

Joint EAC/Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, September 27, 2021 at 5:30 PM
Caucus Room, Doylestown Township Building

Meeting Minutes

The Doylestown Township Environmental Advisory Council and Planning Commission met for a joint meeting on Monday, September 27, 2021.

The meeting officially began at 5:40 pm.

Welcome

Ms. Mason began the meeting with a welcome to the group.

Introduction of EAC/Planning Commission Members and their Liaisons

Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; Gregory Reppa, Vice Chairman; members Tom Kelso, Ted Feldstein, and Jill Macauley. Others in attendance included Judy Stern Goldstein, Planning Consultant, Stephanie Mason, Township Manager, Nancy Santacecilia, Board of Supervisors Liaison, and Jen Herring, Board of Supervisors Liaison. Each of the members introduced themselves.

Members of the Environmental Advisory Council in attendance were Jeannine Mitchell, Chairman; Anne Woodbury, Vice Chairman; and members Tanya Casas, Heidi Shiver, Curt Sawyer, Jim Baldassarre, Martin Brooks and Kara Raymond, Associate Member. Also in attendance were Dan Wood, Board of Supervisor liaison to EAC; Aaron Walizer, Assistant Township Manager, and liaison to EAC. Members of the EAC also introduced themselves to the group.

Sinclair Salisbury, Director of Code Enforcement.

Overview of Board/Commission Functions

Ms. Goldstein gave an overview of the Township structure beginning with voters, election of the Board of Supervisors and appointment of the Township Manager. She then summarized the roles of each group, including department heads and staff.

Ms. Goldstein then summarized the role of the Township's Boards and Commissions. They make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and provide information and opinions to help the Board make informed decisions.

Discussion of the Model Ordinance for Permitting Renewable Energy Systems

Dr. Baldassarre summarized the model ordinance for permitting alternative energy systems. The EAC has been working towards the goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035. Bucks County also passed a similar resolution for 100% renewable energy by 2050. The EAC strongly recommends that the Township adopts this ordinance for alternative energy systems. Mr. Baldassarre made a few notable points regarding the ordinance: There should be mandatory provisions for encouraging passive solar energy, more attention to the placement of trees and structures that offer shade, and these suggestions will affect the Township building codes. He also suggested that the Township should be preparing for a

changeover to electric vehicles and consider the placement of EV chargers as part of the proposed ordinance.

Ms. Mason said that the Township is aware of the County's ordinance and has discussed implementation. The Planner's office can help with review of the ordinance.

Ms. Goldstein explained that they are very familiar with this ordinance and that of the Township. Any issues found by the EAC can always be brought up during plan review as part of land development. She also suggested that the Township's Green Points ordinance addresses some of these things, but that a monetary incentive doesn't seem to be enough. The end goal was to get people to think about being greener, and we have seen some of this.

Ms. Mason added that the county has an incentive program (C-PACE) for commercial businesses where they can get loans for energy efficient practices, the financing of which comes from the state.

Ms. Hendrixson explained that with new construction, developers are always looking at life cycle costing, and they want to save with efficiency in the long term. Administrative "carrots" don't mean as much.

Discussion of Township-Owned Lots & Open Spaces

Ms. Raymond summarized the background of the EAC and their mission to protect, preserve and restore. She went on to discuss watershed friendly properties and Doug Tallamay's homegrown national parks, the basic idea of which is to provide habitats for native species. The Township can also adopt a watershed stewards' program and the development of watershed friendly certified properties.

Ms. Raymond discussed the EAC's visit to Township owned open space properties. Most are in residential areas and are divided between wooded lots and stormwater basins. Some are well groomed, but others are wild and native. These areas would be a good start for watershed property certification as they are some of the few parcels that are undeveloped. This also keeps in line with a lot of the programs the Township already participates in.

Ms. Mitchell suggested that these areas can become a sort of biological corridor, not connected and contiguous, but a series of related lots dedicated to environmental stewardship. This would advance the goal of the Park Recreation and Open Space Plan, be purposeful, and have great benefits to native species, including human beings.

