

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**August 20, 2013**

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 7:00 PM, with the following members present: Bob Gutowski, David Sands, Mary Holland, Angela Murray, James Mascaro, Amanda Helwig, George Schaefer, Commissioner Tom Bell and Robert Dunlop represented the Township. Absent were Joseph Devine of the Planning Commission and Jean Holland for the MCPC.

Minutes: Minutes of the July 16, 2013 meeting were read. Motion to approve the minutes was made by J. Mascaro and seconded by S. Schagrín, minutes approved unanimously.

**Commissioner Report:** Commissioner T. Bell reported that the neighbors have advised they no longer want negotiations, rather want the Tank Car Corp site decision to be made by the Courts. It is a case of Private property rights versus community rights. If it comes back, there will be Land Development and it will come before the Planning Commission.

**New Business**

**Atria Senior Living**  
**9303 Ridge Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA.**

**Ross Weiss, Esq.**  
**Jim Lane, Atria Development Officer**

The discussion opened with Chairman Bob Gutowski summarizing the history of the property to the PC Members as well as the public in attendance at the meeting. In 2002 the property was zoned AA Residential which allowed for 45 single family homes. It was then rezoned with a AAA overlay, which allowed for more compact density and open space which is desirable to the Township. The owners then asked to re-zone the property to AAA-AQ (Age Qualified). The increased density being a tradeoff for the 55+ restriction not adding an increased burden on the school district. The Planning Commission was opposed to this rezoning and recommended to the BOC it not be adopted. The BOC however agreed to the re-zoning. There was then a minor amendment to the AAA-AQ to allow, per Federal Law, 20% of the units to be occupied by residents under the age of 55. The applicant is now appearing to ask for another rezoning of the frontage on Ridge Pike for an Institutional usage.

Ross Weiss, Esq presented to the PC and the neighbors in the audience the proposed Atria complex to be built along Ridge Pike. This was conceptual and a sketch plan only. This is showing the front 7 acres essentially being subdivided off and rezoned Institutional. The remaining Tecee Tract would revert to AA Zoning. The Atria facility is an independent, assisted, and memory care facility. Residents pay a monthly fee and are on one year leases with no "buy in" found in other facilities. Proposed are 125 units with 165 beds. The 125,000 sq foot building would generate a proposed \$700,000 in additional tax revenue and create jobs in the community. In addition they would be seeking LEED Certification of the building. This use will not burden the neighboring streets and is an improvement needed to accommodate aging residents in the immediate area.

Jim Lane, the Development and Planning Officer for Atria, is responsible for development in the NE region of the United States. He presented a background on Atria to the PC and the public. Atria has 133 communities in 27 States with over 15,000 rental apartments. 53 of these communities are in the NE. They feel Atria will fit in well between the adjacent properties; Andorra Woods (a skilled nursing facility) and the Masonic Home (Independent Living). Atria's assisted living style provides a niche opportunity and alternative affordable option. Mr. Lane also stated that Atria strive to incorporate their buildings into the community. For this building, costs will range between \$3,900 and \$6,800 per month.

Dennis Glackin, AICP described to the PC and public the desired zoning change and amendments to the current Institutional zoning they would be seeking in order for this project to be feasible. Mr. Glackin stated that our Institutional zoning was created in the 1980's and has had only minor amendments since. The applicant has issues with the side and rear setbacks with respect to this proposed new subdivided lot. They would also be seeking to direct all traffic to a side street versus onto Ridge Pike. Lastly, they would seek an amendment to the loading dock location. The proposed site would have approximately 85 parking spaces. They could provide no yield plan for the remaining 33.57 Acres of the Tecee Tract should it be AAA Zoning again.

## **Public Comments**

Rhoda Schatz, 9311 Eagleview Drive. Recalls that there was an Atria facility at one time on Willow Grove Avenue and Stenton Ave. The facility there has changed hands many times. Can the applicant comment on the longevity of their facilities? Mr. Lane commented that in his time at Atria since 2005 he is not aware of any loss of facilities, in fact there has been only acquisition, retention and renovation to existing facilities.

