

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, March 27, 2023 at 7 PM

Community Meeting Room, 425 Wells Road

Meeting Minutes

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission Regular Meeting was held at 7:00 pm on Monday, March 27, 2023. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Tom Kelso, Chairman; Judy Hendrixson, Vice Chairman; members Jill Macauley and Michael Kracht. Others in attendance included Stephanie Mason, Township Manager; Stacy Yoder, Gilmore & Associates; Jennifer Herring, Board of Supervisors Liaison.

Not in attendance was member Robert Repko.

The meeting officially began at **7:00 pm**.

Public Comment

N/A

Review of Minutes

On motion of Ms. Hendrixson and seconded by Mr. Kracht, the February 27, 2023 minutes were unanimously approved as prepared.

Sketch Plans Scheduled for Discussion

Gillard 1965 Turk Road – 1953, 1961 & 1965 Turk Road

Attorney Carrie Nase was present on behalf of property owner Dan Gillard, along with Scott Mill from Van Cleef Engineering, to present a sketch plan for the named parcels on Turk Road across from Kutz Elementary School. The property is zoned C-1 and currently houses four rental units. It is serviced by Snyder Road, which is private. Based on the need for repairs and upgrades it was determined that it would be better to demo the existing buildings and reconstruct single family dwelling units on the property. This would consist of 8 single family townhouse units, along with one twin for two additional units. It is believed that this would be a better use of the property and offer less adverse impact. However, zoning relief would be required since this use is not currently permitted in C-1.

Mr. Mill provided a brief overview of the surrounding area, showing that there are multiple parcels and a private Road that runs through them. He added that each unit would have its own driveway, with two parking spaces, and a garage. In addition, there would be a row of ten additional parking spaces along the street.

Mr. Kelso asked for an explanation of Snyder Road and the legal aspects of it.

Mr. Mill explained that the private road was never taken for dedication by the Township. It is a fee simple right of way, dating back to the 40's or 50's based on the Snyder subdivision plan.

Ms. Nase explained that they are still researching the legality of the road and property. It is referenced in deeds as a private drive. She added that the subdivision plan is very old, and they recognize this needs to be clarified.

Mr. Kelso asked what the applicant is seeking from the Zoning Hearing Board.

Ms. Nase described several items needed, but noted the primary need is to request the use, since it is not permitted under the C-1 zoning. There are also existing legal nonconformities that they would wish to maintain. In addition, variances may be needed for setback requirements. She also noted that prior to Mr. Gillard's ownership, one of the parcels was granted permission by the ZHB for a single-family dwelling. It is further believed that the existing multifamily use is grandfathered in.

Ms. Mason noted that this predated zoning. The property has been nonconforming since zoning was instituted in the late 50's or early 60's.

Ms. Herring asked for clarification of how many units were on the property now.

Ms. Nase replied that there are four units in two buildings.

Ms. Macauley asked about the impacts of having single family homes so close to the quarry.

Mr. Kelso explained that the quarry is under closure and being filled. They are no longer blasting.

Mr. Mill added that the property would be serviced by public water, no wells.

Ms. Herring suggested the applicant consider green initiatives in the planning as the planning commission is very interested in promoting them.

Ms. Nase said that they will take that into consideration.

Ms. Nase noted a few items from the professional staff review letters, and that most items will comply or will be addressed during land development. She added that some of the noted items may not apply, particularly in regard to handicapped parking, but that the applicant would request a variance if needed. She also noted they would likely need a variance in terms of depth for the buffer area.

Mr. Kelso suggested that the property owner speak with the owner of the quarry. He also added that he doesn't know what the closing plan is for the quarry.

Ms. Mason explained that the plan is approved by the DEP since the quarry falls under their division of mining. For the most part it will be green space with an impoundment in the end .

Ms. Nase also noted sidewalk improvements to be proposed.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested connecting the sidewalks on either side of Turk and adding a crosswalk at Kutz.

Mr. Kracht asked if there was any analysis done for feasibility of permitted uses.

Ms. Nase replied that they hadn't done a full analysis, but that based on current characteristics and the surrounding area, it would be better for residential use.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested considering a common HVAC plan and perhaps using geothermal or something similar that is environmentally sound, rather than individual units.

Ms. Nase said they would certainly look at this.

Mr. Kelso added that none of the reviews mentioned the Village plan for Edison, which included the named parcels, and laid out a plan for specific improvements in that area. He further suggested that uses should be controlled by the elected officials, and not the Zoning Hearing Board. He suggested a site visit with all parties, including the adjacent property owners.

Ms. Nase responded that they will look at the village plan and see if they can fit into that. They are also happy to arrange a site visit.

Items Scheduled for Discussion

Zoning Amendments EV Charging Stations & Manufactured Homes Height Limits

Mr. Kelso asked Ms. Mason for an update on the zoning amendments.

Ms. Mason said that the zoning amendment has been advertised and that the public hearing will be held at the next Board of Supervisors meeting in April. We are seeking a recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Ms. Hendrixson made a motion that the planning commission recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt the amendments to the zoning ordinance. Ms. Macauley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

611 Corridor

Mr. Kelso suggested the planning commission look at a study of Edison Village that was done by the former chair of the planning commission back in 1992. He noted the access to 611 in this area and the need for improvements. He does not recommend a use change but added that zoning changes should be looked at for the broader area, not just the individual parcels.

There was a discussion regarding the future of Kutz Elementary, many years down the road, and how zoning changes could affect that property as well.

Rob Caroselli of Squirrel Road asked if there was any talk of what might be happening at the Barn movie theater property.

Ms. Mason said that there is nothing official yet, only some inquiries that have been made. One for a storage facility which is not currently permitted under the zoning, and another for a pop-up live theater, which would be a permitted use. She reiterated that these are only inquiries at this time.

Mr. Caroselli asked if there was any chance for attainable housing at the property.

Ms. Mason explained that only a zoning amendment or overlay would allow for housing there. She added that the 611 Corridor has been reviewed by the Planning Commission in recent years in a very proactive way. The Planning Commission is aware of changes in other municipalities regarding commercial properties. They're working to stay abreast of future trends impacting such properties especially along the 611 Corridor.

Plans Scheduled for Discussion

Ms. Mason noted that a sketch plan for the 1776 shopping center will be in for next the Planning Commission meeting.

Adjournment

With no other business, and on a motion by Mr. Kelso, seconded by Ms. Macauley, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley
Office Manager, Code Enforcement