

MINUTES OF MEETING
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
May 4th, 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 7:00 PM, with the following members present: Angela Murray, Amanda Helwig, Joe Gerber, Bob Gutowski, Mary Holland, George Schaefer, James Mascaro and Joseph Devine. Absent: 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 April 20th, 2010 meeting were read. A motion to approve the minutes with revision to the Commissioners Update and changes to the minutes was made by J. Gerber and seconded by A. Murray. Motion approved unanimously. Abstained: James Mascaro.

Board of Commissioner Update

D. Heller

- On March 18th, 2010 the BOC held an open meeting inviting the community regarding Storm Water Issues in the community. As a result of that meeting, the BOC determined areas of concern in the township; Brookside and Windsor Roads in Erdenheim as well as Hemlock Rd in Flourtown. The Commissioners have been visiting the sites and discussing with residents riparian buffers. Discussion continues on alternative places to store storm water during storm events.
- PC Minutes will be posted on the Township Website after they have been approved. R. Dunlop to follow-up with M. Taylor.
- The BOC will review the Village Overlay when there is time and send it back to the PC with comments.

Old Business

Objectionable Vegetation Regulations

The Planning Commission received back Staff review of Chapter 11 of the Township Code on Brush, Grass and Weeds. Staff requested the addition of reference to the PA Best Practices Manuel as well as the removal of any riparian buffer in a front yard because it would be intrusive and more difficult to manage.

After discussion, a motion was made to keep the former recommended Chapter 11.1 revisions by the PC and recommend the inclusion of the reference to the PA Best Management Practices Manuel for best management practices but not include staff's language for the exemption of frontage. Motion made by M. Holland and seconded by J. Mascaro. All in favor.

New Business

Electronic Message Board Sign Ordinance Amendment

Planning Commission reviewed the proposed amendments to the Township Sign Ordinance regarding installation of Electronic Message Board Signs. In discussion, it was relayed that the ZHB has had applications for such, but mostly by nonprofit groups who are seeking relief since their older style signs for relaying information to the community have become obsolete. The ordinance amendment was drafted by the township Solicitor.

The following items were discussed:

- 1.) A change should be made to II. I. (6.) to replace the word nuisances to “public nuisance”
- 2.) A quantitative contrast in the level of intensity of the signs should be considered.
- 3.) Signs should only be allowed in areas where lighted signs are already permitted.
- 4.) Montgomery County is conducting a study to analyze where signs (non-profit, churches, govt.) are located in Springfield Twp.
- 5.) A maximum size of lettering to be permitted should be added
- 6.) Should be a conditional use in all zoning districts, this would allow only for worthy applicants to get signage.
- 7.) The size of the signs should be cut down.

In further discussion of making the Electronic Signage a conditional use, Commissioner Heller felt it was difficult to deny certain entity's a conditional use. Chairman Gutowski relayed that if guidelines are set to be restrictive enough it would assist the commissioners in their determinations. Overall the document was determined to need work. The PC proposes that Electronic Signage be permitted as a conditional use, with clear and limiting conditions. Conditional use is a by right use if all conditions are met. Montgomery County Planning Commission will review the Ordinance Amendment and make recommendations for turning this into a Conditional Use Ordinance.

Comprehensive Plan Cont.

R. Dunlop, Chairman B. Gutowski and Montgomery County Planning Commission Liaison J. Holland met prior to the regularly scheduled PC Meeting to discuss a plan for proceeding with the Comprehensive Plan Review. They concluded the following:

- 1.) A timeline of 12-18 months for completion is proposed.
- 2.) The matrix that has been being compiled of PC Members comments will be used to guide the creation of the Chapters and highlight / summarize each topic. This piece will be distributed to the public for review and comment. Comment from Staff, Community Groups and other Civic Associations will also be requested.
- 3.) The Comprehensive Plan will be available online and downloadable. A shorter summary piece should be sent out to the general public.
- 4.) A preliminary Land Use Chapter for the Springfield Township Comprehensive Plan has already been prepared by J. Holland. R. Dunlop to distribute to the PC.

The remaining PC Members to report are D. Sands, A. Murray, N. Devine, and G. Schaefer. PC Member comments to be emailed to A. Helwig for inclusion into the matrix. Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:03pm made by J.Mascaro and seconded by A.Murray. All in favor.

The next PC meeting will be at 6:00 p.m., May 18th, 2010 at the Morris Arboretum Bloomfield Farm located at 303 Northwestern Ave. The Public will be notified of the change in location.

Amanda M. Helwig, Secretary