

**MINUTES OF MEETING
SPRINGFIELDTOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
July 19th, 2011**

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

Minutes: Minutes of the June 7th, 2011 meeting were read. Motion to approve the minutes as amended made by Joe Gerber and seconded by David Sands. All in favor.

Board of Commissioners Update

Commissioner Heller

- Flourtown Shopping Center has approval to put in Medical Offices.
- Village District overlay being worked on by Planner.
- Municipal Campus Plan has encountered neighbor resistance to the whole development. An advisory Board is being set up.
- Social Networking Policy. PC can request to be a part of it.
- Billboards. Public Meeting Sept 8th.
- Seasonal Sidewalk Café Ordinance approved.
- Sharrows (share the road with bicycles) introduced. Haven't decided where they would be appropriate.

505 Auburn Ave Land Development

**Steven Kline, Architect
Regan Construction**

Chairman Bob Gutowski advised the Public he felt he must recuse himself to avoid a conflict of interest since his Urban Forestry Team was hired to review the Trees on the property.

Attorney representing the Neighbors had no objection to Bob Gutowski participating. Steven Kline (Applicant) had no issue with Chairman Gutowski participating. Chairman Gutowski continued to Chair, just not vote on any motions.

Lot was subdivided from 507 Auburn Avenue and currently is being renovated. Applicant is proposing a new 4-5 bedroom home with detached garage. Plan meets all ordinance requirements. In response to the Township Engineer's letter dated June 13, 2011, the Applicant had the following comments:

Under Zoning Ordinance Comment.

1-3 Will Comply

Under Subdivision and Land Development.

4. Will Comply

5. and 6. refer to waivers already received last October

7. Will Comply (defer 8.,9.,10.)

11. Will Comply

12. Will Comply

13. Will Comply

14. Will ask for waiver.

15. Will Comply

16. Have made alterations already on the plan. Will Comply.

Miscellaneous Comments

17.-27. Will Comply

28. There are no retaining walls, need to clarify with Township Engineer

29.- 30. Will Comply

County Comments in the May 31, 2011 Letter.

1. Waiver already addressed.

2. Is also addressed in, response to 8-10.

8-10 in the Township Engineer's Letter will be complied with, including grading, but in doing so some of the trees will need to be removed to do the construction. Applicant is requesting a partial tree replacement waiver. The Applicant will be removing 24 trees. Code calls for 48 trees to then be planted. The Applicant worked with a Landscaper who proposed to add back 24 new trees. In addition, the Applicant was seeking a waiver of the two Street Trees. Applicant submitted their Planting Schedule; Red Maples, Sugar Maples, Pin Oaks and Elms.

PC Discussion w Applicant

PC Member A. Murray asked for the Proposed Elevations of the building. The Applicant demonstrated to PC and clarified to the Public in attendance this is a 2 story home, not a 3 story home. A. Helwig asked about the maximum number of trees that a professional would feel is feasible for the site. Applicant says that 24 is the max # of trees that can safely be established and grow on site.

B. Gutowski inquired if the applicant would consider planting additional street trees in the Township right-of-way. Jean Holland with Montgomery County Planning Commission added she did not feel that requesting an applicant plant on the street or alternative locations is established in case law, however, asking an Applicant to meet with the Shade Tree Commission and contribute trees maybe a viable option.

Attorney Herb Rubenstein representing 500, 501, and 511 Auburn Avenues introduced himself. He presented reports from the Morris Arboretum and acknowledged meeting with Mr. Klein the Applicant. He found that the revised landscape plan was a result of positive talks between the parties. He shared that his clients main concerns were Tree Replacement & Protection and Storm Water Management. In a Memorandum dated July 13th, 2011, recapping a report completed by Jason Lubar an Associate Director of Urban Forestry, Mr. Rubenstein noted which items Mr. Klein was open to considering, of particular importance to the Neighbors item #18, which requested Mr. Lubar be able to check the plants as well as access the property. Further, Mr. Lubar reviewed the Planting Schedule listed in #5 of the booklet and made recommendations, of which the Applicant, Mr. Klein, was agreeable to recommended substitutions. B. Gutowski commented that Lindens or Hornbeams would be a better alternative to Pin Oaks that are subject to Leaf Scorch. B. Gutowski would not recommend Norway Spruce.

No objection was made by the PC to sidewalk and cartway waivers. Mr. Rubenstein's final comment was on Storm Water Management. They acknowledge the 2 seepage beds, but after consulting a Municipal Engineer it was suggested something could be done with the driveway which is 2,200 sq. ft. of impervious surface, and suggested a rock bed on southern side of the driveway to allow water to percolate into the ground. He requested the applicant consider this recommendation and acknowledges that the applicant has met responsibilities and has been cooperative.

B. Gutowski commented that if the Applicant were to make modifications to the driveway it may impact more trees. It is possible interceptors installed under the driveway where there is a gentle slope could be installed. As a PC we always try to have an applicant do better to improve Storm water. The Applicant replied that the Civil Engineer prepared an approved Storm Water Management Plan that shows it will be equal or less than current flow.

Public Comment

503 Auburn Avenue. Laura K. McKenna. Submitted a letter in advance to PC. Feels that Mr. Klein has been reasonable. She continued about the scale of the home compared to others in the neighborhood and the community, was too large.

511 Auburn Avenue. Thomas Greenwood. Questioned the Applicant about the size of the trees being removed. Applicant replied that they are removing 691 total caliper inches of existing trees.

500 Auburn Avenue. Art Scibelli. Questioned if it is allowable that they are removing 100+ yr old trees and replacing with smaller caliper trees. B. Gutowski replied that an older tree will absorb more storm water, however you also want to remove dangerous trees which the report indicated some needed to be removed.

