

**Meeting Minutes from the
DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**

Regular Meeting

December 16, 2020

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 16, 2020, this meeting was held via Zoom. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; Gregory Reppa, Vice Chairperson; members Ted Feldstein and Jill Macauley. Others in attendance included Township Planning Consultant Judy Stern Goldstein; Jen Herring & Nancy Santacecilia, Board of Supervisors Liaisons and Stephanie Mason, Township Manager.

Absent: Tom Kelso

Review of Minutes

On motions of Mr. Reppa, seconded by Mr. Feldstein the November 23, 2020 minutes were unanimously approved. On motion of Mr. Feldstein, seconded by Mr. Reppa the minutes of the October 26, 2020 were unanimously approved.

Public/Commission Comments/Participation

No Comment

280 North Broad Street / Arcadia Land Company

(See Attached)

Mr. Jason Duckworth, Arcadia Land Company, presented the proposed project of mixed use residential/commercial to the Planning Commission.

He indicated that the property is split, a portion in Doylestown Borough and a portion in Doylestown Township and straddles the municipal boundaries. He indicated that this is the first time he's reviewing the project with the Planning Commission and just wanted this to be an introduction about the property. He shared the attached presentation with the Planning Commission members about the passion his company has for walkable neighborhoods. He indicated that he has other projects that he is currently working on in Doylestown Borough, he provided a location of the existing Tilly Property on Broad Street and that it has a walkability score of 75 out of 100. He provided some information on the existing zoning of LI in the Township and Borough CI. He referenced a 1992 Joint Township / Borough Corridor Plan as well as the Doylestown Comprehensive Plan. He provided in the presentation information on what the Broad Street Corridor looked like in 2000 as well as the realization of what it looks like today with a series of industrial, residential, civic, open space and office along the corridor. He also provided history of the property indicating it used to be brick work in the 1800's. He got his idea for the look of his proposed building from the Doylestown Ag Works. He then showed two potential renderings of mixed use versions 1 and 2, which can be seen in the attached document for the property.

In his versions he anticipates that the ground floor will be retail, possibly restaurant or brew pub with a parking garage hidden interiorly and apartments of about three stories, possibly 150 to 180 units. He is

proposing that there will be outdoor space as well as an outdoor swimming pool for residents in the apartment complex. He believes this is a nice adaptive reuse although in very preliminary stages.

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that she liked concept #2 however she would like to see more open space. She indicated that there doesn't seem to be much of a view considering the adjacent parcels include a sewer treatment plant.

Mr. Duckworth indicated that he understood that and he believes the amenities are the Borough's proposed park and historic Doylestown Borough in general. In addition, when you are up about two stories the view of the rolling hills in the Township are lovely.

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that it's a nice concept of mixed use and the need for diverse housing.

Ms. Santacecilia inquired about balcony space, it was indicated that it could be provided.

Mr. Reppa indicated that Broad Street has changed over the years and indicated that he does not live far from the site. Many in the meeting also live nearby off of Broad Street. He believes that the traffic along Broad Street has increased significantly since the bypass ramps were open.

Mr. Jack O'Brien, President, Doylestown Borough Council, commented on the fact that the Borough is working with another property owner across the street at the old Intelligencer building that is in the process of showing sketch plans of residential and commercial as well. Nothing has been determined however, traffic is also a concern. He further said that there are number of close by intersections, and that a traffic light is proposed at Atkinson Street if the Intelligencer project moves forward. If Mr. Duckworth's proposed project moves forward coordination should be considered.

Mr. Reppa inquired if the nearby commercial or warehouse buildings were interested in the site. It was indicated that at this time they were not. He did agree that the property does have a Borough feel.

Mr. Duckworth indicated that from a size perspective utilizing the existing Tilly building would be about 7,000 sq. ft. again with a residential component of perhaps a 150 – 180 units, parking would be done inside, you would park on the floor where your apartment is located. Parking is hidden. He would like to provide a range of units from studios upwards to larger units. He believes the rateables for the Central Bucks School District, Township and Borough would be very positive and have a fiscal benefit.

There was concern about fire accessibility in the rear of the building and that if the plan moves forward the Fire Marshal from the Township should review the plans.

There was some discussion about a Borough overlay district for the Intelligencer Building that is still under consideration.

Ms. Goldstein indicated that the Intelligencer building is about 5 acres with about 224 units being proposed and the Tilly site is 3 acres with 150 units being proposed, that's 50 units per acre.

Ms. Mason suggested that the Borough and Township Planning Commissions consider working together on the Corridor and address concerns about traffic and access etc.

Mr. Gus Perea, Chairman Doylestown Borough Planning Commission indicated that he would welcome the Township and Borough working together. It was suggested that a meeting sometime in January be arranged.

Mr. Duckworth indicated that he would like to work collaboratively with both the Borough and Township through the planning process.

