

**Minutes of Meeting
Springfield Township Planning Commission
February 17, 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 7:01 pm, with the following members present: Amanda Helwig, Bob Gutowski, Steve Schagrin, George Schafer, James Mascaro and Mary Holland. Robert Dunlop and Commissioner Baird Standish represented the Township. Donna Fabry represented the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC). PC Members David Sands, Angela Murray and Joe Devine were absent.

Minutes: Minutes of the February 3, 2014 meeting were read. Motion to approve the minutes with minor amendment was made by Mandy Helwig and seconded by Steve Schagrin. Motion approved unanimously.

New Business

Industrial District Zoning Amendment

Bob Gutowski provided an overview of the industrial district zoning amendment that has been developed with the assistance of the Montgomery County Planning Commission. The ordinance introduces new development setbacks for the district and divides uses into two classes which may be considered light and heavy industrial uses. The class II, or heavy uses, would be subject to greater setbacks and increased separations from adjacent, residential uses.

Steve Schagrin asked if there was any territorial designation for the class I and II uses such as in the last draft of the ordinance. Bob Gutowski answered that both classes of uses were permitted uses within the industrial district, but subject to different setbacks.

Mary Holland stated that she that there has not been sufficient information provided regarding the need for modification of the industrial zoning article. Bob Gutowski stated that the justification lies in the impact that some industrial uses has on adjoining residential properties.

Steven Kurtz, 1100 E. Mermaid La., Wyndmoor, PA, Mr. Kurtz informed the PC that he owns several buildings on E. Mermaid La. in Wyndmoor and considers the present ordinance to severely impact his potential re-development of these properties in the future. The biggest problem with this draft is the change in setbacks. He urged the PC to consider the current draft from the point of view of the owner.

William Gordon, Tank Car Corp., 1725 Walnut Ave., Oreland, PA believes that this ordinance puts a very heavy burden on all businesses trying to operate in within the

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industrial zoning district. He does not believe that this ordinance draft addresses any of the suggestions made by industrial property owners concerning the previous draft.

Torre Vecchione, 111 Oreland Mill Rd., Oreland, PA stated that once again the industrial property owners are asked to make changes on their properties to suit residential property owners next door. The industrial owners will lose value in their properties and potentially be put out of business altogether. The current draft isn't an improvement over the last draft, and he reiterated his dislike for any of the proposed changes to the industrial district.

Christine Hesser, 127 Orlemann Ave., Oreland, PA made a full statement to the PC that the main concern over uses within the industrial district comes from the attempt to locate a school bus terminal at the Tank Car property in summer of 2013. The impact from light, dust, bad odors and noise from this use was horrible for the adjacent homeowners. Seeing that there is no repeat of this use right next to her property is her #1 concern. She believes strongly that homeowner have the right to enjoy their properties as much as anybody else. Bob Gutowski stated in response that many impactful uses can be stopped by the enforcement of the disorderly conduct chapter of Township Code (chap. 21) which address nuisances such as noise, light, odors and other environmental problems.

Margaret Mary Burks, 127 Orlemann Ave., Oreland, PA stated that some businesses by their nature are completely unsuited to be located near homes. The school bus terminal at the Tank Car property was one such incompatible use. Since many other municipalities have light and heavy industrial districts the residents of Springfield are only asking for an up to date industrial zoning code to protect their interests. Mr. Vecchione spoke before about property values, and I have concerns about my own property's value – which was definitely lowered by the buses at the Tank Car property.

Bob Gutowski asked Donna Fabry if the MCPC could run show some of the impacts from the proposed ordinance on a sample of properties within the industrial district. She stated that it would be possible to have something ready by March. Bob also stated that he thought it would be better to restrict nuisances on industrial properties by enacting more stringent restrictions on noise, light, etc.

Mandy Helwig made a motion that after reviewing the current draft of the industrial district ordinance the PC does not recommend that the Board of Commissioners moves forward with the formal adoption process. This motion was seconded by Steve Schagrin and approved unanimously.

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Springfield Township Floodplain Conservation Ordinance

Donna Fabry, MCPC presented the complete draft of the floodplain conservation district ordinance. She reminded the PC that because FEMA is updating the Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the Township it is necessary for all municipalities to update their floodplain ordinance. Without this update homeowners in the Township would not be able to obtain flood insurance.

Rob Dunlop asked if residential accessory uses within floodplains were still allowed under the new ordinance. Donna answered that driveways, patios and small sheds were allowable within floodplains. After this discussion Dave Sands made a motion to recommend that the BOC starts the formal adoption process for this ordinance. This motion was seconded by Mandy Helwig and approved unanimously.

BOC Update

Com. Standish informed the PC that the BOC has received a new proposal for the Lloyd Tract that is also being submitted to Cheltenham Township for this property shared by the two municipalities. This zoning change will be coming before the PC in March.

Bob Gutowski announced the passing of Gary Bromberg a resident of the Township who lived off of Northwestern Ave. on the panhandle near the Tecce tract. Gary had been involved in many PC meetings regarding the Tecce property over the past 12 years. All PC members were saddened to hear of his passing.

Elections

PC members agreed unanimously to keep Bob Gutowski as chair and Jim Mascaro as vice-chair. Mandy Helwig informed that she was regrettably ending her time as secretary, which naturally led to a long discussion about the election of a successor. At the end of this discussion Jim Mascaro volunteered to take minutes for this year, but would look to turn the responsibility over for 2016. This proposal was approved by acclamation, and afterward a motion for adjournment as made by Bob Gutowski. This motion was seconded by Mandy Helwig and approved unanimously at 8:45 pm.

