

**MINUTES OF MEETING
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 19, 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 6:59 PM, with the following members present: Mary Holland, George Schaefer, Bob Gutowski, Steve Schagrín, Angela Murray and David Sands. Robert Dunlop represented the Township and Jean Holland represented the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC). James Mascaro, Mandy Helwig, Joe Devine and Commissioner Bell were absent from this evening's meeting.

Minutes: Minutes of the October 15, 2013 meeting were read. Motion to approve the minutes was made by after amendment of the minutes by Bob Gutowski and seconded by S. Schagrín. Motion passed unanimously with 1 abstention (A. Murray).

Commissioner Report: No Report

**Tecce Tract – Re-Zoning Application
9303 Ridge Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA**

Ross Weiss, Esq.

Applicant is requesting that 7.22 acre of the Tecce tract at 9303 Ridge Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19044 be re-zoned from "AA" residential zoning, with overlays of "AAA" and "AAA-AQ1" residential zoning, to "Institutional" zoning. In addition, the applicant is seeking revisions to the dimensional setback and other development requirements included in zoning code sections 114-8D4.A., B., C., D. & E. (see copy of proposed ordinance changes attached as exhibit). The "AAA-AQ1" residential zoning overlay would be removed for the remainder of the property not re-zoned "Institutional". The re-zoning of the 7.22 acres adjacent to Ridge Pike would make it possible to construct a 125-unit/175 bed, 125,000 sq. ft. Assisted Living facility on the newly subdivided lot.

Mr. Weiss began the presentation by offering an overview of the history of the property which has been subject to several land development and zoning change applications over the last ten years. He also reviewed the process for re-zoning and explained why in the case of the Tecce Tract re-zoning was more appropriate than seeking a zoning variance to allow the assisted living use on property because the re-zoning would be similar to uses on neighboring parcels.

During the power-point presentation that was prepared for tonight's meeting Mr. Weiss explained that he will be introducing five experts to explain various aspects of the proposed. The first expert introduced was Mark Alexander, Senior Vice President of Atria Senior Living. Mr. Alexander gave an overview of the mission of Atria and showed the location of the 140 communities that they currently operate. He exhibited examples of communities that would be similar to the proposed facility – including photos from Atria Woodbriar Place in Falmouth, MA which would be similar to the new community in size, services offered and architecture. This facility is seeking LEED silver certification as the new assisted living center would be.

The Atria model includes three levels of care – independent, assisted living and memory care. The first two areas would comprise the largest part of the new building with meals offered in three separate dining venues. The memory care unit would be segregated at the back with its own courtyard and dining facilities. All services provided on a monthly rental basis with no additional up-front costs other than a normal security deposit. Mr. Alexander showed real estate marketing statistics that within a ten mile radius of the facility a population of 110,655 individuals 75 years

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of age and older. For this population only 2,868 units of senior housing exists within the ten mile radius. This ratio is referred to as the “penetration rate” for the identified market. A penetration rate of 2.6% is considered to be one that indicates a very strong market for senior housing in the future. This fact along with determinations regarding age profile and median income levels led Atria to identify the area as one that is highly favorable for future development within Atria’s business model.

Mr. Weiss introduced three letters: the first from a neighbor of Woodbriar Place, the second from the Zoning Board of Falmouth, MA and a letter of support from an adjacent neighbor of the Tecce Tract – Michael Young, 800 Andorra Rd. The former letters expressed support for the Woodbriar Place project from the perspective of a direct neighbor and the local government.

Dennis Glackin, AICP, PP was next up – to review zoning changes and potential fiscal impacts. Mr. Glackin showed aerial maps, amended zoning maps, existing land use maps and a site plan for the Tecce tract. He also reviewed each of the seven proposed changes to the existing “Institutional” district requirements (see attached proposed ordinance). He also went over the a summary of the fiscal impact statement that was previous prepared which showed a net gain for the Township of \$68,434 annually and \$658,009 for the School District.