Neshaminy Manor Complex – Bucks County

Mr. Evan Stone, Executive Director Bucks County Planning Commission; Diane Marseglia, Bucks County Commissioner and Margie McKeivitt, Chief Operating Officer Bucks County were in attendance. This conversation was a follow up to the discussion the Planning Commission had in October when they hosted several 611 Corridor Commercial Property Owners as well as Mr. Stone. At the time they talked about the future of post COVID development along the 611 Corridor. Concerns about markets for commercial space, office space etc.

The Planning Commission wanted to continue the discussion specifically about the County's property at 611 and Almshouse and what plans or options for future development they may like to see.

Mr. Stone indicated that the County has approximately 28 acres of land and with more and more telecommuting by County employees the County is thinking about what the highest and best use of that property would be in the future.

He also indicated that they are seeing a number of places like the Oxford Valley Mall change from the large retail mall space to a combo of small retail and apartments. He believes a residential mixed use component could be beneficial at the County's location but with small retail and truly mixed use and not adjacent use as is often seen.

Mr. Reppa indicated that the site would lend itself to a college campus like setting with interconnection of buildings. He would like to see something along those lines.

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that there is no family entertainment space, not necessarily speaking of movies but things bowling as an example.

Also, the experiential venues with restaurants that people are looking for don't exist in this area. There was also a question about biotech and whether incubator space would be of need in the community. There is already a nursing home space on the County property, Ms. McKeivitt indicated that incubators require manufacturing space so traffic could become a concern.

Ms. Hendrixson talked about nonresidential experiential concept as well as attainable residential space and whether that was appropriate.

Ms. Goldstein indicated that having the most vulnerable near the least favorable because of the nearby prison was of concern.

Mr. Stone indicated social equity is important as part of the planning process.

There was discussion about boutique hospitals or working with Doylestown Health as a possible future facility.

Ms. Santacecilia inquired about the potential of an indoor sports complex for tournaments.

There was a concern again about traffic increasing and Ms. McKeivitt indicated that the County would like uses that promote public transportation.

Ms. Macauley indicated about seeking proposals possibly from students in the field of architecture and design.

There was a question of Mr. Feldstein if he was familiar with programs at Delaware Valley University and he indicated that there were some and he would find a name for the County to reach out to.

Ms. Goldstein indicated that you want to find the marriage of an idea that has the highest and best use for the property, which makes sense for both the Township as well as the County. In addition, that it's not a use that is just a trend but something that will withstand the test of time and be sustainable going forward.

Mr. Reppa inquired if the County had a long range plan for the property and what those needs would be met in the next 25-30 years.

Ms. McKeivitt indicated that telework was the future for the County. They are instituting a telework policy and looking at building needs going forward. There was some discussion about the Bucks County Health Department building that is very old and would be part of the process.

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that it would be great to hear of a variety of ideas, flexibility that helps direct planning and zoning. The options to be evaluated would be interesting.

Ms. Goldstein indicated that this is rare for the County to be looking at doing something like this.

Ms. Marseglia it's been about a two year process that the County has been accessing its needs and wants.

Ms. McKeivitt indicated that she and Mr. Stone have talked about the possibility of putting out an RFP for the site and perhaps it would be a good way to attract attention from developers. Having proposals submitted that include ideas for the best possible use for the site and whether the County sold the property or did a partnership that has yet to be determined.

She also indicated that the County recently sold their sewer pretreatment building to the Buck County Water and Sewer Authority. She indicated that there were issues with the operations of the facility and having Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority, who are experts operate it was a better idea than the County continuing to operate it.

Ms. Macauley indicated an RFP would be great if it needs to be fast tracked to have a developer do it versus students perhaps the developer could work with students.

Mr. Stone suggested putting out an RFI (Request for Innovation) of design and require a developer to partner with university students. Everyone seemed to like that idea.

Ms. Santacecilia indicated that she liked the idea of a public private partnership.

Ms. Marseglia suggested that the County would work on a proposal of a draft RFI and would share it with the Planning Commission in the future and could move forward from there.

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that she agreed with Mr. Reppa that having a campus feel with appropriate buffers and natural buffers and public transportation would be beneficial.

Mr. Feldstein indicated having space for nonprofit groups to meet would also be beneficial.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested we pick this up again in January.

2021 Planning Strategies Moving Forward

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that updates for Planning and Zoning, Dealing with the Pandemic and finding ways for residents to get out safely through our pedestrian corridors along the Neshaminy Greenway trails and the continued dialogue throughout the year on land development plans and open space that have occurred are encouraging from a land development open space perspective. Working to reduce the carbon footprint, educating citizens, getting their input and feedback assist the Planning Commission to be effective and efficient.

She continued by thanking everyone on the Planning Commission for their contributions throughout this past year and wishing everyone a very happy and safe holiday season. She looks forward to the day when we can once again meet in person.

Mr. Reppa indicated that her words were well said.

Everyone wished each other happy holidays and a good night.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie J. Mason
Township Manager