508 Auburn Avenue. Johnathan Frank. On the Storm water, commented he lived on the end of the street. He has seen an increase of water during his ownership. This driveway has a five foot drop. Something needs to be done to intercept the water. Second point, in consideration of the waiver, can a compromise with the applicant be made if less trees are planted to see more large shrubs to create a screening of the street view.

508 Auburn Avenue. Sarah Frank. Talking to spirit of the community, Auburn Avenue is known for its canopy. Why would anyone want house devoid of trees. Can't the Developer perhaps build a smaller house. Applicant responded that they built 521 Auburn Avenue recently. They recognize how nice the street is and want to build on that quality. People are buying on Auburn Avenue for the quality and the trees being installed will be quality as well.

8213 Ardmore Avenue. Melanie Martin. She was the first teardown in Wyndmoor and understands how difficult this process is for all.

508 Auburn Avenue. Charles Frank. Feels the house is not in conformity with the style of the street or in color or the roofline.

8221 Ardmore Ave. Ina Lipman. Commented that what was a one family lot is now being divided into two and crowding another home on it. How is the Applicant not impacting the value of the neighborhood? Is there a restriction we can put in place? Where does this group take this continuing issue? Chairman Gutowski replied that if Wyndmoor and its neighbors want to say they want to create a neighborhood district to protect your area there are options like Overlay Districts. By reaching out to your Commissioners to make changes is the only way you can protect your neighborhood.

8208 Ardmore Ave. Robert Cellar. Looked at the plan and does not like the size of the house and the loss of trees on the property. He was very upset about the loss of the Dawn Redwoods. B. Gutowski assured him that the plan calls to save the Dawn Redwoods.

PC Discussion:

Comm. Heller asked the Applicant to recap how many trees are currently on the property? Applicant responded there are 46 current trees they plan to retain 22 and plant 24.

B. Gutowski commented there is a real demand for in-fill housing in developed communities. This is an example how minimum foot print and lot sizes can be determined for Neighborhoods and Communities to preserve their nature. We want to look at these priorities as we continue to work on the Comprehensive Plan. B. Gutowski called for comments of the PC.

D. Sands question about the Caliper of the trees to be removed, it was stated that over 600 caliper inches were being removed and smaller sizes planted. B. Gutowski commented that he would rather see a smaller tree with better soil, and that would be just as good. Larger trees don't necessarily take as well as a younger tree that has time to establish itself in proper conditions.

A. Murray commented that as a neighbor this was a difficult situation. She would want to see a condition that extra trees be contributed to the Shade Tree Committee or planted on Auburn Ave or in Wyndmoor. She still does not like the garage location, and would like to see the Applicant lessen impervious surface especially of the driveway.

G. Schaefer complimented B. Gutowski for summing up the issues well. It's a difficult situation. You have an Owner that has rights versus Neighbors who have an investment in their community and PC concerns to be weighed. We don't have the tools to address these issues. He liked the idea about trees planted in neighborhood as long as it doesn't raise legal issues and assumes any proposal to do so would be vetted by the Twp. Solicitor. He also expressed concerned about

runoff and wants to see that addressed. D. Sands agreed that it would be nice if the Applicant can consider interceptors to direct water to a drainage system along the driveway.

J. Gerber. Doesn't like anything about the subdivision, but also doesn't know how to say no, they have the right.

A. Helwig, commented that as a Realtor, she is always looking to defend people's property rights. As part of that ownership they have a right to develop their property to its highest and best use, which the Applicant is doing. She felt that the house was too large for the street and a smaller floor plan and likely do just as well on resale. With respect to the trees, obviously she would want to see as many saved as possible, and if the expert says 24 is what is healthy and viable so be it. As for the storm water, the concept was raised about the gravel bed along the drive way as additional storm water management. She would rather see those trees preserved that would be disturbed by such development and see more trees planted elsewhere in the community to help with storm water management .

J. Holland representing the County feels that there can be an improvement with the driveway especially at the end of the driveway to slow flow onto Auburn Avenue.

Applicant will take under advisement that PC wants the Applicant to add trees elsewhere in the community will talk to the Commissioners.

After the PC recapped the issues of importance that came to light in the evening's discussion, a motion was made by A. Murray that the PC supports a waiver to include 2 trees in the right of way to be considered street trees and be included in the replacement trees. Seconded by G. Schaefer. 5 in favor. 1 recusal.

A second motion was made by D. Sands to support a partial waiver of tree substitution based upon a quantifiable and substantive improvement to the storm water management plan especially to driveway, and further that a mutually agreed inspection to trees during construction and impact to the roots in the seepage beds be made by a mutually agreed upon representative of the Applicant and Neighbors. Seconded by A. Murray. 5 in favor. 1 recusal.

Bob Gutowski recapped to the Public. The issues of storm water management, subdivision, and neighborhood continuity really demonstrate that there is a need for change. Bob emphasized that the PC is appreciative of neighbors for coming out and having counsel to identity issues for us. These conditions are not suggested lightly and these issues may warrant future Zoning changes such as Minimum Foot Print, Protection of Neighborhood Character, etc. Lastly, PC shall continue to work for a substantive reduction in storm water in the community.

Applicant acknowledged he will speak with both Commissioners prior to the Commissioners Meeting.

Motion to recommend the requested waiver of Land Development subject to conditions listed above and all the comments in Twp Engineers letter to be complied with. George Schaefer seconded. 5 in favor. 1 recusal.

Old Business

Springfield Township Comprehensive Plan will be deferred until next meeting.

Motion to adjourn by A. Murray and seconded by G. Schaefer. 9:20 PM

Next Meeting of the PC will be August 16th, 2011

Minutes by A. Helwig, Secretary