Traffic Engineer John Yurick, P.E., PTOE, P.T.P. explained traffic changes that would take place in the future both through the Atria project and the Montgomery County road project proposed for Ridge Pike. The current operations of the traffic signal at Manor Rd./Ridge Pike is extremely poor. The new road would have two travel lanes in both directions, a left hand turn lane in both directions and right hand turn lanes from northbound Ridge onto the future, proposed extension of Manor Rd. (to be named Legacy Blvd.) adjacent to Atria/Masonic Home and Southbound Ridge onto Manor Rd. Crosswalks would also be installed to allow for safe access to public transportation. Mr. Yurick also showed that trip generation for the Atria plan would result in a drop in peak hours trips (10 AM & 39 PM) from the property compared to the former plan 52 age-restricted dwellings on the property known as Squire’s Ridge.

The next expert called upon was Rick Stoneback, P.E. to elucidate the stormwater management strategies that would be used during the development of the Atria facility.

Mr. Stoneback reviewed the basic principles of stormwater management and showed how these principles would be used to improve rate of stormwater leaving the site, volume of water leaving the site and quality of stormwater being released into a tributary of the Andorra Run that currently drains the property. Stormwater re-charge beds would be located under the parking, 20,000 sq. ft. of swaled area would be used to create a large rain garden and the existing pond, near the drive that accesses the Tecce Home at the back of the property, would be increased in size to impound stormwater to released by new outflow into the tributary of the Andorra Run. These techniques should improve all areas of stormwater management (rate, total volume and quality) ultimately leading to a net decrease of 10%, or more for volume of water leaving property in all storm event types.

After Mr. Stoneback finished, Peter Schmidt of EGA Architects, Newburyport, MA exhibited elevations of a 125,000 sq. ft., three to four-story proposed building for the site. Mr. Schmidt noted his professional specialization in the field of senior housing. His approach is to emphasize the local vernacular building style. In this situation he would use stucco and Wissahickon stone as

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the main finished wall material. Sloped roofs with upper floor dormers would be used through out the building. He also showed how the area of the building with four floors would be screened from view by a landscape barrier. Mr. Schmidt was the final expert for the forty-five minute power-point presentation. At this point Mr. Weiss invited questions from the PC.

Bob Gutowski asked if the stormwater improvements would mean an improvement for residents down below in the valley of the Andorra Run. Mr. Stoneback stated that the site itself would be discharging 10-15% less into the Andorra Run, but since the 7-8 acre site would only be a small part of a watershed that could be 600-800 acres the improvement would be small.

Mary Holland inquired if stormwater calculations based on a comparative existing condition of meadow, woodland or housing development. Mr. Stoneback stated that existing conditions there were close to being a classic example of meadow conditions so this comparative condition was used.

Steve Schagrin asked why a zoning change was proposed instead of a variance application. Mr. Weiss answered that the application would not meet normal standards for zoning definitions of "hardship", therefore the proper legal course would be to ask for a zoning change. Also, the variance process might make for an opportunity for an aggrieved party to appeal any ruling adding time delays.

George Schaefer questioned why relief from existing height restrictions was needed. Mr. Weiss said that the sloping nature of the property meant at the back that the height would be greater. Atria has spent a great deal of time refining the model through 140 facilities what is the optimal configuration. The depicted set-up is what is necessary for a successful outcome.

Mary Holland stated that if the complex were sold to a tax-exempt entity the fiscal impact statement would be changed to a loss through services required on the part of the Township. Mr. Weiss stated that technically this point is correct if a future operator could go through the complex process successfully of obtaining the exemption. Atria is not a developer though, they would be interested in operating this facility. Ms. Holland also asked if Atria was opened before the County project was complete what could be done to improve conditions on Ridge Pike. Mr. Yurick answered that the Masonic Home and Atria would cooperate on the construction of Legacy Blvd. and improvements at the intersection that would at least create the left turn lanes that are needed to ameliorate the worst public dangers that exists currently. Ms. Holland also inquired about pedestrian safety. Mr. Weiss stated that crosswalks and sidewalks will be included in plan so that workers could safely access the bus at both sides of Ridge Pike.

