

The stated meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at the Township Administration Building, Abington PA., with Chairperson, Lucy Strackhouse presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: DiCELLO, COOPER, SPEARMAN, ROSEN, RUSSELL, GAUTHIER, STRACKHOUSE
Excused: ROBINSON, WEGGEL

Also Present: Director of Code Enforcement MATTEO
Planning & Zoning Official PENECALE
County Planner NARCOWICH
Assistant Township Manager WEHMEYER
Commissioner MARKMAN
Community Director STROTHER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Agenda Item PC2 – Application of Nancy Posel, owner of property located at 1060 Mill Road Circle, Rydal, PA. 19046

Ms. Strackhouse read agenda item PC2 into the record, and asked the applicant to present their plan.

Marc Jonas, Attorney with Eastburn & Gray, P.C. 470 Norristown Road, Suite 302, Blue Bell, PA., 19422, representing the applicant, said the application is to create a subdivision and to convey the new vacant lot of 1.71 acres to the Township, which will be deed restricted and will be worked on with Township Solicitor. This property is located next to the National Audubon Society. Township’s Zoning Ordinance allows for the creation of a landlocked piece of ground for open space; however, there is a practical issue of access, so we are looking at alternative ways to provide access and the applicant will agree to that as a condition.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for any comments from members of the Planning Commission. There were none. She thanked Ms. Posel for this wonderful gift to Abington Township.

Mr. Penecale noted there are waivers requested by the applicant as follows:

1. Section 146-11.A – Property Identification Plan.
2. Section 146.11.B – Existing Features Plan.
3. Section 146-11.C. – Proposed Layout Plan.
4. Section 146-11.D. – Grading Plan.
5. Section 146.11.L – Architectural Plan.

Mr. Rosen made a MOTION, seconded by Mr. Spearman to recommend approval of the application as well as approval of waivers requested by the applicant.

MOTION was ADOPTED 7-0.

Agenda Item PC1 – Overview of Walk, Park, Train, Abington Plan:

Ms. Strackhouse read agenda item PC1 into the record, and called on Township Manager Tara Wehmeyer.

Ms. Wehmeyer noted Simone Collins are the consultants assigned to the Walk, Park, Train, Abington Plan as well as worked on the Township's Master Bicycle Plan and are here this evening to provide a brief overview of the status of those projects.

Pankaj C. Jobanputra, AICP, Simone Collins, Landscape Architecture, 1191 East Lafayette Street, Norristown, PA. 19401, introduced his colleague Geoffrey T. Creary, and said also assigned to this project is Traffic Planning & Design firm, who will be working on intersection improvements and provide crash and traffic analysis for the project.

Scope of work includes inventory structures in the Township such as the seven stations, bus stops and bus routes close to the stations making sure there are connections and address any gaps existing between parks and open spaces and the schools. We will also review regional destinations such as neighborhoods, employment centers and retail centers noting where the gaps are to improve connections between the stations and the neighborhoods. We will also incorporate recommendations for stormwater management-best practices, so as to address stormwater issues.

We will come up with alternative recommendations and coordinate them with existing bike plan that was done last year. We have already begun mapping some of the gaps within the Township and noticed there is a need for sidewalks in many neighborhoods, but some neighborhoods have missing gaps within parks and stations and bus stops.

Signage is also an issue as many of the stations do not have proper signage directing into station areas, so that will be addressed as well.

We will also look at intersection enhancements as TPD recently conducted a crash analysis of crash data provided by the Township and PennDOT looking to see where accidents occur in the Township and ways to improve those intersections in terms of signalization, crosswalks, lighting and bump-outs. So the intersections are safer where they have a continuous safe access from a neighborhood or retail area to a bus stop or train station.

We will also look at parking feasibility at five stations and look at ways to improve parking and add some parking so as there is enough for the stations.

We will also look at current zoning to see how we can make recommendations for revisions for TOD making it competitive with other suburban areas and increase improvements and use of buses and trains. We have already begun creating GPS mapping and will incorporate that into zoning revision maps around the stations.

Finally, we will provide a draft and then final report including an executive summary, and during this process, will be public participation. In fact, there is a public meeting to be held on Monday, February 27th and there be another meeting held in May.

Mr. Creary said as a continuation of the bike plan, Township staff applied for grants in an effort to secure funding for implementing trails, and funds were awarded, so we took a look at what would work well within the Township for that funding. From Crestmont close to the Ardsley station, we saw good connections to parks and neighborhoods.

Update on Proposed Improvements to the intersection of Susquehanna & Old York Roads:

Ms. Wehmeyer acknowledged Mike Narcowich, County Planner of the MCPC, who assisted with the Old York and Susquehanna Roads project. The Township applied for three grants and was successful and awarded grant funding for the northwest corner of Old York Road and Susquehanna. The first grant is for the acquisition and demolition of properties: 1100, 1102, 1104 and 1106 Old York Road and also 1907 Susquehanna Road.