Ms. Mitchell then proposed utilizing the Master watershed stewards program for restoring some of these properties, as they must put in volunteer hours to maintain their certification. In addition, they could work with the community and in these neighborhoods, and residents would gain more knowledge of their environment. Considering the educational opportunities cannot be overstated. Watershed stewardship aids in containing stormwater runoff, reducing pollution, and supporting wildlife. She added that there are lots of opportunities for partnerships, with DelVal, elementary schools, Bucks Beautiful, etc. She also emphasized that they do not want to spend money but utilize volunteer labor and efforts.

Ms. Mitchell then asked if it was possible for these areas to be identified as protected watershed properties.

Ms. Goldstein added that these efforts could not only happen on Township owned properties but also privately owned property.

Ms. Herring asked if the Township could encourage builders to do this in open space as part of land development requirements.

Ms. Goldstein suggested that many of these practices are part of the MS4 program already, so these programs can all come together with a common goal.

Ms. Santacecilia added that she could help with building some partnerships and asked what else the Board of Supervisors could do to help.

Ms. Mason suggested that the EAC speak with Township staff to determine what properties they could start with. She also said that there may be some pushback from residents, who may be protective of these areas in their neighborhoods.

Ms. Raymond said they could talk to people in the neighborhoods and familiarize them with the idea.

Ms. Mason requested that they start in house educating staff before going out into neighborhoods.

Ms. Goldstein added that many of these properties do have a designated purposed or use, and their history should be part of the discussion.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested that an article in the newsletter could help with educating the community and getting basic info out.

Review/Summary of Township's Current Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Hendrixson said these issues do fall under the current comp plan, and that the Planning Commissions is working to define it and fit it into the ordinance.

With no other business or comments, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kaitlyn Finley, Township Code Secretary

DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, September 27, 2021 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, September 27, 2021. Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; Gregory Reppa, Vice Chairman; members Tom Kelso, Ted Feldstein, and Jill Macauley. Others in attendance included Judy Stern Goldstein, Planning Consultant, Sean Torpey, Township Engineer, Stephanie Mason, Township Manager, Nancy Santacecilia, Board of Supervisors Liaison, and Jen Herring, Board of Supervisors Liaison.

The meeting officially began at 7:03 pm.

Review of Minutes

On motion of Mr. Kelso and seconded by Mr. Feldstein, the August 23, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

Public/Commission Comments/Presentations

None.

Plans Scheduled for Discussion

Ashbridge at Furlong – Land Development Plan

William Benner on behalf of the applicant (Mr. Grasso) presented a preliminary land development plan for Ashbridge at Furlong. He highlighted that the Board of Supervisors approved an amended stipulation in October of 2020, followed by several meetings to work out a plan to everyone's satisfaction. The result is a three-story building occupied by senior citizens 55 and over, and shows 124 dwelling units, mechanical areas, and 241 off street parking spaces, with 97 held in reserve. Various outdoor amenities include walking trails and gardens, and indoor amenities include a barber shop, salon, doctors' office, and a fitness and physical therapy area. The stipulation provided called out certain zoning variances which were granted by agreement and a series of subdivision and land development waivers which were granted by agreement. The issue before Planning Commission is to make sure that the preliminary land development plan complies with the requirements of the stipulation. The applicant respectfully believes that it does. Township professional staff took no issue in their review letters, and only requested more engineering detail. Any open items are addresses as will comply.

Dan Humes, PE from Van Cleef Engineering explained that the project consists of consolidating 5 parcels into 1 at the southwest corner of Swamp Road and York Road, down to Rogers Road to the south. There is no right turn configuration onto Rogers out of the site and along York Road there is a right in, right out configuration. They also added fire department access along Swamp Road to the north, with a grass paver path to address concerns regarding emergency access. Generally, all is a "will comply" except for the fee in lieu of.

Mr. Kelso asked for an update with PennDOT.

Mr. Humes said that the PennDOT plans have been prepared and given to them for initial reviews.

Mr. Kelso asked if there was a reason the PennDOT plans hadn't been submitted yet since traffic has been such a major issue.

Dave Horner, traffic engineer for the applicant responded that their firm is preparing the PennDOT plan and traffic plan, but they want to make sure that some of the elements tweaked in the last month are congruent with the plans. The plans will be submitted within the week.

Mr. Kelso asked for a review of the stipulation and how it applies to tonight's review.

