

Minutes from the
DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
July 25, 2011

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held at 7:00 p.m., Monday, July 25, 2011 in the Doylestown Township Municipal Building, 425 Wells Road, Doylestown, PA. Members of the Planning Commission in attendance included: Chairman; George Lowenstein, Thomas Kelso, Edward Redfield and Kenneth L. Snyder. Also present: Township Manager; Stephanie J. Mason, Board of Supervisor Liaison; Richard F. Colello and Township Planning Consultant Ms. Judy Stern Goldstein

Absent: Vice Chairman; Judy Hendrixson,

Review of Minutes:

In a form of a motion, by Mr. Kelso, seconded by Mr. Snyder the June 27, 2011 Planning Commission Regular Meeting minutes were approved.

Motion carried 4 to 0

Visitor Comments: None

Street Hierarchy

Mr. Lowenstein reported although the current Street Hierarchy ordinance is becoming well developed, the purpose of tonight's meeting is to clarify what streets are being used for, how much right of way is required and what type of street is considered as it pertains to the Subdivision Land Development Ordinance (SALDO).

The Planning Commission members then introduced themselves to the attending Traffic Advisory Committee; Chairman; Mark Shiner, Vice Chairman; Alan McQuarrie, Carol Shugars, Dennis McFadden, Joseph O'Malley and Dori Vicente. Also in attendance was Traffic Engineer; Dave Tomko.

Mr. Lowenstein presented the committee with an updated Street Hierarchy Maps draft as of March 2011 to include the new Route 202 Parkway and the existing interchange of Route 611 to Route 313. The goal is to present the modified Street Hierarchy ordinance for Board of Supervisors' approval.

Floor opened for questions and discussion.

Mr. Shiner informed the commission the maps viewed by the committee only included arterials collector and local streets categories, where many discrepancies were found. Upon a discussion amongst the commission and traffic committee, it was found the proposed maps provided did not include streets updated as of March 2011 with Penn Dot street database provided by Mr. Tomko within the last six months.

Mr. McQuarrie then questioned what the purpose of tonight's meeting. Ms. Stern Goldstein answered; the purpose of the Street Hierarchy ordinance is to determine the classification of existing streets, which sets the ultimate right of way, cart way and curbing as they pertain to the SALDO. Mr. Lowenstein added the maps themselves will serve as visual aid to show the roads and how they connect to other municipalities.

Mr. Kelso questioned Mr. Tomko if the use of designations is to determine the right away widths and curbing. Mr. Tomko answered; according to Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Penn Dot) the use of designation for all roads are state highways, separated by identification numbers as a classification system. This roadway classification system is designed as a criterion used for proposed development. This will enable Penn Dot to take jurisdiction over any township local roads at face value. With highway occupancy permits Penn Dot also has jurisdiction. However they will correspond with townships to maintain the characteristics of the road classification system. Mr. Tomko's recommendation is for the commission to either defer to Penn Dot or designate the road to Penn Dot and refer to reference materials.

Ms. Shiner questioned what the impact in changing classifications of township roads is. A discussion ensued amongst the commission and traffic committee regarding the impact of the use of designation as it pertains to township roads and effects of their changes.

Mr. Kelso then suggested the next step should be to update the SALDO include Penn Dot requirements prior to submitting it for Board of Supervisors' approval. On behalf of the Traffic Committee, Mr. Shiner believes the proposed Street Hierarchy ordinance is acceptable, but suggests prior to moving forward, as requested by Mr. Kelso, township's regulations be embedded into the ordinance.

The commission agreed by consensus to meet with Mr. Shiner on Tuesday, August 9, 2011 at 5:00pm as a work session, prior to the August 22nd Planning Commission regular meeting to prepare the Street Hierarchy Ordinance. Mr. Lowenstein then asked Mr. Tomko to provide a list of township state roads as categorized by Penn Dot. Mr. Tomko agreed.

Heritage Tree Ordinance

Mr. Lowenstein indicated the purpose of the ordinance was to recognize, foster appreciation for and to inspire the need to safeguard the trees of significant historical, environmental, cultural, and aesthetic benefit to the Township. Ms. Stern Goldstein added a memo dated July 11, 2011 was forwarded to Director of Forestry; Richard John and the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) for their assistance in identifying significant individual trees, tree grouping and locations with importance to the township. Currently, the list is not complete pending additional comments from the EAC. Mr. Lowenstein suggested waiting for their responses.

Ms. Mason indicated she would like to submit the ordinance for Board of Supervisor's review in August, where the list can then be amended by resolution. Ms. Stern Goldstein added the criterion is included in the Heritage Tree Ordinance and the list is only for informational purposes. However, there is a slight sense of urgency to adopt the ordinance due to several trees that may be in jeopardy.

A discussion ensued amongst the commission, Ms. Stern Goldstein and Ms. Mason regarding defining the drip irrigation, up lighting and penalties of the ordinance.

Mr. Colello voiced his concern with having the township govern how residents should take care of trees located on their property and suggest the township purchase any tree within the Heritage Tree guidelines in order to protect it. As a Board of Supervisor, Mr. Colello cannot stand by the ordinance, which he believes may be punitive by having residents maintain trees located on their property within township guidelines. Mr. Kelso suggested placing a provision as a preservation note under imperious coverage. Ms. Stern Goldstein will need to add a paragraph stating the discretion of the Board of Supervisors will determine actions for relief purposes.

Mr. Redfield agrees with Mr. Colello's comments, questioning if a new owner will have to abide by the same regulations. Ms. Mason indicated yes.

The commission agreed by consensus to have Ms. Stern Goldstein revise the ordinance as a list without regulations to become proactive and have residents first inform the township prior to cutting any tree. Ms. Stern Goldstein will provide the commission with copies of the Montgomery Township Celebratory ordinance as a sample.

Adjournment: 8:55 p.m.