

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, November, 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, November 27, 2023. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Tom Kelso, Chairman; Judy Hendrixson, Vice Chairman; members Jill Macauley and Robert Repko. Others in attendance included Stephanie Mason, Township Manager; Judy Stern Goldstein, Gilmore & Associates; Sinclair Salisbury, Director of Code Enforcement; and Jennifer Herring, Board of Supervisors Liaison.

Not present at the meeting was member Michael Kracht.

The meeting officially began at **7:02 pm**.

Mr. Kelso made a motion to add to the agenda a discussion item about the proposed zoning amendment to the LI district. Ms. Macauley seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-1 with Mr. Repko voting nay.

Public Comment

N/A

Review of Minutes

On motion of Ms. Hendrixson and seconded by Ms. Macauley, the October 23, 2023 minutes were unanimously approved as prepared.

Old Business

Zoning – Non-Commercial Backyard Poultry – Continued Discussion

Ms. Mason explained that after going to the Board of Supervisors the Board referred it to the EAC to review the ordinance and then have it come back to the Planning Commission. It is now back with the Planning Commission for them to weigh in since it is a zoning ordinance, and there is now more information available.

Mr. Kelso requested that Mr. Salisbury speak to the recommended changes.

Mr. Salisbury noted that the ordinance needed a more practical application and to be tightened up.

Ms. Goldstein added that the draft amendment in the packet is inclusive of Sinclair's comments.

Mr. Salisbury summarized the changes, which included adding definitions, specifics regarding lot size requirements and setbacks, and that chickens must be contained on the property.

There was a discussion about whether permits should be required to have chickens. It was noted that permits are not required for other animals that are considered pets, or for dog houses, rabbit hutches,

etc. The consensus of the Planning Commission was that permits should not be required. It was further noted that chicken owners should continue to submit waste management plans to the Township.

Brooke Henningsen of 788 Sandy Ridge Road requested a template or guideline for the waste plan.

Mr. Salisbury replied that we can look into that.

Mr. Kelso made a motion that the ordinance amendments be recommended to the Board of Supervisors with the changes noted. Ms. Hendrixson seconded. Motion passed 3-1 with Mr. Repko voting nay.

New Business

Added item to agenda – Proposed Zoning Amendment to LI District

There was a discussion regarding the Bucks County Planning Commission (BCPC) review and comments and why it had not been received by the Planning Commission.

Ms. Mason explained that the BCPC review arrived after the Planning Commission's last meeting. The item will be included in the Planning Commission's December packet.

Mr. Kelso inquired if Ms. Mason had access to it now on her iPad. Since she did, Mr. Kelso requested that Ms. Mason read the BCPC review letter.

Ms. Mason read the review letter, dated November 1, 2023 and the comments therein.

Ms. Goldstein noted that the applicant has provided a redlined version of the ordinance to address the technical issues identified by the BCPC review. She added that it will be in the packet for the next planning commission meeting.

Mr. Kelso asked why there was no review by the Township planning consultant.

Ms. Goldstein added that she has been collaborating with the applicant throughout the process.

Mr. Kelso requested a review by the Planning Consultant.

Mr. Repko added that if the item had been added to the agenda in advance of the meeting, all of the information could have been sent out prior, and the members would have had time to review it.

Mr. Kelso questioned the timing and expectations of the Board.

Ms. Mason replied that the public hearing is in process, and it was continued to a date certain which is their next meeting on December 19th.

Supervisor Nancy Santacecilia indicated that her reason for tabling the issue at the Board of Supervisors meeting was that she wanted some items regarding buffering, density, and parking to be flushed out by the Township Planning Commission utilizing their expertise.

Mr. Kelso wished to discuss the specifics needed to make the ordinance go forward.

Ms. Goldstein noted that definitions were added to the ordinance to clean up some ambiguity. She added that buffers were not changed in the draft, because they are there already.

Mr. Kelso asked how the changes would apply to other LI districts in the Township. He suggested an overlay that would limit the changes to this property and the adjoining one.

Ms. Goldstein cautioned that this could be considered spot zoning.

Ms. Mason added that the senior living use has already been incorporated into the LI district. This came about with the approval of the use on the Grasso Tract. This just offers a different approach with an affordability component.

Ms. Santacecilia further noted that the amendment would be required in order for the tax credits to be received by the applicant.

Mr. Repko questioned the likelihood of this type of development in the other LI properties.

Ms. Goldstein replied that the walkability requirement is limiting and would require major infrastructure changes. It could only happen in the remaining LI areas if a developer has the means to do that or it happens overtime.

Ms. Henningsen questioned the parking and potential ADA needs.

Ms. Goldstein noted that these requirements are addressed in the ordinance already. She added that statistics suggest that the percentage of residents in this type of housing who have cars is minimal.

Mr. Kelso questioned the ambiguity of “walkability” or “walking distance” and asked for it to be defined.

Ms. Hendrixson asked whether “pedestrian access” should be added to the definition, or if a specific distance should be included.

Ms. Goldstein replied that a mile is typically considered walking distance, or a 20-minute walk.

Ms. Hendrixson added that the school district considers walking distance a mile as well. Children within a mile don't need busing.

Mr. Kelso suggested that after this amendment is concluded, the Planning Commission should prioritize going forward and look at the comprehensive plan and how to add affordable housing in the different districts.

Ms. Mason noted that the Board of Supervisors was very favorable to the senior affordability and veteran component and there were a number of positive public comments made at their meeting as well.

Mr. Kelso questioned what issues could arise when the 30-year deed restriction is up.

Ms. Goldstein replied that the redlined ordinance increased the restriction to 40 years. Further, any new applicant would have to come before the planning commission and Board regardless.

The zoning amendment will be on the December 18th agenda for the planning commission. Ms. Mason indicated that she anticipates a number of people to attend as well as the applicant and representatives from the Borough.

Adjournment

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley
Office Manager, Code Enforcement