Gutowski, James Mascaro, Mary Holland, Joseph Devine, George Schaefer and David Sands. Commissioner Doug Heller and Rob Dunlop, Staff Liaison represented the Township and Jean Holland represented the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) this evening.

Minutes

Minutes of the January 19th, 2010 meeting were read. A motion to approve the minutes was made by A. Murray and seconded by J. Mascaro. Motion approved unanimously.

Board of Commissioner Update

D. Heller

- No Report

Old Business

Neighbors of the 9425 Stenton Avenue Project were present to present a list of their concerns to the PC. Brian McGlynn of 30 Gordon Road, Erdenheim and Stephen Steinbrook of 34 Whitemarsh Avenue, Erdenheim highlighted their concerns;

- Mass of the building and the height of the building (especially along the Whitemarsh Ave. frontage) were proportionally too great.
- Protection of the existing mature trees along the Gordon Road boundary and along the Steinbrook /Ganeley property.
- Clarification on number of units versus allowable size of units – issue currently under review by Township Solicitor
- Balconies proposed along Whitemarsh side of the property and impact on adjoining properties (Ganeley/Steinbrook).
- Emergency Fire Access at Whitemarsh Ave. will eliminate 2 parking spaces in a congested area for on-street parking. The use of grass pavers should be encouraged to eliminate additional impervious surface.

Chairman Gutowski reiterated that the Developer was not present and therefore they could not enter into conversation over the neighbor's list. However, PC did agree that if the pavers meet specifications, and upon Engineer review of comparable installations they are found to be an acceptable alternative, they would recommend to STEMS their usage as an alternative to help cut down on impervious surface and add to the aesthetics of the fire lane access at Whitemarsh Ave. The PC still retains its position that the building is too high a density usage of the site but recognizes the ZHB ruling that the developer has a right to the approved 30 units.

Zoning Map Amendment – west side of 100 Block of Orlemann Ave., Oreland

Home owners on the 100 Block of Orlemann Avenue, on the odd side (west side) of the street are currently zoned the Industrial zoning district. Neighbors across the street are zoned C-Residential. In light of the cleanup taking place at the Tank Carr property in the rear of the homes on the odd side of Orlemann in the 100 block, a change in zoning would be a logical change. In conversation, current zoning requires a 25ft buffer between the homes and the Tank Carr parcel. A change to any type of Residential Zoning would increase the buffer to 50 feet for any future

land development which might take place on this property. Discussion on the impact of changing the designation to C-Residential versus D-Residential zoning followed. D Zoning allows for a slightly higher density housing, twins or duplexes on marginally smaller size lots. Careful consideration was given to the possible uses of the Tank Carr Property in the future and the transition of the quarry into park as per the Comprehensive Plan. In conversation the PC agree that it is highly likely the parcel would be developed into an office building/light industrial usage rather than heavy industrial use in the future.

Motion was made by J. Gerber and seconded by J. Mascaro to keep the current zoning to preserve existing Industrial zoning. 2 in favor, 6 opposed – motion does not carry. In discussion, G. Schaefer pointed out that in light of the neighbors seeking the change, and that the area is mostly surrounded by Residential, the zoning change makes sense for the location.

Motion by B. Gutowski and seconded by G. Schaefer to recommend to the BOC to continue the process of rezoning the block to C-Residential zoning. 4 in favor, 5 opposed – motion does not carry. Discussion continued - A. Helwig pointed out that most of the homes in that neighborhood are of a type of higher density housing that is consistent with D-Residential zoning. To be in conformity, it would be more appropriate to rezone D Residential. M. Holland followed by pointing out this creates a transition from the less dense C zoning to the Industrial zoning which seems to be a theme throughout planning. Motion by M. Holland and seconded by A. Helwig to recommend to the BOC to continue the process of rezoning the block to D-Residential zoning. (9-0) Motion approved. It was noted in the motion that the PC recommends that the Solicitor's opinion of the potential repercussions of reducing the amount of land area included in the Industrial Zoning District in the Township by 1.43 acre.

Township Comprehensive Plan

Chairman Gutowski summarized the goals and path the PC shall be taking in overhauling the Comprehensive Plan. The first objective is to update existing Demographic Data and Existing Land Uses in the Township. The PC must be aware of the goals of the community and recognize areas of concern not addressed in the current version of the plan. As part of the process, community input will be needed after a draft revision has been created. With the guidance provided by Jean Holland of Montgomery County PC, it is hoped a draft version will be prepared within a 6 month time period. Issues already identified of concern include creating stronger sections that address Commercial Zones, Storm Water Management, Natural Resources and Historic Preservation.

PC Members are to begin reviewing the Comprehensive Plan and providing individual critiques to share with the PC as a whole. As well as familiarizing themselves with the 2005 Open Space Plan. Both are available online through the Township Website. The next meeting on February 16th will be a Solar Panel Workshop. Jon Leshner, Environmental Planner of the Montgomery County Planning Commission will make a presentation to the Planning Commission regarding current efforts by municipalities to develop effective zoning and planning measures regarding the use of new "green" energy sources. The PC will review Zoning Code Amendments, specifically amendments to the Zoning Code covering "family", "group home" and "riparian buffer". Motion to Adjourn was made by J. Mascaro and seconded by M. Holland at 8:55 p.m. Motion approved unanimously.

The next PC meeting will be at 7:00 p.m., February 16th, 2010.
Amanda M. Helwig, Secretary