Mr. Benner explained that the stipulation provides that the Township will approve the preliminary final plan within the terms of the stipulation, waiving initial submission, and calls for review by the Planning Commission, and speaks to the Board of Supervisors taking action upon that review. The only difference is that instead of the plan being governed by the zoning ordinance, it is governed by both the zoning ordinance and the stipulations of various waivers.

Mr. Kelso then asked about the SALDO time clock.

Mr. Benner said that they had submitted revised plans in August of 2021, and at filing of those plans, it reinstated the 90-day review period.

Ms. Mason added that they were granted an extension by the Board through December 25, 2021.

Mr. Kelso asked for an update on Act 537 and the Sewage Facilities Planning Module.

Mr. Blue said he is working with the water and sewer engineer and is acting as project manager for the project on behalf of Mr. Grasso. He said that it had been given to Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority for their review. They should have an answer within a week or two. This is not before the Planning Commission currently.

Ms. Santacecilia asked if the previous issue with parking spaces had been addressed.

Mr. Humes said that there are 13 designated ADA spaces, in compliance with the IBC code requirement. There are 241 total spaces, 90 of which are reserved.

Mr. Reppa asked what triggers additional "in reserve" spaces.

Mr. Humes said that the Township has a right to request that they be built. Ms. Goldstein confirmed that the Township can determine the need for the requirement. Ms. Mason added that the required number of ADA spaces would be built in the first phase, so there are enough when the facility opens. Mr. Humes confirmed this is correct.

Mr. Reppa asked that the traffic concern be addressed, as far as people not using Rogers Road at the intersection of 263.

Mr. Horner said that the stipulation required that the exit be a left turn only on Rogers Road. The intersection of Rogers and 263 analysis shows that traffic from this development is quite small because it is an over 55 community. More direct access to 263 with the right in, right out, does not create the

need for a traffic signal at Rogers and 263. PennDOT will review that as well, and if they require improvements, these will be done.

Mr. Reppa –added that residents are concerned about speeding and asked what steps could be taken to reduce the speed along Rogers Road.

Mr. Horner responded that there are a number of options; speed humps, reducing speed of 25 mph throughout to 15 mph, road narrowing, and speed indicator signs.

Ms. Mason said that it was previously suggested a traffic calming study be done but it requires involvement of the residents in the area. The newly adopted regulations by the Township have been shared but such a request by the residents has not been forthcoming. At some point it probably will and traffic calming can be addressed at that time.

Mr. Kelso expressed concern over the use of large trees, particularly white pines, as these are not compatible along trails. The roots could cause a safety issue.

Mr. Humes said that white pines were specifically discussed and reviewed as part of the reforestation plan.

Ms. Goldstein clarified that white pines were not specifically discussed, just that the trees be a minimum of 15 feet from the trail.

Mr. Benner asked for any suggestions regarding types of trees and said that alternatives would be considered.

Ms. Mason added that they should keep in mind the requirements for native trees.

Mr. Reppa asked if there are any additional highlights that need to be considered from review letters.

Mr. Torpey said that the plan review was based off the stipulation and SALDO. There was nothing of major consequence, he just asked for supplemental information for the sewer plan to serve future residents. There were a couple other items for potential icing areas, but developer indicated they will comply. He also requested clarification on impervious and emergency access.

Ms. Goldstein reiterated that there were no major deal breakers, and that they would offer fee in lieu of for the 120 remaining replacement trees.

Ms. Hendrixson brought up environmental concerns and asked if there are any plans for energy conservation measures, solar, etc.

Mr. Benner said that the project is not in that stage at this time, but those items would be considered with final building plans.

Ms. Mason suggested that EV charges also be considered, and that the location of bike racks had been addressed.

Mr. Kelso further commented that the bike trails seem to show all right angles at intersections, but that a four-foot radius holds up better.

Mr. Kelso then made a motion that the Planning Commission deny the plan and wait and see the responses on the items addressed, and added that reviewing the tree plan, PennDOT plan and 537 plan separately is a mistake.

Mr. Benner suggested that any additional issues can be addressed when the final plan is presented, but respectfully requested that the preliminary plan not be held up.

Ms. Hendrixson agreed and offered that she would like to see a motion contingent on stipulations, with contingencies for trees, PennDOT approval, and the sewage planning module.

Ms. Hendrixson asked for a second to Mr. Kelso's motion. Mr. Kelso's motion died for lack of a second.

