

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**SPRINGFIELDTOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**August 16, 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: David Sands, Bob Gutowski, George Schaeffer, Angela Murray, Mary Holland and Joe Gerber. Absent: Joseph Devine, Mandy Helwig, 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 July 19, 2011 meeting were read. Motion to approve the minutes as amended made by Angela Murray and seconded by Joe Gerber was approved unanimously

**8616 Montgomery Ave. Land Development**

**Sam Blake**  
**Robert Heidte, Architect**  
**Robert Wager, P.E.**

Messrs. Blake and Heidte gave a brief overview of the proposed new dwelling which will be very similar to the house built at 8208 Ardmore Ave., Wyndmoor 5 years ago. The basic design of the garage at the front of the property creating a semi-enclosed courtyard was determined by the need to locate an on-lot sewage system in the rear yard of the property due to unavailability of sanitary sewer service in this part of Wyndmoor. The front yard garage design will also allow stormwater infiltration beds to be sited in the front yard.

A review of Amy Riddle Montgomery's letter of 8/10/2011 showed that the applicant intends to comply with all comments except for the following items:

2. Under section 114-131.B(1) of the Township Zoning Code, chimneys are allowed to project a maximum of 18" into required side yard areas. This issue was not correctly stated in the review letter.
12. This Norway Maple tree will be removed and replaced by two tree, because the species is considered an invasive, exotic species.

Bob Gutowski asked the engineer Mr. Wager to comment on the location of trees close to the proposed septic field. Mr. Wager stated that the plan will be revised removing trees that are too close to the septic field. In addition, the septic field will be moved further back on the lot to an area that will have less impact on existing trees. Soil infiltration tests have shown that practically all of the lot has suitable conditions for the establishment of a septic system.

Bob Gutowski asked if it would be possible to capture the stormwater run-off from the courtyard/driveway area. Mr. Wager stated that because of the slopes on the property and the ability of the soil to perc well this would be a simple matter to engineer properly.

Mary Holland inquired if the stormwater infiltration bed was moved if the large Copper Beech tree at the front of the property could be saved. Unfortunately, Mr. Blake informed the PC that this tree was in very bad condition. Bob Gutowski stated that it was normal practice for this tree and any other large tree to be examined by an ISA certified arborist to give a definitive opinion on the viability of all tree that are intended to be preserved. The applicant stated he would have this done as soon as possible.

Regarding stormwater, the applicant stated that they would comply with all requirements included in the Saldo. Bob Gutowski asked that the applicant exceed the Saldo requirements wherever possible and locate stormwater infiltration beds under the courtyard/driveway. Sam Blake agreed to both of these conditions. Bob also asked the applicant to substitute alternate species for the Pin Oak and White Ash included on the landscape plan since these species are currently in decline due to leaf scorch and emerald ash borer beetles. The applicant agreed to find suitable species in the White Oak family as a substitute. Bob next sought general comments from the PC – which produced the following replies:

- Angela Murray – Not in favor of promoting front yard garages, which are not aesthetically pleasing. At this point there are a lot of engineer comments that need to be addressed
- Mary Holland -- When this subdivision was reviewed (Hill Subdivision 2005) there was a great concern to preserve existing canopy trees. An overly district should be created to preserve the existing tree canopy in areas of the Township where extensive tree canopy coverage exists. This will also have the effect of preserving neighborhood quality as well. In general her impression is that the existing plan has too many defects to be considered now for recommendation.
- Bob Gutowski – If the neighbors would like to see less in-fill development in Wyndmoor the only solution is a change in zoning. The landscape plan presented was not created by a reg. Landscape Architect. No stormwater calculations have been submitted. In addition to these deficiencies there is a good deal of required information that should be on the plans.
- David Sands – the lack of stormwater calculations is the most troubling issue.
- George Schaefer – even though there are items that need addressing, the applicant has agreed to comply with all Engineer comments. Isn't it possible that we could make a provisional recommendation to the BOC based on complying with the Engineer's review items.

**Public Comment:**

Christopher & Christine Smith, 8615 Montgomery Ave., Wyndmoor stated that they were attending this evening out of interest in the process, but did not have any comments at this time.

Angela Murray asked to see the proposed building elevations for the new house. Upon examination several PC members commented that the new house will “stick-out” closer

to Montgomery Ave. more than the houses on either side of it, despite the fact that it setback 50 feet from the curb-line as required by the zoning restrictions for the district. Mr. Blake answered this assertion by relating that a great deal of care was taken in placing the building where it is on the plans since stormwater management and an on-lot sewage system must be accommodated on the property. Any other arrangement would require a radical re-design of the project which would mean a large increase in impervious coverage for the lot. In addition, there are also multiple examples of garages located in the front yard along Montgomery Ave. between E. Evergreen Ave. and Paper Mill Rd.

At the end of the discussion Bob Gutowski made a motion, seconded by Mary Holland recommending that the applicant provide the following information before a recommendation for approval is made to the BOC:

1. Stormwater plan will be revised by the Engineer including stormwater calculations.
2. Landscape plan will be revised by a reg. Landscape Architect.
3. Landscape plan and stormwater plans will be fully coordinated.

This motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Blake agreed to make all of the required changes so that the revised plans can be presented at the 9/6/11 PC meeting.

Several members of the PC felt that staff should develop a check-list to give applicants to better direct their applications. Rob Dunlop stated that he would work with the Township Engineer to develop an effective checklist for applicants. A PC general discussion of the variable factors that make a property “sub-dividable” led to an examination of the role of zoning setbacks, minimum frontage requirements and impervious coverage limitations in potentially limiting future in-fill development. In the weeks ahead staff will work on making a lists of “sub-dividable” properties in Wyndmoor.

## **Board of Commissioners Update**

## **Commissioner Heller**

- The Township Human Relations Ordinance, often referred to as the Anti-discrimination ordinance regarding discrimination against individuals who are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or trans-gender in regard to housing or public accommodations, will likely be voted on at the September BOC meeting.
- Community opposition to alterations to Wyndhill park that will accommodate organized sport use of the facility has led to creation of a committee to fully discuss community concerns about his possibility and look into the potential use of other Township facilities for the required extra sports fields.
- A special meeting about the validity challenge to the Township Zoning Code regarding Billboards will be held at the Springfield Township High School on 9/8/11 at 7:30 PM.
- The 505 Auburn Ave., Land Development was approved with conditions by the BOC in August.

Com. Heller also advised the PC that he advocated the creation of a Township Sidewalk Plan that accurately showed pedestrians routes in the Township, such a plan would be the first step in recommending improvements that could make Springfield Township a more “walkable” community. Also, the applications of the last few months has seemed to indicate that Springfield Township needs to create a stormwater review process that takes into consideration to role of trees in controlling stormwater run-off. Mary Holland added that Swarthmore Borough in Delaware County has created a stormwater review approach that does not allow the development to generate any stormwater run-off after development.

David Sands made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Angela Murray. This motion was approved unanimously. The PC adjourned at 8:58 PM. The next scheduled PC meeting will be held on Tuesday 9/6/11 at 7:00 PM.

R. Dunlop