George Schaefer asked if changes in "Institutional" zoning requirements would be applicable to any property in the Township. Jean Holland answered that the changes would apply to all other properties zoned "Institutional". Bob Gutowski opined that any adverse effects for other properties could be handled during the up-coming review of the zoning code that the PC would be undertaking starting next year.

Mary Holland asked if building coverage and total impervious coverage were within existing limits for "institutional" zoning. Mr. Weiss answered that the building coverage would be 16% compared to a maximum of 20% and impervious coverage would be 37% compared to a maximum of 40%.

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With no further questions occurring to the PC, Bob Gutowski opened the questioning to the eighteen residents in attendance:

Judi Novey, 9200 Eagle View Dr., Lafayette Hill, stated her concerns for the safety of residents in the area because of the current unsafe condition of Ridge Pike where a motorist must turn from a northbound travel lane onto Manor Rd. This has been the site of many accidents. Can the applicant guarantee that the separate, dedicated left turn lanes will be installed? Mr. Weiss stated that Atria will do everything that they can to ensure that the left turn lanes go in. She also asked if the area for the expansion of Ridge Pike would be taken from both sides of the existing roadway. Mr. Weiss indicated that in the area of Manor Rd. the expansion of the roadway would be towards the Tecce tract.

Rhoda Schatz, 9311 Eagle View Dr., Lafayette Hill, emphasized the concerns of the residents of the area with traffic conditions on Ridge Pike. She asked if a safety study was done for the area during the preparations of the Traffic Engineer. Mr. Yurick said “No”, but the installation of left turn lanes is the required fix or the dangerous condition that exists. Mr. Yurick has had meetings with Penn D.O.T. and they are aware of the need. Jean Holland asked a follow-up question regarding the space for queuing at the left-turn lanes. Mr. Yurick stated that room for six cars in the queue was provided.

Brennan Preine, 265 Northwestern Ave., Phila., PA, made a general statement that the owner of the property and the neighbors have discussed the potential development of the Tecce tract for many years. The neighbors have again secured professional services to allow them to continue this discussion. He believes that a mutually beneficial solution can be achieved. He asked specifically how the pond would be enlarged since the existing outfall structure has the access drive over it. Mr. Stoneback stated that the whole area would be raised to create the berm and the road would be re-constructed. Mr. Preine inquired about sanitary sewer planning. Mr. Stoneback answered that the arrangement would be the same as for Squire’s Ridge with a pump station located on the property pumping up-hill to a connection with the system in Philadelphia near Northwestern Ave. Regarding the highway project Mr. Preine asked at which end of Ridge Pike the project would start – Mr. Yurick indicated that he had heard that it would start at Joshua Rd. and work towards the Philadelphia line. As stated before, the left turn lanes at Manor Rd. could be made operational before the final phase of the County project was complete by widening and re-stripping the area adjacent to Manor Rd. Mr. Preine closed by stating that the current proposal was similar to one submitted in 2004. He suggested that the current plan was another use that was too intense for the area – especially considering the contents of the Comprehensive Plan of 1998 and the new one. Bob Gutowski asked him directly if he would tell the PC what the neighbors wanted. Mr. Preine did not want to state their goals, but again asked the PC to only allow development on the site that was in conformance with the goals of the comprehensive plan for low, density residential only development in this part of the Township.

Gary Bromberg, 273 Northwestern Ave., Phila., PA, echoed Mr. Preine’s comments with more intensity. He feels that the owners of the property have been seeking relief from Township restrictions for over ten years with no other goal than the maximization of profits from the sale of the property. He has been opposing Tecce tract development plans for so long it seems like a second job. The core of his opposition is that the plans proposed will reduce the value of properties that are adjacent to the site. He has said and continues to say that the zoning of the land has been low-density residential since he purchased the property thirty-five years ago. If the

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zoning was changed to allow for this very intense use he thinks this would be an extremely unfair blow to the neighbors – especially since the property owner has shown no hardship.

