

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, April 29, 2024 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, April 29, 2024. 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; Dan Wood, Board of Supervisors Liaison; and Sinclair Salisbury, Director of Code Enforcement.

Not in attendance was member Robert Repko.

The meeting officially began at **7:03 pm**.

Public/Commission Comments

None.

Review of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Hendrixson, seconded by Ms. Macauley, the February 26, 2024 minutes were unanimously approved.

Presentation

N/A

Land Development

45 Sauerman Road – Sketch Plan

Presenting the sketch plan on behalf of the applicant was Larry Byrne, PE, the engineer who prepared the plan. The proposal is for a minor subdivision across from the Township’s Sauerman Park. The parcel is approximately 7 acres in size and would be subdivided into two parcels, one just over 5 acres, and the other roughly 1.5 acres. The existing house and barn would be on one lot, and a new single-family home is proposed on the second lot.

Mr. Byrne discussed comments from professional staff reviews from Gilmore, Pennoni and Michael Baker, and requested directions with regard to the inclusion of a bike and hike path along the property’s frontage, and the suggested road improvements.

Mr. Kelso suggested that the applicant meet with the Bike and Hike Committee regarding the path.

There was a discussion of the location of the bike path and the feasibility of putting one at the site due to existing features, including a pond and steep slopes, and how those elements might be prohibitive.

Mr. Kelso suggested looking at these items during a site visit with the planning commission.

Mr. Byrne noted that apart from these issues, all other items are anticipated as will comply. He also questioned the possibility of a waiver or variance needed in order to grade within the buffer of the pond. This item would require further investigation.

Jim Baldassare of Pebble Woods Drive noted that this area of Sauerman Road can be somewhat dangerous due to its topography. He expressed that adding a bike path there would not only be good for access to the park, but also for safety.

Bobbi Newton of 59 Sauerman Road asked about notification of further plans for this property.

Ms. Mason replied that there was a courtesy letter sent by the Township regarding the sketch plan, and that another letter would be sent if a preliminary plan is submitted. After that, those who are interested can follow the agendas for Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings for updates. She added that if any variances are sought by the applicant, property owners within 500 feet will receive notice of the hearing.

Ms. Newton also wished to express how much they care about the pond and would like any issues with it to be addressed prior to renovations at the site.

1796 S. Easton Road Redevelopment – Preliminary Land Development Plan

Presenting the plan on behalf of the applicant were attorney Kelly McGowan, and engineer Kristen Holmes. Ms. McGowan provided a brief summary of past appearances before the planning commission. She then discussed review letters from the Township, Gilmore, Pennoni and Michael Baker and went into further detail regarding their comments.

Ms. Holmes added that the project proposes a reduction in impervious coverage, making it exempt from stormwater management requirements.

Ms. McGowan and Ms. Holmes further explained the changes to the sidewalk that will be incorporated in the proposal. These involve pulling them further off the 611 frontage, but keeping crosswalks pulled closer to the roadway for better visibility. She also noted a deceleration lane on 611 that they would be working through with PennDOT.

Ms. Holmes discussed changes to the landscape and tree plantings and noted that they are working through this now and will continue to work with the Township on it.

Ms. McGowan noted other approvals that will be required, including NPDES and BCCD and said they are working through them. The applicant is also in discussions with DTMA regarding water service.

Ms. Holmes explained an additional change to the site that will close it off from the neighboring gas station. Pavement will be removed along that property line and a green buffer will be added.

Ms. McGowan mentioned two likely waivers that will be requested regarding features within 400 feet and grading within 5 feet of the property line.

Mr. Kelso made a motion to recommend preliminary final land development approval to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Kracht seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

280 N. Broad Street – Preliminary Land Development Plan

Presenting the plan were Kelly McGowan, attorney for the applicant, and Mark Buchvalt, PE, engineer for the project. Also present were Jason Duckworth from Arcadia and Ryan Bailey from Pennrose. Ms. McGowan provided a summary of the proposal for a 60-unit affordable senior living apartment complex, as well as 18 single family townhomes. She noted the addition of the affordable senior living use to the LI zoning district, which was enacted in December 2023. The applicant is now presenting fully engineered land development plans.

Ms. McGowan briefly discussed the comments in review letters from Township staff, Gilmore, Pennoni and Michael Baker.

There was a discussion about the affordability component of the project. Ms. McGowan noted that it is age qualified at 62 years plus. In addition, there will be a recorded covenant on this property restricting that use.

Mr. Buckvalt noted the parking plan for the apartments and that the plan would provide for some excess. In addition, the townhomes would each have two car garages. Ms. McGowan later noted that a waiver would be requested regarding the size of the parking stalls.

The addition of EV chargers was suggested by the Planning Commission. Mr. Duckworth said they are very enthusiastic about EV charging and that infrastructure would be provided for this capability.

Ms. McGowan added that a landscape conservation plan would be submitted as well. Additional items will be included in a subsequent submission.

Clear site triangles were also discussed in relation to the alley ways provided for the townhomes, similar to that of driveways. This is an area where a waiver might be requested.

Ms. McGowan described the need for an offsite drainage easement and said that they are working through that, but that the stormwater proposal would need to be accepted by the Township for that as well. They are also working on outside approvals at this time. She added that they have met with both DTMA and the Borough regarding water service to the site. There are a couple of options, and they are working to find the best plan for all parties.

Ms. Hendrixson asked about energy savings or geothermal systems.

Mr. Bailey replied that the senior building would be net zero ready, and that the flat roof will allow for solar panels, but geothermal has not been looked at.

Chris Chandor, on behalf of Tri Partners LP, property owner of the neighboring automotive parts distributor presented a potential issue that may arise between the company and the proposed townhomes. The business operates at all hours and is very busy, employing 75 people inside and 50 or 60 drivers. Due to the nature of the operation, this could cause complaints from the townhome owners of noise and headlights shining in the windows late at night. He wishes to be proactive to alleviate those concerns. He suggested some type of solid buffering 6-8 feet in height.

There was a discussion of providing notice and disclosing these conditions to buyers and subsequent buyers as a note on the deed. It was agreed that this would be a reasonable request.

There was also a consensus to plan a site visit to discuss the buffer.

Ms. Mason asked that notes be included on the development plans for ease of access and understanding in the future.

Ordinances Scheduled for Discussion

Backyard Poultry

Ms. Hendrixson made a motion to advertise the ordinance as written. Mr. Kracht seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Electric Vehicles

Mr. Kracht made a motion to advertise the ordinance as written. Ms. Macauley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Adjournment

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley
Office Manager, Code Enforcement