

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Work Session

Monday, October 28, 2024 at 6 PM

The Doylestown Township Planning Commission held a work session with the Bucks County Planning Commission to discuss their Almshouse Road property. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Tom Kelso, Chairman; Judy Hendrixson, Vice Chairman; members Robert Repko and Michael Kracht. Others in attendance included Judy Stern Goldstein, Gilmore & Associates; Stephanie J. Mason, Township Manager and Judy Dixon, Board of Supervisors Liaison filling in for Dan Wood. Not in attendance was member Jill Macauley.

The work session began at 6 pm.

Margie McKeivitt, Chief Operating Officer for the County, and Evan Stone, Executive Director of the Bucks County Planning Commission were present to discuss the plans for the property at 611 and Almshouse Road. The property includes the area of the existing Health Department, the old Neshaminy Manor nursing home, and a portion across the street, behind the District Court. Ms. McKeivitt explained that after issuing an RFI for the property, only three proposals were received. None of the proposals met all of the County's needs and now they are back to the drawing board. They would like to hear the thoughts of the Township before issuing another RFP.

Mr. Stone noted that some of the proposals included adaptive uses, coworking space for non-profits, a hotel use, multifamily housing, etc.

Ms. McKeivitt added that they hope to carve out a portion of the property to build a second Grundy Hall, as there is currently a waiting list for the first one.

Mr. Kelso asked for the County's master plan for this property.

Ms. McKeivitt replied that there is a master plan from 1973, but it has not been updated but is still applicable.

There was a discussion of what the County is hoping to get from the Township and whether they have established their goals for the property. There is concern over traffic in that portion of 611 and what that could look like in the future.

There was then a discussion about the housing component for the property, to include attainable housing, affordable housing, and some market value. In addition, there was talk of an indoor sports facility to fill a need in the community and bring tourism to the area. The County would remain the landowner for the property.

Mr. Kracht asked how the County intended to control the attainable/affordable housing component.

Ms. McKeivitt explained that the County has spent a lot of time working on this concept and has planned for a partnership with Habitat. Mr. Stone added that they would also have partnerships with local municipalities and developers to help with this as well.

Nancy Santacecilia, Township Supervisor asked if there might be any plans to include independent special needs housing for those with aging parents. This could provide an opportunity for a community to live and work.

Ms. McKeivitt said that this is a definite consideration.

Ms. Mason asked if the County could take the best parts of each of the three proposals received and create a new RFI that lays out the best-case scenario. Mr. Repko asked if they could share the pieces of the proposals that they liked.

Ms. McKeivitt spoke about the multifamily housing uses, non-profit opportunities, a hotel or event space, and some open space retention with trails at the back portion of the property.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested the County put together a chart of their wants and needs before putting together another RFI, as it is too nebulous for developers. She added that there could be an opportunity for a community geothermal system, as an example, and that those priorities should be spelled out.

Mr. Kelso added that there was a lack of information in the RFI and too many questions for developers.

Ms. Hendrixson asked if the County had a budget to hire someone to work with or put together a master plan.

Ms. McKeivitt said they do not.

Mr. Kelso added that with a project this big and no budget, this could be a big waste of time. After two years no progress has been made.

Mr. Repko noted that he appreciates the County coming to the Planning Commission for their input and does not consider it a waste of time.

Mr. Kelso clarified that it could be a waste of their time, not the Planning Commission's.

There was a discussion of access to Grundy and the overall site, with the goal to improve the circulation.

Ms. Dixon asked if there was a timeframe for building the second Grundy Hall and developing potential partnerships.

Ms. McKeivitt said that they plan to do an RFP for the demo of the old nursing home first quarter of next year, and hopefully a contract by the end of the first quarter. But as of now the County has not time frame.

Being no further business, the work session adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley
Office Manager, Code Enforcement

Regular Meeting
Monday, October 28, 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, October 28, 2024. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Tom Kelso, Chairman; Judy Hendrixson, Vice Chairman; members Jill Macauley, Robert Repko and Michael Kracht. Others in attendance included Judy Stern Goldstein, Gilmore & Associates; Stephanie J. Mason, Township Manager and Judy Dixon, Board of Supervisors Liaison filling in for Dan Wood.

The regular meeting officially began at 7:00 pm.

Public/Commission Comments

None.

Review of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Hendrixson, seconded by Ms. Macauley, the September 23, 2024 minutes were approved 4-0-1, with one abstention by Mr. Repko.

Presentation

N/A

Land Development

280 N. Broad Street – Final Land Development Plan

Kellie McGowan, representing the applicant Arcadia Doylestown II, was present to request final land development approval on behalf of the applicant. She provided a history of the project before the Planning Commission and updated the PC on additional review letters received. All items are a will comply, and they have no additional waiver requests. Since the last appearance before the Planning Commission, they have negotiated a stormwater management easement with one neighboring property and have identified building improvements to mitigate potential noise with another neighbor. They have taken steps for formal agreements with these neighbors. Outside approvals with DEP, BCCD and DTMA are being worked through as well.

Ms. Dixon asked about the traffic study.

Ms. McGowan explained that this was part of a waiver request to the Borough. In the reviews from their engineer, they requested updated information related to traffic and the Broad Street corridor. They are in process and Traffic Planning & Design will update those reports and resubmit them to the Borough. They will be submitted to the Township as well.

There was a discussion of the location of the driveway to the site and the access off Broad Street.

Mr. Kracht asked how the plan has changed from the preliminary plan.

Ms. McGowan replied that the changes were mostly to the landscape plan, which is now more robust. However, nothing has changed with respect to improvements, and the terms will remain the same. She added that outside agreements will be documented and submitted to the Township.

Ms. Dixon asked about EV chargers, which were not included on the plan.

Ms. McGowan said that they have agreed to install them, and that the Townhouses will be equipped with outlets, these items just have not yet been added to the plan.

Mr. Kracht made a motion to recommend final land development approval conditional upon the items noted in the consultant review letters. Mr. Repko seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Other Business

Mr. Kracht wished to discuss the County project that had been discussed during the work session. He noted a project in Dublin that worked very well with the collaboration of the Borough, engineer and developer. He would like to see the County's project handled similarly, with a more collaborative effort. There was consensus that perhaps the Board of Supervisors make that suggestion to them rather than the Planning Commission.

Ms. Mason added that this was the goal with their RFI and reminded the Planning Commission that they did that with their recommendations.

Ms. Goldstein also noted that the overall goals for the property are still being discussed and retaining ownership of the property long term could be holding them back.

Adjournment

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlyn Finley
Office Manager, Code Enforcement