Ms. Hendrixson made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend the preliminary plan to the Board of Supervisors contingent on the substitution of some of the trees, that the 537-planning module goes forward, that PennDOT approval is received, and that the developer comply with outstanding letters and reviews.

Mr. Reppa seconded that motion. Motion passed 4-1 with Mr. Kelso voting nay.

Sketch Plans Scheduled for Discussion

405 Edison Furlong Road (Fir Line Prop LLC)

Scott Mill, landscape architect with Van Cleef Engineering, represented the owner/applicant to discuss a sketch plan for 405 Edison Furlong Road. The site is roughly 50 acres in size with frontage along Edison Furlong Road, between Pickwick and Briarwood Court. The site is wooded in rear and open in front and drains from south to north toward Edison Furlong Road. There is a proposed access drive along the eastern third of the site. There are 9 proposed dwelling units along a cul-de-sac, and the zoning is R-1a, so they must be 2 acre lots at minimum. All have on-lot water and sewer. The owner maintains a residence at the site, and the additional lots will be at the rear. The review letters from professional staff listed nothing of major consequence, but if the project moves further, supporting data will be needed.

Mr. Kelso asked how much of the plan is proposed open space.

Mr. Mill said that technically, none is proposed, as the existing dwelling is on a lot over 19 acres in size. Because the lots are oversized, no open space is required.

Mr. Kelso suggested that the larger lots be deed restricted to avoid further subdivision. If not deed restricted, then there should at least be a concept plan for the future of the property.

Ms. Hendrixson asked how far away the property is from public water and sewer.

Mr. Mill said they are unsure at this time.

Mr. Kelso said that in the DTMA review letter, engineer Fred Ciottoni, suggested locating a water storage tank on the property.

Ms. Hendrixson asked if these would be custom homes.

Mr. Mill said that is most likely.

Mr. Reppa asked if the street would be public or private.

Mr. Mill said that is unknown at this time, but that there will be an HOA, which allows for better maintenance and workmanship with a private road over public. He also suggested that the idea is to utilize the existing access, but they will explore whether this is the best location for a driveway. They are also considering whether to have on street parking in addition to two through lanes.

Mr. Kelso raised the question of what the ordinance requires for a secondary access in a cul-de-sac.

Mr. Mill said that they are in compliance with the ordinance. It was determined that the max is 10 homes in order to comply with the code.

Paul Kuhnle of 217 Briarwood Court said they were made of aware of the sketch plan on short notice and asked how they are to be involved. He also suggested that this is a treacherous spot of Edison Furlong and would like to know how it can be made safe.

Ms. Mason explained the process of Subdivision and Land Development and what the Planning Commission's role is. She added that the sketch plan is the first step in the process. All comments and concerns will be addressed. Plans will be more substantial at the preliminary stage.

Laura Mitchell of 1262 Pebble Hill Road stated that these proposed houses would abut her property, and would like the opportunity to review plans when they come in.

Ms. Mason clarified that if a preliminary plan is submitted, neighbors will be notified. They can look at the plans at any time during regular business hours. She further added that it is not uncommon to see a sketch plan and for the applicant to go away, do studies and gather more information, then resurface sometime later.

Ms. Mitchell (1262 Pebble Hill Road) asked if someone is responsible for the environmental aspects of the plan, saying that they were very conscientious not to disturb the wooded areas and native plants.

Ms. Mason explained that the EAC would review the environmental impacts at the preliminary plan phase as well as the Township Planner and Engineer.

Brian O'Neill of 219 Briarwood Court said that he is very close to the property and was under the impression that it could not be subdivided. Furthermore, there is a road proposed by his house. He added they have spent money to prevent runoff from going into their pool and tried to create a berm, but there is still an issue. A road will add impervious surface and more water will go right onto his property and some of his neighbors.

Ms. Hendrixson explained that they will not be permitted to send water onto neighboring properties, and that this will be part of the engineer's review. Ms. Mason added that the Township engineer is an independent consultant who reviews plans on behalf of the Township in compliance with Township ordinances. Ms. Goldstein then said that the neighbors would be entitled to hire a private engineer if they wanted to.

Ms. Mitchell (1262 Pebble Hill Road) said that her driveway washed away despite doing what engineer's reviews suggested when she developed her property.