The second grant awarded was from PennDOT to realign that intersection at Old York and Susquehanna Roads.

Another grant awarded will be to continue work north on Old York to expand sidewalks and improve that intersection as a whole. She presented a map showing the area for improvement and through multi-modal grants the idea is to increase walkability, bicycling and overall pedestrian safety.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for the status of acquisition of properties.

Ms. Wehmeyer replied throughout the process the Township kept an open line of communication with the property owners informing them about application for grants, and staff has met with all property owners, and currently, we have two fully signed agreements-of-sale.

Mr. Spearman questioned whether the plans for the reuse of those properties passed the rights-of-way requirement for that intersection.

Ms. Wehmeyer replied yes.

Ms. Gauthier asked for the timeframe for demolition.

Ms. Wehmeyer replied once all properties have been acquired, and since grants have been awarded, we are ready to move forward.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether there will be sidewalk improvements on Susquehanna Road.

Ms. Wehmeyer replied yes.

Mr. Spearman asked what is the mechanism for deciding what to do with those properties?

Ms. Wehmeyer introduced Doug Callantine, Chairman of the EDC (Economic Development Committee) and Commissioner Michael Markman, Liaison to the EDC, who were present this evening and noted that this project has consistently been on the EDC's monthly agenda for review. We are in the midst of creating a Steering Committee for this project and there has been an EDC subcommittee for the past two years that reviews the project as well.

Commissioner Michael Markman of Ward 2 and Liaison to the Economic Development Committee, said as a guesstimate the properties will mostly likely be torn down in about one year. In the short-term, this project will open the intersection and correct the curvature of the road creating a nicer environment. In the long-term, there will be vision by the Township's Planning Commission as well as other Township's committees.

Mr. Russell extended an offer to review and participate in a future committee for this project.

Agenda Item PC3 – Overview of Proposed Replacement of Round House Building at Crestmont Park

Ms. Strackhouse read agenda item PC3 into the record, and called on Mr. Van Strother.

Mr. Van Strother, Community Director for the Township along with Amie Leighton of Daley & Jalboot Architects presented draft plan of proposed new building as well as a proposed site plan to the Board.

Mr. Strother said before the Planning Commission is a sketch plan in which bids have been sent out for construction of a new building. The project is a one-story recreational facility that supports interior and exterior for recreation activity at Crestmont Park. Crestmont Park is a vibrant active park for the citizens of Abington Township.

The existing one-story structure was originally constructed as a gazebo in 1946 by the Township and later was enclosed and it is not an effective facility. Staff of Township's Parks and Recreation Department believes more programming can be done by having a workable facility.

Ms. Leighton reviewed newly proposed building along with proposed site plan.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for the square footage of proposed building.

Ms. Leighton replied in total approximately 3,900 square feet.

Ms. Gauthier asked will the existing octagon building be reused?

Ms. Leighton replied it will be demolished as it is in poor condition.

Mr. Strother added that he consulted with Old York Road Historical Society as well as the Upper Moreland Historical Society about the existing gazebo structure and by enclosing it made it a dismal place inside.

Ms. Strackhouse noted that she was contacted by the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission about the building, and although there is history of it in the park, this is an important project and unless there are funds to move the gazebo to another area in the park, she does not want to hold the project up with that.

Ms. Gauthier commented there are two or three existing trees by the playground that were planted in honor of Unity Day as well as in honor of Township's Centennial and she wants to be sure those trees are not removed.

Mr. Strother replied he consulted with the EAC as well as Shade Tree Commission and we will be sensitive to that aspect.

Item PC4 – Application of Steven Kozlowski for property located at 1235 Meinel Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA. 19006

Ms. Strackhouse read agenda item PC4 into the record, and asked the applicant to present their plan.

Leslie Cunningham, Civil Engineer with Cornerstone Consulting 213 W. Main St. Lansdale, PA. 19446, representing the applicant, said we are requesting a recommendation of approval of a preliminary/final six-lot subdivision plan located off of Meinel Road. The 3.52 acre parcel contained a large single-family dwelling that was in poor condition, which has since been demolished.

The proposed plan consists of a six-lot subdivision that will be served by a new cul-de-sac-style roadway. Each of the six homes will have access off of the cul-de-sac. The site has been designed to meet all zoning requirements such as use lot size and setbacks so no zoning relief is necessary.

Additional site improvements include stormwater management, landscaping and underground utilities. The applicant has received a Township staff review letter dated, January 10, 2017 as well as review letter from the MCPC dated, December 29, 2016. Also, the applicant has been notified about concerns of neighboring property owners.

After receiving staff review letters, the applicant met with Mr. Matteo and Mr. Penecale to discuss the comments and the applicant revised the plan and resubmitted it. Revision No. 2 of the plan is the plan before the Planning Commission this evening.

