

MINUTES OF MEETING
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
August 3rd, 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 7:02 PM, with the following members present: Angela Murray, Amanda Helwig, Joe Gerber, Bob Gutowski, Mary Holland, George Schaefer, David Sands and James Mascaro. Absent was and Joseph Devine. 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 June 1st, 2010 meeting were read. Minutes were approved, motion made by M. Holland and seconded by A. Murray. All in favor. J. Mascaro abstained.

Minutes of the July 6th, 2010 meeting were read. Minutes were approved with amendments, motion made by J. Gerber and seconded by J. Mascara. All in favor.

Board of Commissioner Update

D. Heller

- BOC Approved School House per recommendations of the PC. The School House reiterated there will be no dropping off at St. Genevieve's.
- Laverock Plans are available online for review with proposed development options.

Old Business

Electronic Message Board Sign Ordinance

The PC began their review of the proposed draft ordinance prepared by the Solicitor by discussing the need for the ordinance. It is apparent that signs are beginning to proliferate in other communities. The PC feels that as soon as you begin to allow this usage it will open it up for requests for all industries and fields to request this type of signage. The PC felt strongly this compromises the traditional values and vision they are trying to protect in our community.

Chairman Gutowski polled the PC for their opinions of the topic:

- Commissioner Heller commented that he feels his stance is not to allow them at all.
- D. Sands said he felt a need to stipulate numerous restrictions in the event you prohibit the signage, in the event that it is appealed then the township would still have some control over what it looks like.
- J. Mascaro would also like to not allow for this type of signage.
- A. Murray would like to not allow this type of signage as well, but voiced concern over lawsuits challenging the township. Suggested limiting where they could be located.
- G. Schaefer agreed with A. Murray and D. Sands that he would like to not see this type of signage in the community but he doesn't feel that it would hold up in court.
- M. Holland doesn't mind the ordinance and understands its use in the community to communicate with the public. If it did spread beyond the proposed use she would then be concerned.
- A. Helwig agreed with J. Mascaro that having the signs would hurt the image of the community and would want to disallow for this type of signage completely.
- J. Gerber felt that no matter what solution or ordinance is passed a challenge in court is always a possibility. He echoed the PC's sentiments that he "does not want another Walgreens situation".

The overall predominant view of the PC was that they do not want this type of signage at all, but that in the event of court challenge, restrictions should be in place to at least have some control. Discussion continued stemming from A. Murray's suggestion of restricting electronic message board signage to Industrial Zoning. This would protect Residential Areas. It would be easier for the Township to win a court challenge if they have it allowed in at least one district.

A motion was made by J. Gerber that the BOC not accept the draft Electronic Message Board ordinance. Seconded by D. Sands. All in favor.

A motion was made by B. Gutowski, seconded by D. Sands and unanimously agreed to that the BOC request the solicitor draft an Ordinance that will permit Electronic Message Board Signage in the I-District only with the following restrictions and stipulations:

- That language be added that the ordinance is being drafted to protect the values, aesthetics and therefore quality of life for our residents. That the ordinance is being created in consideration of safety issues associated with this type of signage.
- That a 100 foot setback from Residential Zoning be included
- That language about non profits be removed
- That (5) be modified to only reflect that signs maybe operated between the hours of 7:00AM and 10:00PM
- That (6) have technology references to light intensity and glare in measurable amounts. i.e. Foot Candles.
- That (7) is modified that it is restricted to a black background only.
- That definitions of new terminology created as a result of this Ordinance be added to code.

Old Business

Comprehensive Plan Review

The Comprehensive Plan Sub Committee met prior to the regularly scheduled PC Meeting at 6PM. Chairman B. Gutowski shared with the PC the Sub Committee's process.

- The Sub Committee will be sending out an Electronic Letter to the historical society, civic groups, and others in the community. Draft letter was supplied to the PC.
- Preliminary review of the Existing Land Use, Housing and Transportation Sections continue.
- The Sub Committee requested A. Helwig comment on Housing at the next PC Meeting.
- The Sub Committee also requested A. Murray comment on Economic Development at the next PC Meeting.
- The PC was requested in general to all review the chapters that have been created so far for emphasis, missing information and corrections.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:39 pm made by B. Gutowski and seconded by M. Holland. Motion carried unanimously.

The next Sub Committee Meeting will be 7:00pm on August 17th, 2010. There will be no PC Meeting.

Amanda M. Helwig