Ms. Mason suggested that the applicant have a meeting with residents and neighbors away from the Township to address their concerns.

Mr. O'Neill (219 Briarwood Court) said that there is a secondary easement in the cul-de-sac, with a septic mound there, and runoff is already problematic.

Dennis Calabrese (1200 Pebble Hill Road) explained that he is concerned about water in his backyard and worried about wildlife in the wooded area. He thought this area was supposed to be a preserved forest.

Ms. Hendrixson assured him that the Township has a very active Environmental Advisory Council who will have a lot to say about environmental impact.

Jeff Danilo of 211 Briarwood Court raised the question of whether this property was deed restricted, citing that the previous owner did not wish to have the land developed.

Ms. Mason said she did not believe that it was, and that when the property was sold in 2014, they chose not to preserve any open space. Ms. Goldstein added that as far as the Township is aware, this property is not deed restricted, but this could be confirmed with a title search as Mr. Danilo said he was doing.

Frank Arrison of 1150 Pebble Hill Road asked when it would be determined if this area is suitable for septic.

Mr. Kelso said this would be determined during the preliminary plan process, which is the next step. The Health Department would have to sign off and there is a separate process laid out by DEP for that.

Mr. Arrison (1150 Pebble Hill Road) then asked if they were requesting any zoning variances.

Ms. Goldstein said there are none at this time, but they would have to request a variance if needed.

Mr. Arrison then asked if any of the woodlands are protected.

Ms. Goldstein replied that woodlands are protected at 50% per ordinance. SALDO has different regulations as well. She further suggested that a more current survey was needed.

Ms. Hendrixson added that there is also an ordinance for tree replacement.

Mr. Arrison asked if the ordinance addresses screening, and then asked about the conservation easements on some of the Briarwood properties.

Ms. Goldstein said that buffer requirements exist but not for residential-to-residential land development, and that the conservation easement came with their deed.

David Mastrobatista of 212 Briarwood Court said that he is not considered an adjacent property but would like to be notified about the next phase, as would most properties on Briarwood Court. He also suggested that the design of the cul-de-sac could impact existing septic systems.

Ms. Hendrixson said that this will all be worked out and will display accurately on the plans.

Mr. Mastrobatista (212 Briarwood Court) asked why the driveway cutouts are so close to the easement which is specified as a "paper road." He asked what would trigger this to be paved.

Mr. Kelso said that it would not be required at this time since they meet the Township standard for number of homes in a cul-de-sac.

Ms. Mason noted that the Township will include the additional property owners in the notification for the preliminary plan notification, and that this is done as a courtesy. The Township is not required to do so but has been committed to notifying the adjacent neighbors since 1988.

Jeffrey Cogshall of 343 Edison Furlong Road asked if there was a geological survey for groundwater and expressed concern over 9 more homes in this area.

Ms. Mason said that there are Health Department requirements for wells, but that this area has also been looked at for a storage tank for public water. A small well could serve neighborhood and may be more efficient. Still very preliminary and conceptual at this point.

Betsy Arrison of 1150 Pebble Hill Road requested that as things move forward, a buffer be added for residential to residential. Neighbors will be severely impacted when back woods are gone. If possible, a clear buffer would be beneficial to neighbors and wildlife.

Ms. Hendrixson reiterated that a meeting between the residents and property owner would be best to address these concerns. She added that the developer should initiate this.

Mr. Kelso suggested that the sketch plan is good for looking at options under the zoning ordinance, and there may be a better one than what is being looked at currently.

Ms. Mitchell (1262 Pebble Hill Road) asked who handles the lighting and suggested that this area could be lit up all night.

Ms. Mason replied that this is a matter for the Code Department, and that Code requires downward facing lights.

Terry Lohrbeer of 420 Edison Furlong Road expressed concern over how dangerous this road is, with the amount of water on the one side, especially in the winter, and said that this should be addressed.

Ms. Mason said that PennDOT will look at this issue because Edison Furlong is a state owned and maintained road.

Mr. Mill thanked everyone for their feedback and input and said he will regroup with the client, and should they move forward, will set up a meeting with the neighbors.

Ms. Mason suggested that a meeting be held prior to submitting a plan for preliminary approval.

Items Scheduled for Discussion

N/A

Adjournment

With no other business or comments, the meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kaitlyn Finley, Township Code Secretary