In regards to the concerns stated in an email from a neighbor; the sanitary lateral for Lot #1 originally was proposed to tie into the easement behind the house, but it since has been revised to tie into the main within the roadway. Also, overflow of the rain gardens will flow into detention basin.

Regarding the tie-in for stormwater; there is an existing easement along the property line for sanitary and storm laterals and a drainage manhole that splits the property line that is located within existing easement. This manhole is where it is proposed to tie in the detention basin within the roadway and also rain gardens in the rear of Lots 2 and 3.

A neighbor raised the point to tie it into the storm lateral within the roadway, but to get the pipe from these inlets within the rear yards to the existing main, will not work.

Mr. Penecale clarified that the applicant is in receipt of the February 15, 2017 revision from Township's W.W.T. P. noting there is the ACT 537 Exemption application or a planning module for five additional EDU's.

Ms. Cunningham replied she received an email from Mr. Wrigley requesting a narrative of the project and to send the exemption mailer to Philadelphia's Wastewater Treatment Facility to sign off on.

Mr. Penecale continued that the Planning Commission is required to review an ACT 527 Exemption mailer and make recommendation on it. Also, Montgomery County Soil Conservation recently issued a review letter, and he asked the applicant to discuss the permitting process for NPDES permit.

Ms. Cunningham replied this project requires NPDES erosion and sediment control approval from the Montgomery County Soil Conservation as well an NPDES permit. Applicant submitted an initial submission and there is a response letter and the applicant is in the process of addressing it and will resubmit.

Mr. Spearman asked for further explanation on the NPDES permit.

Ms. Cunningham replied if there is disturbance of over one acre of earth, the State requires applying for an NPDES permit. Two major components of an NPDES permit are water quality or infiltration and the other is rate control. The permit requires infiltrate the difference of increased impervious coverage of the two-year storm and also requires to reduce all post stormwater runoff below predevelopment. So the flow leaving the site today cannot be exceeded in post-development.

Mr. Rosen clarified that approval of the NPDES permit has not been received by the applicant. Is that correct?

Ms. Cunningham replied that is correct. However, preliminary soil investigation was done where the soil engineer found bedrock, which is a limiting factor for the NPDES permit, so the site was redesigned in a stormwater management sense. The reason why there are so many rain gardens is due to the NPDES permit. Limiting zones are bedrock and high water tables and the MCSCD (Montgomery County Soil Conservation District) has tightened controls of the NPDES each year.

Mr. Penecale said Township staff review letter includes a list of waivers requested by the applicant.

Ms. Cunningham submitted a formal waiver request letter to Township staff as well as the Planning Commission.

Waivers request from Property Identification Plan and Existing Features Plan in which the applicant has done that for immediate adjoining properties. Waiver request for proposed layout plan; the plan shows existing utilities as what is provided at time of field survey. Waiver request for Utility Plan; the plan has been submitted; however, the plan is incomplete because it does not plot the location of required street lights, proposed gas lines, telephone lines and provide a street name. The plan submitted shows a proposed street light at the end of the cul-de-sac as well as in front of Lots 1 and 6 and the street name is still under discussion. Telephone and gas lines will be up to the utility companies to dictate final location of those lines.

Waiver request of Landscape Plan; the applicant had a tree survey done and the plan does show the rain garden design. Also, the developer would like the ability to provide landscape packages to the client to address their wishes for the site.

Mr. Steven Kozlowski, developer for the site, added that proposed rain gardens will look much like a front lawn with two feet of special soil atop of the ground and conservation mix.

Mr. Narcowich questioned whether any street trees are proposed.

Ms. Cunningham replied the applicant agrees to plant the required street trees, but not plant them within the five foot front property line every 50 feet.

Mr. Spearman questioned whether the landscape packages will conform to Township requirements.

Ms. Cunningham replied only Township requirement is street trees.

Mr. Rosen asked where the street trees are proposed to be planted.

Mr. Kozlowski replied 10-15 feet from the street line.

Ms. Cunningham said waiver request from Phasing Plan requirement; this is a small site and once construction begins there will be no phasing.

Mr. Russell asked about staging area for construction equipment as the neighbors may be concerned about it being parked on the street.

Mr. Kozlowski replied all equipment will remain onsite and not on public roadway.

Mr. Russell continued that since the developer does not know at this time whether Lot 1 or 6 will be developed first, he suggested designating a lot for storing of equipment.

Mr. Kozlowski agreed.

Ms. Cunningham said waiver request from sidewalks; the applicant proposes no sidewalks within the new cul-de-sac as it would cause more impervious surface onsite. The cul-de-sac will service six homes with extremely low traffic volume and 300 feet to Meinel Road where there is sidewalk.