Sheryl Jacobs, 9233 Eagleview Drive. Stated that her mother was in Atria on Willow Grove and Stenton Ave. There were never enough parking spaces available for visitors. Feels the applicants estimate for visitors and allowance for parking is grossly underestimated. The PC did comment that to their knowledge that facility was a retrofit and not built for the current usage. Ms. Jacobs also expressed concern about the amount of traffic generated by not only the employees but vendors to the site. There is significant traffic issues already on Ridge Pike and promises from the state to widen and improve Ridge have not happened. Lastly, she and her neighbors have spent significant amounts of money to address storm water runoff from Ridge Pike and this new project adds additional impervious surface.

Joanne Scoles, 9308 Eagleview Drive. Stated that traffic congestion is worst between the hours of 3:30 and 7 pm. A left turn lane is needed onto Manor Road. The developer is exhibiting a lack of sensitivity to the traffic problem.

Margaret Goldfarb, 9330 Eagleview Drive. Commented about Mr. Lanes presentation that the Atria facilities strive to assimilate into the communities. Asked if Mr. Lane has documented measurable feedback of the satisfaction of the neighbors to these facilities? Mr. Lane had no documentation but commented that with each community they try to offer services and be open and a resource.

Judy Novey, 9200 Eagleview Drive. Pointed out to the PC that the Masonic Lodge has had 60 additional units approved and they will be exiting on Manor Road and that they are planning on eliminating their exits on Ridge. They currently have 165 beds.

Gary Bromberg, 273 Northwestern Avenue. Wanted to emphasize this tract is part of the Springfield Township Pan Handle and should be preserved, as it is one of the few locations of open space still open. The proposed development will affect property values of neighboring home owners. The Applicant seems to have a long history of changing their mind what zoning they need. This proposed rezoning is a downgrade in zoning. This is a land grab and no neighbors want this or support this proposal.

Liam Wood, 2 Golf View Drive. Does not like the applicants logic that just because there are two similar uses on either side that its appropriate to put Atria in the middle. Seems to him this is becoming a stretch of highway with redundancy.

Bob Schwarz, 277 Northwestern Avenue. Does not want to consider any one part of the project rather the property as a whole. The applicant cannot get utilities up Ridge and approached him for access which he denied. The key to the property is how they will develop the rear portion. The developer has come right back to their original proposal of putting a 4 story building on the front of the parcel.

Ross Weiss commented the Applicant was simply present this evening to ask to have an opportunity to have a hearing and thusly respond to the concerns of the PC and the Public this evening.

## **PC Comments**

The PC does not see how this proposed subdivision and development promotes open space on the site or is in line with the Townships Plan for preserving the Pan Handle portion of the Township. They offered the following additional comments to the applicant;

1. A comprehensive plan to know what would be proposed on the remainder of the site is needed, specifically a yield plan being sensitive to slopes.
2. A well-developed storm water management plan that not only meets but exceeds expectations required.
3. A strong consideration about the traffic impact on the community will be considered and the intersection improvements needed at the light at Manor Road.
4. Measurable assurances that the developer will attain LEED Certification.
5. A plan to address pedestrian safety, sidewalks, and Septa.
6. That consideration be taken on the rear of the Atria for aesthetics to potential development on the rear of the site.

M. Holland commented that there is no justification to rewrite the zoning for the entire township because of one site. They could ask for rezoning and then come in for variances.

B. Gutowski commented that the PC needs to know there is a need to consider recommending a change in zoning to a site. Ross Weiss responded that because of the existing uses on the neighboring sites, this is an appropriate change for zoning. No community remains static in their zoning; a community should change with their needs.

A.Murray commented that it bothers her not being able to have a full understanding of the development of the site as a whole. The PC should not have to make a decision on one portion of the Tract.

D. Sand commented that he feels that this request could be considered spot zoning. Ross Weiss responded that the true test of spot zooming is to consider the zoning around the site, feels that because of the usages of the Masonic Home and Andorra Woods, this site passes that test. J. Mascaro disagreed, the Masonic Home, which is in another Township is Residential Zoning with e Institutional overlay and Andorra Woods is Residential Zoning and a Non-Conforming use.

Chairman Gutowski reminded the public in attendance that this is a Sketch Plan presentation only and no action was going to be made by the Planning Commission at this time. They will summarize the comments of the Public and PC and forward those comments to the BOC.

Motion to adjourn J. Mascaro and seconded by S. Schagrin. Meeting Adjourned at 8:47PM

Amanda Helwig, Secretary