

LOWER FREDERICK TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

October 19, 2017

53 Spring Mount Road/Schwenksville, Pa. 19473

Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm.

Present for Roll Call:

Planning Commission Members:

Chuck Yeiser, Chairman

Ernie Schmitt, Vice Chairman

Philip A. Smith, Secretary

Hans Schweikert

Ranier Keown

Barb Colletti

Pam Hartman

Donna Fabry, MCPC Community Planner

Township Staff:

Carol Schuehler, Township Engineer

Mr. Kevin Tobias, Township Manager

also in attendance:

Bob Yoder, Chairman LF Board of Supervisors

Mr. Terry Sacks, LF Township Supervisor

1. Motion to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2017 Lower Frederick Township Planning Commission meeting.

Motion: Mr. Ernie Schmitt

Second: Hans Schweikert

Motion carries unanimously

2. Public Comment and Inquiry

A. An exploratory question in behalf of the Rhodes family was posed to the Planning Commission involving the purchase 128 Little Road (6 acres) in order to facilitate a possible access to the Rhodes Farm Property on Simmons Road. The Rhodes Farm property (28 and 30 Simmons Road) contains 104 acres of land (R-1 and Light Industrial Zoning). The property owner, Mr. Rhodes wishes to look at the option of having a second access to his R-1 property in order to best accommodate its future development potential.

Township Engineer's Comment:

The property owners would be best served by entering and application as "Minor Subdivision" seeking a lot line change. Site distances on Little Road are also a concern so the applicant should seek PennDOT guidelines to ensure acceptable sight distance are possible at the possible access point.

Planning Commission response:

With the limited information presented from the representatives, the Planning Commission has no objections with the concept other than those expressed by the Lower Frederick Township Engineer.

B. Introduction of the New Township Manager

Mr. Yeiser introduced the new Lower Frederick Township Manager, Mr. Kevin Tobias to the Planning Commission members and the audience.

3. Informational, Pa. Act #26- Ms. Carol Schuehler, Township Engineer

Ms Schuehler provided the Planning Commission members and the public with a summary of the newly enacted Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act- Official Plans of July 20, 2017, aka: "Pa. Act 26". Noted was the fact that the new regulations will most significantly effect township subdivisions that have conditions not suitable to ordinary on site septic system. Currently Pennsylvania Sewage Planning employs only three types of on site sewage systems, conventional in ground, above ground sand bed systems, and spray irrigation systems. The new regulations include many alternative system designs for sewage planning. These new alternative designs enable previously unacceptable properties to subdivide by proposing alternative on site systems. Ms. Schuehler recommended that the Planning Commission should begin considerations for the changes that Pa. Act #26 will have on Township existing ordinances, zoning regulations, and associated planning objectives and goals. Cited were the Township's zoning code, "Environmental Adjustment Factors", alignment to the the CPVRPC Comprehensive Plan for growth and rural conservation areas, the need for "second replacement sites" within the existing "SALDO", and the general pros and cons related to environmental protection with aging and failed on site systems viewed in relationship to the employment of approvable alternative systems.

Mr. Ernie Schmitt- conveyed to the Planning Commission members and the public his perceptions of alternative systems vs. other sewerage options from his experience.

Ms. Donna Fabry- interjected that larger land tracts with subdivision proposals would not opt to plan or utilized the options provided for under Pa. Act 26. These types of developments would like seek the use of public sewerage.

4. Ragusa Subdivision (aka: Metropolitan Tract) Informational and Discussion- Mr. Yeiser

Mr. Yeiser defined the protocol for the informational discussion and question period. It was conveyed to the public that the meeting's agenda provided for information gathering and a chance to get questions answered, noting the Planning Commission is not the body or Township forum for grievances to be addressed. Under the terms of State Municipal Law the former Greenway Development (aka: Ragusa Tract Sudvision) received preliminary approval, therefore it has certain inherent rights. Thus, changes to the former preliminary approved plan are not feasible. It was also noted by Mr. Yeiser that in the years from 2004 (the inception) to 2008 (the preliminary approval) the Greenway Development plan went through 14 reviews and public hearings, amongst the Township Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. According to Ms Schuehler, Township Engineer, still pending for the development is the finalized sewage planning approval, FEMA permitting, and approval from the Schwenksville Authority.

Noted Questions and Comments:

*Ms. Linda Jansson raised concerns about her interpretation of the Pa. Municipal Code and its application to the rights of the developer and property owner based on their vested interests.

Planning Commission's position: These are perceptions and concerns that exceed the planning commission and would be best addressed via the Township Solicitor via a Board of Supervisors work session.

*Mr. Bob Burns raise the need for a second active or emergency access to the development plan.

