

**Minutes of Meeting  
Springfield Township Planning Commission  
November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

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 7:08pm, with the following members present: Amanda Helwig, Bob Gutowski, Steve Schagrin, David Sands, George Schafer, Joseph Devine, and Mary Holland. Robert Dunlop and Commissioner Baird Standish represented the Township. Brandon Rudd represented the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC). PC Members Angela Murray and James Mascaro were absent.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the October 21st, 2014 meeting were read. Motion to approve the minutes with minor amendment was made by S. Schagrin and seconded by D. Sands. All were in favor. M. Holland abstained.

**Commissioner Report:** No Report

**New Business**

9425 Stenton Ave. Preliminary Subdivision / Land Dev  
Erdenheim, PA. 19038

Sam Blake, Owner  
Brian Madsen, P.E.  
Steve Schreiner, Arborist

PC Members reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting with the Developer to see if the items requested at that time had been addressed. Specifically the Applicant revisited Option A. versus Option B. for the width of the road as requested by STEMS. In addition he Landscape plan was evaluated.

The Applicant prefers Option A which allows for a 20ft wide road, 52 spaces and less impervious surface versus Option B which is a 28ft wide road, 41 spaces and 52.5% pervious coverage. The Applicant feels Option A. looks better and is a better fit for the development. He is hopeful to appeal to the BOC.

**Public Comment**

Jane Jacoby, 112 Gordon Road. Asked, that since it is implied that if there is a parking need that residents of the new development will be parking on Gordon if she will be allowed to park on the new street. Applicant indicated no since this is a private development and not a public street as is Gordon.

**PC Comment**

J. Devine- Asked the Applicant to clarify about how both plans work with respect to compliance with STEMS. The Applicant indicated that both Plans A. & B. meet the required parking spaces. The Applicant indicated that he feels the 28ft width is excessive and that no other properties meet this in the township. Further, the Plan A. does demonstrate it will allow for emergency vehicles to access the development.

S. Schagrin- Likes the idea of more parking versus less parking. Supports Plan A.

G. Schafer- Thinks the driveways are tight for 16 ft for the homes staggered forward. Suggested compromise with stems by having more clearance on the turns and keep it the 20 feet on the straightaways. Okay with preferred Plan A.

D. Sands- Okay with both plans. Expressed hope that the developer will be able to move forward and compromise with STEMS with something acceptable to both.

M. Holland- Agrees that the 16ft is too tight, and would like to see 18 ft driveways. She expressed concern over the enforcement of parking. She suggested a different staggering pattern to reduce number of 16ft driveways.

A. Helwig – Okay with the preferred Plan A because less impervious and more parking.

B. Gutowski – Echoed M. Holland and asked the Applicant consider a variation on the staggering of the properties to reduce the number of 16ft driveways. Both have negatives, but also agrees he preferred Plan A. Ultimately, he noted, it is up to STEMS and the BOC.

The PC conducted a review of the Landscape Plan. The Applicants arborist present a report on the dead, dying or insignificant trees. One neighbor, Jane Jacoby, questioned the applicant if a large Elm leaning over on her property would be removed, he indicated in the affirmative. PC felt the choice of trees was appropriate for the site.

Applicant will be back at the next December PC Meeting.

### **New Business**

Amendment to Industrial Zoning

Will permit uses more appropriate to properties adjacent to residential uses and proposes certain properties be designated limited use. Specifically, on those properties, it would eliminate transportation uses, the storage of buses, limousines or taxi cabs. This came as a result of the Commissioners hearing concerns of the neighbors wanting to protect the neighbors in the future.

### **Public Comment**

Tory Vechione, S. Vechione Incorporated. The general consensus from all the Industrial land owners is that their properties will be devalued. While this does not currently affect him because he has less than 5 acres, his concern is that the direction the township is taking will eventually come to his doorstep and will affect him. Made the point that it is always the Industrial Land owner giving into the Residential Land owners.

Rick Anderson, 100 Ehrenpfort Ave. Told the PC that these changes proposed take away everything that is Industrial. It's the neighbors constantly pushing for change. Changes to zoning should not be the way to enforce issues being raised by neighbors.

Stephen Kurtz, several properties along E. Mermaid Lane. He bought Industrial and has a right to Industrial. Taking away and restricting his use in any way is a downgrade in zoning and taking away his value.

Bill Gordon, Tank Carr Property. Reiterated that taking away any use on any industrial property will affect its value. Questioned why only the largest parcels in the community are being targeted and who even proposed the changes in the zoning.

### **PC Comment**

B. Gutowski explained to the audience that that the trend in the state is to have multiple types of zoning, in this case limited industrial versus industrial. We look to our Comprehensive Plan for direction about where we want our community to go. The direction was clear, that we want to keep relatively just the way we are. So the question before the PC is, does this change benefit our community. Does it make sense that the largest tracts of land in the township are being targeted for change in zoning to limited industrial?

In reviewing the proposed ordinance changes, there are a few items the PC ran by the Industrial Land Owners present. The first was section reviewed was §114-121 Permitted Uses H.- “ Manufacturing, fabrication, assembly, processing and packaging of natural and man-made materials and products, except those permitted only by special exemption of the Zoning Hearing Board”. Both PC and the Public acknowledged this is a positive change to the code.

§114-121 Permitted Uses U.- PC and the Public commented the desire to strike from this verbiage “ and after the imposition of conditions designed to eliminate ) to the extent reasonable possible) adverse effects upon neighboring properties” because they felt the verbiage was too vague.

§114-12C2 Prohibited uses- Tory Vechione commented it would make more sense to eliminate this section and just say if you are not an approved usage you must come in for review.

§114-12C2 EEE. The PC would like to add tighter verbiage and add “Excessively noxious or excessively offensive”

§114-12C3 Lot and Building Area A. PC Discussed openly the lot size restriction and setback requirements. B. Rudd of the MCPC commented the setbacks being placed on the smaller parcels do not make sense and make the lots undevelopable. By maintaining large areas you are protecting a larger area.

M. Holland commented that Limited Industrial needs more buffer than Industrial, which doesn’t make sense.

A. Helwig commented that overall she is not supportive of the zoning change adding Limited Industrial. It makes more sense to work with the current zoning, improve it, and tighten up the language. Changing the zoning is not the solution to the enforcement issues of residential neighbors and their concerns. Conversely, perhaps we need to look at Residential Zoning when properties abut Industrial and but stronger buffer restrictions on the Residential side. There has to be a balance on both sides for both residents and business owners to cohabitate in the community.

B. Gutowski summarized the group’s feelings that at this time, the PC would like to tighten up the Industrial Zoning, eliminate the vagueness of the code. The rezoning of properties in the Township does not make sense at this time.

Specifically the PC objects for the following reasons:

- 1.) Hardship for the Landowners
- 2.) Devalues Industrial Parcels
- 3.) Leaves Undevelopable Parcels
- 4.) Limits opportunities in the Township
- 5.) This is not the tool to use to address Bus Depot Issues in the Township

Discussion will continue on this topic.

### **Flood Plain Ordinance**

PC Members are requested to review the Draft of the Floodplain Ordinance and bring their comments and questions to the December PC Meeting. B. Rudd requested the Solicitor and Engineer review the draft as well. It will go back to MCPC for a final review before going to the BOC. Thank you to B. Rudd for the first draft.

Motion to adjourn made by S. Schagrin and seconded by B. Gutowski. Approved 9:14pm

Minutes by A. Helwig, Secretary