

**LOWER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

Meeting Notes for August 20, 2007

The Lower Pottsgrove Township Planning Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 20, 2007. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Geoffrey Dailey, at 6:30 p.m. and the following were in attendance:

Geoffrey Dailey, Chair
Frank Cebular, Vice Chair

Alyson Elliott, Assistant Manager
Doug Dilliplane, Engineer
Matthew Edmond, MCPC
Mary Morrison, MCPC

Commissioners Jonathan Spadt, Thomas Troutman, and Anthony Doyle were also in attendance.

As the meeting did not have a quorum; no official business was conducted. The following is a transcript of the discussion items for this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

(#07-05) Viola M. Swinehart Estate, Lot Line Consolidation: proposal to consolidate two lots and an unopened road easement into one 38,000 sq. ft. lot at 1200 Crestwood Drive in an R-2 Residential District. [Plans prepared by Aston Surveyors/Engineers, Inc. dated 07-25-2007 and consisting of two pages].

Rich Hettrick of Aston Surveyors/Engineers, Inc. represented this application and discussed the recommendations of the Bursich review letter dated August 16, 2007.

As per the comments in the review letter, Mr. Hettrick said he would request a waiver from §602.C(1) which requires the applicant to show all existing conditions within 400 feet of the project. He said the depth of the water table was shown in the soils table on the plans. Mr. Dilliplane said he would accept that.

Under General Comments in the review letter, Mr. Hettrick said he would list all requested waivers on the record plan and place a note on the plan that any development would be in accordance with the Township's stormwater management ordinance.

Mr. Hettrick asked if the Fire Marshal had any comment about connecting the paper road on this property with the dead end drive off Randy Drive. Ms. Elliott said she had spoken with Mr. Babel prior to the meeting and he said he did not have any problems with the Township vacating its rights to the road easement.

Ms. Elliott also reported that the sewer engineer did not have any comments since the property would be connected to public sewer and would have a well.

Mr. Edmond said the County letter would be finalized and sent out in the mail early this week.

(#07-06) Pottsgrove School District Parking Lot, Amended Site Plan: proposal to expand the current parking lot by 20 additional spaces, add approximately 500 linear feet of sidewalk, and create the associated stormwater management facilities at 1301 Kauffman Road in an R-2 Residential District. [Plans prepared by Landmark Engineering, Inc. dated 07-27-2007 and consisting of four pages].

This application was not considered complete and was removed from the agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS

Swamp Creek Stormwater Management Ordinance

Ms. Elliott explained that the Township has been participating in a Swamp Creek Stormwater Study spearheaded by the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy and the Montgomery County Planning Commission since 1999. A recommendation of this study was to generate a stormwater management ordinance specific to the watershed. The ordinance was given to the Planning Commission for review and comment prior to the public hearing scheduled for October 1, 2007 at 6:45 p.m.

Mr. Dailey questioned the need for this stormwater management ordinance when the Township already had one and what made this one different for the existing ordinance. Mr. Dilliplane explained that there is a trend to look at stormwater management ordinances by watershed rather than by township, since watershed boundaries do not follow municipal boundaries. Mr. Edmond said it is a trend that the county promotes.

Ms. Elliott apologized for not understanding the nuances of the ordinances. Ms. Ebling was very involved in reviewing the ordinance and was prepared to discuss the ordinance with the Planning Commission. One or both of them would be prepared to answer Planning Commission member questions at the next meeting.

Grading Permit

Ms. Elliott had distributed the grading permit to members of the Planning Commission for their thoughts on the ordinance. She asked the Commission to consider the following actions:

- Request the Board of Commissioners authorize the Planning Commission and Township Staff to consider revising this ordinance;
- Leave the ordinance as it is;
- Table discussion on the ordinance until a future date when the Commission, Staff and Board of Commissioners would have the time or a better reason to review or revise it.

Mr. Cebular said he did not think changing the ordinance would solve the problems that Mr. Hallman had brought up at a previous meeting. Mr. Dailey said he thought the ordinance was relatively clear and straight forward, but wanted to bring it up at the next meeting when the Commission had a quorum.

422-Sanatoga Interchange Gateway Study

Ms. Elliott reported that Limerick Township had officially stepped out of the study. She is working with DCED to find a different funding source for the project. She is also working with the consultants to revise the scope of the project. She plans to have the study up and running by mid September.

Community Revitalization Plan

Ms. Elliott reported that she sent out 15 RFPs to consultants and received five responses. She and Rod Hawthorne interviewed all five firms and will be choosing a consultant at the September 23, 2007, Board of Commissioners' meeting. She said it will be a difficult decision because all the firms generated good, creative ideas for the Township. This study will also be up and running by mid September.

Natural Features Ordinance

Mary Morrison of the Montgomery County Planning Commission, who will be working with the Township to develop and revise the Township's Zoning and Subdivision & Land Development Ordinances, presented information about why it is important to protect natural features and how they can be protected. Mr. Dailey questioned the definition of a stream and how it relates to buffer requirements. If it is a depression that occasionally gathers and conveys water when it rains – would it be considered a stream and be subject to strict buffer requirements? Mr. Cebular said he would also like to have different definitions for the various

types of streams and identify the classes of streams that exist in Lower Pottsgrove. Ms. Morrison said she would address these concerns as part of the process.

Sign Ordinance Presentation

Mr. Edmond presented an overview of the new sign ordinance. He explained how the ordinance was set up and some of the new conventions it incorporated. Sign ordinances, he explained, tend to be either easy to navigate and rather vague or difficult to navigate and impose tight regulations. This ordinance strives to be very clear on regulations and easy to navigate, tending toward tighter regulations. The current ordinance is rather vague and establishes a “one-size-fits-all” criteria to signs in most zoning districts, while the new ordinance seeks to tailor sign types and sizes to the type of zoning district. This new ordinance seeks to react and anticipate modern sign conventions, such as electronic signs, and to reduce visual sign clutter that many members of the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners cited as problems in the Township.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Edmond challenged the Planning Commission to review the sign ordinance and pick it apart to try to find holes in it. He asked them to bring any questions or comments they had on it to their next meeting.

Comments

Mr. Doyle asked the Planning Commission about the size of parking spaces in the Township, saying that many of the spaces in the Township are too small. Mr. Dailey said that he believed all spaces were according to the standards of the Lower Pottsgrove Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for September 17, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Alyson Elliott, Assistant Manager