

MINUTES OF MEETING
SPRINGFIELDTOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
April 3, 2012

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 7:10 PM, with the following members present: Mary Holland, David Sands, Bob Gutowski, Angela Murray and Joseph Devine (George Schaefer joined the meeting shortly after it was convened). Rob Dunlop, Staff Liaison and Commissioner Tom Bell represented the Township and Jean Holland represented the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) this evening.

Minutes: Minutes of the March 20, 2012 meeting were read. Motion to approve the minutes was made by M. Holland and seconded by A. Murray. This motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner's Report

No Report

505-507 Auburn Ave. Subdivision/Land Development

Steven Kline, R.A.

Applicant last presented plans for this 2-lot subdivision/land development (lot-line alteration) on 3/6/12. At that time the PC tabled the application to allow time for the applicant and neighbors to discuss possible changes to the plans that all parties could agree to. Mr. Kline presented to the PC a 2 page document noting 9 conditions that the applicant, neighbors and Herb Rubinstein, Esq., counsel for the Scibelli, Roberts and Greenwood families, agreed to. The following 9 conditions were included in the agreement:

1. The applicant will comply with all items in the report prepared by Mr. Mark W. Eisold, P.E.(Township Engineer) dated February 27, 2012, except for the waivers and conditions itemized below.
2. Recommend granting a waiver from Section 95-10.A, requiring a minimum 30 foot wide cartway for a road with a 50 foot right-of-way.
3. Recommend granting a waiver from Section 95-10.I, requiring sidewalks on streets which are residential in nature. However applicant will include a note on plan that indicates that it will be the owner's responsibility to install curbing and sidewalks if directed by the Board of Commissioners in the future.
4. Recommend granting a waiver from Section 95-11.I.(2)(a), requiring street trees to be planted between 15' to 25' from the curb or edge of paving, but in no case shall they be planted within the right-of-way. Applicant will agree to install street trees in accordance with the landscape plan prepared by McCloskey and Faber, P.C. dated July 11, 2011 revised March 22, 2012 and plant schedule prepared by McCloskey and Faber, P.C. dated March 22, 2012 which uses a tree species, Green Mountain Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum* 'Green Mountain'), not listed as an approved street tree.

5. Recommend granting a waiver from Section 95-11.I.(11)(c), requiring two replacement trees of 2 ½" caliper or greater for every existing tree removed that is 3" caliper or more. Applicant will agree to install replacement trees and shrubs as per the landscape plan prepared by McCloskey and Faber, P.C. dated July 11, 2011 revised March 22, 2012 and plant schedule prepared by McCloskey and Faber, P.C. dated March 22, 2012 for the 29 existing trees scheduled to be removed.
6. Recommend granting a waiver from Section 88-12.B.(1)(i), requiring that a stormwater operations and maintenance plan must include a 15 foot wide easement around all stormwater BMP's. Applicant agrees to grant a full access easement to the stormwater BMP to the Township.
7. Tree staking detail shall be in conformance with ANSI A300 standards and associated best management practices.
8. The applicant shall adhere to the Township standard for tree protection and the tree planting contained in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, and shall work closely with Township staff to assure that these requirements are met to their satisfaction.
9. The Land Development Plan and Stormwater Management Report for Lot 1, 505 Auburn Avenue, shall be revised to provide for the seepage pits shown on the Landscape Plan dated 7/11/11, last revised 3/22/12, to the satisfaction and approval of the Township Engineer.

Mr. Kline also presented the revised landscape plan prepared by McCloskey and Faber and dated 7/11/11, last revised 3/22/12. This new plan has been reviewed by Jason Lubar, RLA. On this plan 29 trees will be removed from lot #1 to be replaced by 34 trees – 16 of which will be arborvitae. Bob Gutowski asked if any of the 24 trees not planted per the Saldo could be planted on lot #2. Mr. Kline stated that he would be willing to plant up to 6 canopy trees on lot #2. Bob Gutowski also inquired if the stormwater report made any allowance for the large trees already existing on lot #1. Mr. Kline answered that in conformance with our Saldo the condition of lot #1 was suburban lawn, but Nick Rose, P.E. did provide some supplemental information – the stormwater report would show a general 3% smaller reduction by the proposed stormwater system for stormwater leaving the property under each storm event noted in the report compared to current conditions if the lot was considered woodland. Bob Gutowski asked for additional questions from the PC regarding the new information submitted – hearing none he opened the floor to questions/comments from the audience.