Maxwell Gorson, 9304 Eagle View Dr., Lafayette Hill, stated his concerns for additional traffic from the complex on Ridge Pike and asked if the Eagle View development would be losing any land to the roadway expansion project. Mr. Weiss stated that the County would be the process of planning the right-of-way next year. Mr. Yurick re-stated that it was his understanding that roadway expansion would occur towards the Tecce tract in the area around Manor Rd.

Judi Novey, spoke again to urge the PC not to recommend approval of the plan until the development plans of the back of the property are revealed.

Hearing no more comments or questions for the audience, Bob Gutowski asked for final thought from the PC:

Mary Holland: Any decision on the property should depend on what happens on the back 26 acres. This area should be restricted to very low density development in the future to compensate for the intense development at the front that the Atria plan shows.

George Schaefer: He believes that the use is needed within the Township and consistent with adjacent uses, but there should be some form of compensation for this zoning change regarding the remainder of the property. Also, he objects to the changing of the development regulations for the “Institutional” district that are proposed and will be applicable to all properties that are so zoned.

David Sands: Is not opposed to the change of zoning, but would like to see a plan for the rear of the property.

Angela Murray: Understands that legally the applicant has proceeded correctly in asking for a change of zoning – after all the zoning code can be changed again in the future.

Jean Holland: stated the opinion of the MCPC that the area shown on the plans to be subdivided is too small for any possible expansion in the future. If the use is a success it will probably put pressure on the operator to expand. Also, the line between zoning districts should be made parallel to Ridge Pike which would be consistent with Township practice in the past.

Bob Gutowski: agrees with others who say that no decision should be made on the Atria project at the front until the plans for the 26 acre balance of the property are disclosed. Any housing project on this 26 acre area would add increase traffic concerns on Ridge Pike and impact neighbors. We have in the past seen cases where the Township has been willing to have density increased in one area for preserved open space in another. We believe that the Board of Commissioners should only consider this zoning change if a restriction of development rights on the rear portion is agreed to.

At the end of his comments Chair Gutowski put forth a motion that recommended that the BOC grant the request for re-zoning on the Tecce tract only if the applicant agrees to deed restriction on the remainder of the tract area that states that no further development of that portion will occur. This motion was seconded by Mary Holland. Bob Gutowski called for discussion of the

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motion, hearing no further discussion, he called for a vote. With six members voting “yea” and none voting “nay” the motion was approved unanimously.

Acme Market, 1640 Bethlehem Pike, Flourtown

Al Comly

Mr. Comly led the members in a review of the application received by the Township on 10/18/13 whereby the Flourtown Acme wishes to install a 1,528 sq. ft. café in the store. This café would serve beer, wine and liquor; and also offer beer for take-out sale. The only changes to the exterior of the building would be the installation of an additional entrance on the north side of the building. This exit is needed for the café to be in compliance with PA LCB regulations. There would also be some restriping of parking spaces required, but the total number spaces for the facility would stay the same.

As owner of the property which is leased to Acme, Mr. Comly stated that the changes are needed to keep Acme up to the service level of its competitors. Without these changes it might mean that in the future that Acme would seek other locations, perhaps outside of Flourtown. Several members said that they feel that Acme offers great service to their customers and have become an integral part of the community.

At the end of the discussion, Chair Gutowski asked if any member wished to make a motion regarding the application. Mary Holland moved that the PC recommend that BOC waive the requirement for land development for the project based on the four page plans that accompanied the letter of request from Acme Markets dated 10/15/13. Steve Schagrin seconded the motion. Mr. Gutowski called for a vote which approved the motion unanimously.

Jean Holland asked that all members able to attend come to the MCPC Comprehensive Plan Workshop to be held at the Upper Dublin Township Building on 11/20/19 at 7 PM.

Angela Murray made a motion to adjourn at 9:40 PM. This motion was seconded by Bob Gutowski and approved unanimously.

R. Dunlop