

MINUTES OF MEETING
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 2, 2015

The Springfield Township Planning Commission (PC) held its semi-monthly meeting on the date noted above. Vice Chair James Mascaro called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with the following members present: David Sands, Joseph Devine, Mandy Helwig, Angela Murray and George Schaefer. Bob Gutowski and Steve Schagrin were absent.

Staff liaison Robert Dunlop, represented the Township and Community Planner, Donna Fabry represented the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC). Baird Standish, Commissioner liaison was unable to attend due to a recent injury. The minutes of the May 5, 2015 meeting were amended for two spelling errors. A motion for approval of minutes was made by David Sands and seconded by Amanda Helwig. This motion was approved unanimously, with Jim Mascaro abstaining.

Limited Industrial Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Donna Fabry provided an overview of the ordinance which has been reviewed by the planners on six previous occasions. The changes to this draft include:

- elimination of dwelling use (since the district is meant to provide a buffer between industrial and residential uses)
- packing and trucking have been listed as separate uses in the Industrial district
- Side yard setbacks in the limited industrial district have been reduced to 10' min. with a 15' required building separation.
- Industrial dimensional setback are now unchanged from existing requirements.

Vice Chair Mascaro asked for community input after this review.

Christine Hesser, 127 Orlemann Ave., Oreland, spoke to urge the PC to recommend approval of the limited industrial amendment to protect homeowners from the impacts from businesses such as the Cheltenham transportation, LLC bus terminal. She provided 4 items to inform the PC. The first was a photo of a sign illegally erected by an owner of an industrial property regarding what he felt were his rights to business operation. The second was an article from newsworks.org about the disruptions caused by a Philly Transportation, LLC bus depot in East Falls (this company is also operated under the supervision of Eric Faust). The last two items were an online petition with 287 signatures and a hard copy petition with 60 signatures that urge the BOC to deny a land development application for a school bus depot use at 1725 Walnut Ave., Oreland – referred to as the Tank Car Corp. property.

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Vice Chair Mascaro reminded Ms. Hesser that tonight's meeting was not about a land development application, but the limited industrial ordinance. He asked Rob Dunlop about the status of a school bus use under current industrial zoning. Mr. Dunlop explained that the Township had previously deemed the use improper in 2008, but the ZHB had allowed the use in 2009 as an extension of the "motor vehicle yard or terminal" use in sec. 114-121.I of the zoning code.

Alan Curry, 1600 Walnut Ave., Oreland, asked if the changes in the limited industrial ordinance would outlaw the use everywhere. Mr. Dunlop answered that the previously established school bus uses would be considered "pre-existing, non-conforming uses" and allowed to continue unless they were stopped for any consecutive 12 month period.

Cindy Conway, 325 Roesch Ave., Oreland inquired about the impact of the ordinance on future uses – such as the Peco property on Roesch Ave. Ms. Fabry explained how the new ordinance would work regarding new uses within the limited industrial district.

Tom Ford, 1000 E. Mermaid La., Wyndmoor, asked about continuity of use for businesses in the limited district. Mr. Mascaro reminded him of the answered previously provided regarding the school bus use. This "grandfathering" would apply to any business that was legally established in an industrial district when limited industrial zoning is adopted.

Candace Kashner, 7700 Elm St. Wyndmoor, asked about the legal status of a landscaping business that is located behind Mr. Ford's building at 1000 E. Mermaid La. Mr. Dunlop explained that the use of the property by a landscaper was legal, but the storage of large amounts of waste would be monitored by the Township. Ray Walsh, 7701 Elm St., Wyndmoor, added that he was also very concerned about this practice. Mr. Ford, stated that he would work with the landscaper to clean-up the property.

Greg Woods, 1014 E. Mermaid La., Wyndmoor, questioned whether, or not existing dwelling use could remain in a new limited industrial district. Mr. Mascaro pointed out that dwelling use would also be subject to "grandfathering".

Kevin Burke, 7600 Cheltenham Ave., Wyndmoor, asked if his property was included in the new district. Mr. Dunlop answered that his property is not included in the limited industrial district.

George Karl, 306 Oreland Mill Rd., Oreland, inquired if the input of residential neighbors mattered in the re-zoning process. Mr. Mascaro told him that both the PC and BOC put a great deal of importance on community input.

Margaret Mary Burke, 127 Orlemann Ave., Oreland, spoke extensively to remind the planners that the limited industrial ordinance was a good start in protecting homeowners from the harmful impacts of surrounding businesses. She cited 6 points in the Township Comprehensive Plan that supported the adoption of the ordinance. She felt that the ordinance would help property values in residential areas like hers. She would not be opposed to any type of sustainable development near her house, but since Eric Faust has not shown that he cares about neighboring property owners she will oppose the operation of Cheltenham Transportation, LLC in Oreland. Ms. Burke reminded the planners that Rep. McCarter also supports the adoption of the limited industrial ordinance.

Torre Vecchione, 111 Oreland Mill Rd., Oreland, said that only 2% of the Township is zoned industrial currently and he feels that the owners of these properties do not support the limited industrial ordinance. These owners are always being asked to modify their properties and practices to suit the surrounding property owners. They have been asked to give too much and he cannot state strongly enough that he feels the current ordinance is unfair.

Hearing no further public comment Vice Chair Mascaro asked the PC for comments and questions regarding the ordinance.

Mandy Helwig asked if a new analysis had been done to show how the building setbacks would impact owners of limited industrial properties. Donna Fabry provided the previously produced graphics and explained how they have been modified by the new draft of the ordinance.

Joe Devine asked if a similar use section could be added to the ordinance such as exists in sec. 114-121.M of the current industrial article.

George Schaefer stated that he thought the ordinance could be improved in several areas:

1. No side yard setbacks should be included in the district since the buffering that is required with a border with a residential property is sufficient separation. The intention is separate residential and industrial uses, not similar uses within the limited industrial district.
2. The impervious coverage limitations should not be applied in a patchwork nature, but should be part of a holistic approach of stormwater control in the Township. He urged the creation of impervious coverage limitations for all zoning districts.
3. No accessory uses have been included, such as those in 114-121.N.

Mandy Helwig said she supported a reduction in setbacks for the limited industrial district to allow owners the ability to support new and self-sustaining uses in the future.

Hearing no further discussion from the planners Mr. Mascaro asked if any motions could be put forward regarding the limited industrial ordinance amendment. George Schaefer made a motion that the PC recommend approval of the ordinance with the following recommended changes:

1. Side yard setbacks should be the same as in the industrial zoning district.
2. No impervious limitations should be imposed without being part of a review of all zoning district in the Township.
3. A section regarding similar uses should be inserted in the ordinance – such as sec. 114-121.U of the proposed industrial zoning ordinance.
4. A section regarding accessory uses should be inserted in the ordinance – such as sec. 114-121.W of the proposed industrial zoning ordinance.

This motion was seconded by Joe Devine and approved by a vote of (5-1), Angela Murray opposed. All business on the agenda having been discussed, a motion to adjourn was made by Angela Murray at 8:50 PM. This motion was seconded by Joe Devine and approved unanimously.