Public Comment

Debra Roberts, 501 Auburn Ave., Wyndmoor

Ms. Roberts informed the PC that her lawyer Herb Rubinstein could not attend tonight's meeting, but the neighbors present tonight, with the advice of Mr. Rubinstein accept the conditions included in the agreement presented by Mr. Kline dated 4/3/12. The neighbors would still prefer the agreement from August, 2011. The neighbors feel that the former

agreement protects the neighborhood better and has more benefit to the larger community. We believe that the current land development regulations are antiquated and have not adequately protected our interests. Bob Gutowski asked “what were the specific aspects of the August, 2011 plan that were better”. Ms. Roberts responded that lot #1 was larger – the newly configured lot still has a house of about the same size. The older plan had 3 seepage beds – this plan has 2. There is going to be a garage constructed on lot #2 (507 Auburn Ave.).

Laura McKenna, 503 Auburn Ave., Wyndmoor

I share some of the concerns, but not all expressed by Ms. Roberts. Mr. Kline has worked with us during the process and I believe that this current plan is not so bad – although I am not in favor of the new garage at 507 Auburn Ave. If this plan is approved who would check that all required plantings are installed. B. Gutowski answered that Township Engineer and Inspectors would insure that the plan is properly implemented. After completion a one year performance bond would be in place to insure that plantings survive.

Tim Greenwood, 511 Auburn Ave., Wyndmoor

It is my impression that everybody was a little dissatisfied with the agreement from last August. This is usually the sign of a good bargain for all parties. Now all of a sudden the plan has been altered and the former deal discarded. This makes me feel that the process doesn’t provide protection for adjoining property owners. The PC has not represented the neighbor’s interests.

Fraser Greenwood, 511 Auburn Ave., Wyndmoor

Please hold the applicant responsible for installing all of the required stormwater and planting elements, and make sure they maintain these for at least a year. We expect that the Township will be proactive in making sure that things get done right.

Additional PC Comments

Angela Murray stated she felt that the applicant reneged on the former agreement. I can understand the frustration they feel for having put time and money for a lawyer into that negotiation to see it later discarded.

George Schaeffer said he sympathized with the neighbors, but many of their concerns are about aspects of the plan that are by-right and therefore un-restricted by the Township according to law.

Bob Gutowski, after giving a short overview of how the zoning and land development process is intended to work, asked for suggestions from members on how the revised plans could be improved. Mary Holland said we should insure that no further subdivision of either lot occurs in the future. A short discussion concluded with the consensus that further subdivision for the purpose of new building was highly unlikely. Bob Gutowski asked if the applicant would plant 18 trees on lot #2 to help regenerate canopy cover on the street. Mr. Kline said he would agree to plant 6 canopy trees on the lot at 507 Auburn Ave. Hearing no further discussion Chair Gutowski asked for a motion regarding the

application. Mary Holland moved that the PC recommend approval of the application to the BOC with all of the 9 conditions included in the agreement dated 4/3/12, plus two additional conditions – the size of the house footprint would be decreased by 20% and the applicant would plant 10 canopy trees on lot #2. This motion was seconded by Angela Murray. After discussion, Bob Gutowski called for the yeas and nays – motion was defeated by a (2-4) vote. The chair called for any other motions.

George Schaefer moved that the PC recommend approval of the application to the BOC with all 9 Conditions included in the agreement dated 4/3/12, and the single additional condition that the applicant plant 10 canopy trees on lot #2. This motion was seconded by Joe Devine. During the discussion of the motion Bob Gutowski mentioned his support for the motion with reservations. He stated that the current plan is not as beneficial for the community as the plan approved last year. Furthermore, he felt it showed that there are several areas of Township code that should be revised to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods – specifically more stringent stormwater management requirements, total impervious coverage limitations, increased zoning setbacks and stricter landscaping directives.

Steven Kline asked Bob Gutowski if he could enumerate the points he felt were better in the former plan. Chair Gutowski cited three specific points: the abandonment of the former agreement made neighbors feel that their input has not been appreciated, the house on lot #1 is very close to the maximum footprint now – and closer to the house at 503 Auburn Ave., the layout of the house at lot #2 with the detached garage was more in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. With the close of the discussion chair Gutowski called for a vote. The motion passed by a vote of 4 yeas, 2 nays. Mr. Gutowski thanked the applicant for meeting with the neighbors to develop an agreement. Angela Murray stated that the Township where she works as a planner – Lower Merion – defers applications long enough for developers and residents to resolve their differences. Although, it must be admitted that in some cases the parties are not able to agree on anything.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Jean Holland distributed a revised table of contents and draft community goals for land use, natural resources, historic resources, housing, community facilities, economic development and transportation. Since tonight's plan presentation lasted over two hours there is not sufficient time left to discuss the goals. Rob Dunlop stated that the schedule would allow for time at the 4/17/12 PC meeting after the presentation on tree canopy coverage in the Township by Nina Safavi. The agenda for the 5/1/12 meeting has also tentatively been set for presentation of a 2 lot subdivision at 27 Bysher Ave., Flourtown and a request for zoning change on the Boorse tract.

Motion to Adjourn was made by Bob Gutowski and seconded by Joe Devine. This motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 9:27 PM.