

**MINUTES OF MEETING
SPRINGFIELDTOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
December 6, 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 7:04 PM, with the following members present: Mary Holland, George Schaefer, David Sands, Bob Gutowski, Angela Murray and Joseph Devine. The following members were absent: Joe Gerber, Amanda Helwig and 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 November 15, 2011 meeting were read. Motion to approve the minutes with amendments was made by David Sands and seconded by Angela Murray. This motion was approved unanimously.

**Erden Court Apartments
6 Haws La., Flourtown**

Bernard McLafferty, Esq.

Applicant seeks a waiver to the formal land development process for the installation of 8 new off-street parking spaces at the above noted facility. Mr. McLafferty provided a brief overview by relating that this fifty year old complex was constructed with very few parking spaces. At that time it was common for apartment dwellers to have only one car per family. There were even some long-time residents who never owned cars. The facility was originally constructed with 53 spaces for 40 apartment units. With the addition of the proposed 8 spaces the complex would have 1 ½ spaces for each two-bedroom unit.

The applicant presented a plan entitled "Additional Parking Spaces" dated 12/4/11 prepared by Mark Hintenlang, P.E. showing where all new spaces would be installed. The plan also showed the removal of 577 sq. ft. of existing impervious surface coverage with a net impervious coverage increase of 166 sq. ft. for the parcel. This latter figure is under the minimum net impervious coverage increase (200 sq. ft.) noted in the Township Stormwater Ordinance for the requirement of stormwater management facilities. Mr. McLafferty also presented 6 photos of the development depicting the area where the spaces would be installed. Mr. McLafferty emphasized that no expansion of the number of dwelling units was possible in the future – the new spaces would only be used to serve the existing 40 dwelling units. It recent years it has become more difficult to rent units without spaces reserved specifically for those units. After reviewing the plans and photos Mary Holland expressed that the slopes in the area around building "H" where four new spaces were proposed would make the installation impractical. Mr. McLafferty agreed that some type of retention feature would be necessary to install the spaces. Ms. Holland suggested that either railroad ties, or a paving block system would be appropriate from what she can see on the photos.

Bob Gutowski asked if it would be possible to plant any new trees along the Haws La. frontage of the property. Mr. McLafferty said he had concerns regarding vehicle and pedestrian visibility along that frontage, but there might be enough room along in the lawn area between building "J" and Haws La. George Schaefer also noted that there might be overhead electric lines in that area. Bob Gutowski suggested the use of smaller canopy species such as a Heritage River Birch. Mr. McLafferty stated that as long as the tree did not interfere with visibility, or aerial electric lines he would plant the tree. Mr. Gutowski also asked that the area of pavement to be removed be converted to grass, or a rain garden. Applicant thought that the rain garden idea might be difficult given the shade conditions in that part of the property. George Schaefer explained that flooding

concerns in the area are acute. The PC attempts wherever possible to make small improvements which may in the future add up to making a larger impact on the problem. Mr. McLafferty promised that he would make sure that the area was restored with the maximum permeability. At the end of the discussion a motion was put forward by Angela Murray to recommend approval of the request for waiver of land development for the project subject to the following conditions:

1. A retaining wall will be installed to stabilize the grade at the four spaces adjacent to building "H"
2. A small canopy species tree will be installed in the lawn area near building "J".
3. In the area where pavement is to be removed grass will be re-established.

This motion was seconded by David Sands and approved unanimously.

Springfield Township Tree Canopy Cover Study

Bob Gutowski distributed a maps showing tree canopy cover in Springfield by land use and ward. Total tree canopy coverage in the Township is 32.4%. PC discussed possible ways that that percentage could be raised. Although the tree canopy coverage maps are good starting point, a more intensive survey would need to be done to provide the type of analysis needed to create a policy that would raise the percentage above 40%. Bob suggested that an appropriate first step would be survey of trees within the public right-of-way.

Montgomery County Planning Commission Funding

Several PC members commented that the recently released 2012 budget for Montgomery County did not include funding for the Montco PC. While it was generally felt that this "doomsday" budget would probably be amended before being approved, all PC members were in agreement that it would be appropriate for the Springfield Township PC to recommend that the BOC send a letter to the County Commissioners which recommends that the County continue full funding of the Mntco PC. Rob Dunlop and Bob Gutowski will draft the letter within a few so that it will get to the BOC before their workshop meeting on 12/12/11.

Old Business

Jean Holland passed around the results from the Comprehensive Plan Open House. Attendees were asked to place colored dots on a board to note the relative importance that they felt certain issues deserved (i.e., economic development, stormwater management, sustainability). Since online surveys are still being received, the final results will be reviewed at the first PC meeting in January.

BOC Update

Doug Heller had no news to impart from the Commissioners. He did again state that his association with the Planners had always been enjoyable and highly productive. All members stated that this feeling was completely reciprocated. And, to show their respect for his service the PC allowed Doug to make a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 PM. This motion was seconded by David Sands, and after a brief discussion on parliamentary procedure, approved by a vote of 4 yeas to 2 nays.

Next PC meeting will be Tuesday 1/17/12 at 7:00 PM.

R. Dunlop