Township Engineer's reply: A second access was endorsed by the planning commission at the onset of the planning process, but with wetland delineation there was no reasonable option on the site. Therefore, the developer included a Boulevard Entry and possible second entry location should the adjoining property owner be willing to permit or sell and road easement or emergency easement access.

*Mr. Bob Burns (additional concerns)

- tot lot
- snow plowing within the internal streets
- paving of existing impacted township roads
- fencing open space and along Jacobs property
- home sizes and township impervious coverage regulations
- handicap ramps on Zieglerville Road
- cross walk safety issues
- internal site parking issue
- traffic study areas

*Township Engineer noted: Traffic studies were conducted in 2005 and 2016 and both reported similar conclusions.

*Mrs. Barb Colletti, Planning Commission member raised the question, What is the difference between a "Patio Home" and "Village House"?

*Mr. Philip Smith, Planning Commission member expressed concerns about the development's current plan lacking provisions for students being picked up and discharged by school buses. He cited the fact that bused student would likely be endangered if some accommodation(s) were not made for safe gathering and walking at the Zieglerville Road bus stopping area. Further, the parents/guardians waiting in their vehicles to pick up student have no accommodations for parking at the development's entry. Mr. Smith recommended that the PVSD be consulted for comment and input prior to the Township granting final approval.

*Mr. Bryan Hill, Zieglerville Road expressed that he wished to have the Township continue to further its efforts with the project in order to realize the sewerage need that he has with his property and the other properties that he believes exist within the Township.

5. General Planning Commission Discussions:

*Mr. Philip Smith, LF Planning Commission expressed that in view recent changes with the factors involving the proposed Goshenhoppen Creek Zoning Overlay Ordinance he feels that the June 8, 2017 Planning Commission recommendation for the Board of Supervisors to adopt the ordinance should be reconsidered by the Planning Commission and perhaps retracted. The Melbourne Hill Plan conditions approved in 2008, the public's adversity expressed at the Sept. 5, 2017 Township meeting, and the possible impacts within our community of densities that would be realized under the proposed zoning change warrant a complete reconsideration of the benefits and losses. Those things stated, Mr. Smith requested a motion and vote on his request.

*Mr. Hans Schweikert, concurs with Mr. Smith and is agreeable to making the requested motion for retraction of the June 8, 2017 Planning Commission recommendation.

*Mr. Yeiser, LFPC Chairman, believes a retraction was appropriate for the Planning Commission's consideration, and further the revisiting of the proposed zoning ordinance would be important to undertake in conjunction with the Lower Frederick Township Board of Supervisors.

*Mr. Bryan Hill emphatically expressed that for the Planning Commission to take such action would thwart the advancement of the Goshenhoppen Intercept project, and thus be unacceptable to the greater need of the community to sewer that area of the Township

*Mr. Yeiser expressed to Mr. Hill that his expression was based on a premise that is personal and scare based. The Planning Commission realizes that he has a personal sewage related issue, however the Planning Commission serves to work towards the best solutions for Township Planning issues. Therefore there is simply an need to revisit the subject ordinance to ensure that the best planning decisions are being made. Mr. Hill was reminded that his accusations and inferences were inappropriate and should hence forth be curtailed.

*Planning Commission Member motion:

The Lower Frederick Township Planning Commission withdraws its recommendation for the proposed Goshenhoppen Overlay Zoning Ordinance as discussed and adopted at the June 8, 2017 public meeting. In the future should the Lower Frederick Township Board of Supervisors move forward with further discussion of creating a Goshenhoppen Overlay Zoning District, the Lower Frederick Township Planning Commission requests that the commission be an integral part of that process.

Motion: Mr. Schweikert

Second: Mrs. Hartman

Motion carries: six votes in favor, and Mr. Ernie Schmitt abstaining

Noted by Mr. Schmitt, "development is coming to Lower Frederick Township"

6. General Announcement- Mr. Yeiser

The Lower Frederick Township Agricultural Security District has now been fully approved and is in place. This will provide a foundation for farm and larger property owners to keep their land undeveloped if they so choose to do so.

7. General Announcement-

The County Planning Staff and Commissioners did a recent tour of the Swamp Creek Corridor as part of the County's Swamp Creek Greenway Feasibility Study.

8. Announcement- Donna Fabry, MCPC Community Planner

Ms. Fabry announced that she has been reassigned, and the Lower Frederick will be getting a new community planner in the coming weeks. Ms. Fabry will be taking up a new position doing environmental planning with the MCPC.

9. Motion to Adjourn:

Motion: Mr.Schmitt
Second: Mr. Yeiser

Motion carries unanimously
Meeting concludes at: 9:20 pm.