Ms. Gauthier questioned whether it will be public or private road, and clarified that the infiltration basin will be below the roadway. Is that correct?

Ms. Cunningham replied public and dedicated to the Township, and yes, the detention basin will be below the roadway.

Mr. Narcowich recommended sidewalks on one side of the street.

Mr. Rosen expressed concern about sight lines, lighting and safety and he asked Mr. Narcowich about his recommendation of what side of the street for sidewalks he prefers.

Mr. Narcowich said he recommended sidewalks on one side of the cul-de-sac, but no preference on which side of the street. Also, he recommended a crosswalk across the entryway.

Ms. Cunningham said the applicant requests approval of preliminary as final plan.

Mr. Penecale said this plan was delayed for one month; however, there were outstanding issues several of which have been resolved. Staff's recommendation would be to consider approval of a preliminary plan only as there are still some outstanding issues. The reason the applicant did not receive a revised staff review letter was because staff of Township's Engineering Office sent the extensive stormwater management plan to BCM Engineering for third party review. He has not received BCM's review comments yet on revisions to the stormwater management plan.

Consensus by members of the Planning Commission was to consider approval of only a preliminary plan due to outstanding issues.

Mr. Narcowich commented that Lot #1 building extends into steep slope area.

Mr. Penecale replied total disturbed area without any relief from ZHB is 500 square feet and that is an elevated deck and it will be about 200 sq. ft. approaching into the steep slope area. At building permit stage, if it is close to the 500 sq. ft, the deck will be eliminated or reduce the size of the deck or go before the ZHB.

Mr. Narcowich asked about tentative architectural plans.

Mr. Kozlowski submitted a rendering of proposed homes to the Board.

Mr. Rosen asked for the price point of the homes.

Mr. Kozlowski replied over \$600,000.

Ms. Strackhouse asked for any public comments.

Nathan Shugerman, 1245 Meinel Road, said there are two sewer inlets on Meinel Road side-by-side in which the Township installed after the storm of 96', and he proposed that instead of tying the basin to the manhole to run the basin down and tie into the inlet which is the same pipe. He also asked for the growth of the wooded area to be cleaned up.

Ms. Cunningham replied the applicant will need to look into it further.

Mr. Kozlowski said he will remove all dead trees and cut the undergrowth.

Paul Feldman, 1202 Oliver Road, commented that there is a fence where a tree has fallen pulling the fence down and he asked for it to be taken care of. He asked for stormwater management for Lots 4, 5, and 6 to be addressed as the water runoff will go right into his backyard and for the ratio of impervious vs. pervious. Those items need to be addressed before approving the plan preliminary as final.

Ms. Cunningham replied there is a rain garden proposed in the front and rear yards of Lot #4 and that is the same as Lot #5. Rain gardens are designed to hold only six inches of water and need an outlet structure, so it will discharge to the inlet that ties into the underground basin and piped off-site.

Jerry Magid, 1236 Meinel Road, expressed concern about more traffic on Meinel Road and asked for the parking on the cul-de-sac to be addressed.

Jacqueline Meyers, 552 Hoyt Road, commented that she does not have a problem with adding value to the neighborhood; however, her home was almost destroyed by the 96' 100-year storm. She expressed concern that her home is at the lowest elevation and how will her home be affected by stormwater runoff from this development.

Ms. Strackhouse replied that stormwater management is still under review by a third party.

Damiano Ditri, 1215 Meinel Road, expressed concern that he does not want fencing erected around the new developed property as well as about getting the "junk" cleaned up that is growing up the electrical lines.

Mike McClernand, 1234 Oliver Road, expressed concern about the fence that has fallen down and asked about a privacy fence being erected.

Mr. Kozlowski replied there are no plans of removing the fence, but there are parts of the fence that fell down that he will consider replacing. There are no plans for a privacy fence.

Stephen Moss, 1226 Oliver Road, expressed concern about the fencing that is in bad shape, but he would rather have the fence in the shape that it is in than no fence at all. He questioned whether the green ribbons signify those trees that will be removed.

Mr. Kozlowski replied he has identified the trees that will be removed and they are shown on the plan.

Tony George, 1228 Meinel Road, expressed concern about lights from vehicles at night spilling onto his property.

Mr. Matteo replied as long as it is code compliant nothing can be done about it.

Mr. Rosen proposed to table recommendation on this application until the Township receives the report from BCM.

Mr. Penecale noted the Township is currently working on an extension.

Commissioner Markman commented that he would like the stormwater management issues to be addressed and requested that the applicant provide another 30-day extension to the Township.

Mr. Steven Kozlowski, applicant, agreed to provide another 30-day extension to the Township.

Ms. Strackhouse noted that we were given access to the property to thoroughly document the history of the buildings and photograph them, and all of that information is with the Old York Road Historical Society.

Mr. Matteo suggested a follow-up meeting with the neighbors when all documents are received.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary