

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 15, 2019**

The Springfield Township Planning Commission met in a regular monthly meeting at 7:00 PM. at the Springfield Township Building. Present at the meeting were Ms. Helwig, Mrs. Blankin, and Mssrs. Bruce, Devine, Sands and Gutowski. Also present at the meeting was Mr. Taylor, the Township Manager, and Mr. Jarrell, Community Planner.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the October 1, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously (Helwig/Bruce) with minor typographical corrections.

Historic Resources Overlay District

Prior to the meeting, the planning commission members were provided a copy of an amended draft of the subject ordinance incorporating comments from the October 1 meeting of the planning commission. The amended ordinance also included modifications by the solicitor's office in response to certain questions or comments posed by the planning commission at the October 1 meeting. The following items were discussed in detail:

Membership of the Historical Commission – Unlike all other advisory boards, the proposed ordinance permits non-residents of the township to be members of the Springfield Township Historical Commission that is created by the ordinance. However, a majority of the five member commission must be composed of township residents. Mr. Bruce was concerned about setting a precedent for other boards and suggested limiting the membership to residents only. Due to the very specific skill set and/or qualifications required of the individual members in the ordinance, the other members of the planning commission suggested that it would be better to allow for the flexibility in membership.

Denial of an application – The solicitor's office was asked to offer an opinion on the removal of verbiage that would allow the Township to deny an alteration or demolition permit. The solicitor responded that since the opt-in process is totally voluntary, the municipality's ability to deny an application should not be removed. It was further suggested that it is inherent in any permit application that if certain criteria are not met, then a permit may be denied. Finally, without the ability to deny a permit application, there is no incentive for a landowner to comply with the ordinance. The consensus of the planning commission was to retain the denial provisions as written.

Bond or escrow provisions – Mr. Bruce previously questioned the need for an applicant to post a bond or escrow in conjunction with an alteration or demolition application, as well as how it may be calculated. It was noted that the bond or escrow is an optional provision that is not required for every application, but is available if the Township determines it is necessary. The solicitor included language to clarify that the bond or

escrow may be calculated by the Board of Commissioners, or its designated and qualified employee or consultant. After review, a majority of the planning commission members were satisfied with the language contained in this section as well.

Design Guidelines – The planning commission suggested the removal of “In such rare instances” from the first sentence contained in Section 46-9.K of the ordinance related to recommended demolition activities.

A motion (Helwig/Blankin) to recommend the proposed ordinance to the Board of Commissioners for the purpose of scheduling a public hearing and possible ordinance adoption was unanimously approved by the members in attendance. Mr. Gutowski commended the work of the subcommittee members who helped to develop the ordinance and cited each by name.

Old Business

The planning commission expressed their interest to revisit the previously reviewed modifications to the township’s parking ordinance. Mr. Jarrell of the Montgomery County Planning Commission was asked to provide Mr. Taylor with a copy of the ordinance for distribution.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Taylor,
Township Manager