

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING APRIL 26, 2016

Attendees: Peter Cornog, James Hoban, Dave Shula, Sherri Patchen, Vince Manuele, Scott Quitel, Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning, Amy Grossman (BOS Liaison), Jim Sullivan, Township Engineer, T&M Associates

1. Call to order: 7:00 PM by Chair Patchen

2. Announcements & Correspondence:

- The next meeting is a joint meeting with Conshohocken Borough Planning Commission to review the Riverfront Plan. The meeting will be held on the 2nd floor at the Spring Mill Fire Company, which is part of the study area.

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Mr. Cornog moved to approve the meeting minutes from April 12, 2016, seconded by Mr. Manuele. Vote 5-0 (Mr. Quitel was not present for the vote)

4. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals:

- None

5. Subdivision & Land Development Applications:

- SLD #01-15 – VFW at Fort Washington, 451 Bethlehem Pike; Request for a new Fort Washington Transit Oriented Development District and Mapping; consider recommendation to BOS to authorize public hearing. Marc Kaplin, Esquire, representative for Allyn and Gregory Harth, was present. Mr. Kaplin reintroduced the project which was in front of the Planning Commission a year ago for a lot line change. His clients are owners of 14 small parcels of land located adjacent to Bethlehem Pike, Septa Train Station and Fort Washington State Park. The property contains approximately 5.2 acres. They are proposing a new zoning district, the Fort Washington Transit Oriented Development District (FWTOD). If the new district is adopted and the area rezoned, the applicant would then like to construct a 3-building mixed-use development with the vast majority of the buildings' space devoted to multi-family dwellings; ancillary office and commercial uses would round out the development. This will create opportunities for a multifamily residential development in close proximity to public transit facilities which serves to promote public transit use and minimize additional vehicular trips on the Township's roads during peak hours. The proposed development would be linked to the Ft. Washington regional rail station via a lighted trail. In addition, portions of the County's Cross County Trail would be constructed and allow linkage to the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail system. This application is on the agenda for the Planning Commission to consider making a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on holding a public hearing on this application only. Mr. Kaplin discussed the goals of the proposed district; the 2.5 acres of land belonging to Ft. Washington State Park, to be acquired from the state in a "land swap"; how the design components are similar to the Riverfront Development (Overlay) District; and gave an overview of the traffic study. Planning Commission Concerns and Comments: redesign for reducing below grade parking; discussion of the land swap with Fort Washington Park; flooding of Sandy Run; knocking out habitat by cutting down so many trees; and setbacks along Bethlehem Pike. Public Comment: George Ozorowski, representative for Fort Washington Rescape; Linda Doll, Fairway Road; Jim Maganizer, representative from the Historical Society of Fort Washington; Michael Potts, 532 Bethlehem Pike; Lesterle Meyer, 530 Bethlehem Pike; and Peter Blood, chairman of Fort Washington Rescape all spoke; Mr. Blood gave a short PowerPoint presentation highlighting flooding, traffic, and building scale issues. The public's

comments and concerns, in general, were as follows: the height of the habitable buildings compared to the existing buildings; was consent given by DCNR to rezone; the new 100 year floodplain, wanted to know where the water was going to be directed (the Wissahickon); concerned about existing flooding and the properties that were condemned; current traffic is impossible during morning and evening rush hour and the accidents on Bethlehem Pike; the massive scale is totally out of character; consider developing the area under Village Commercial regulations; and the new FEMA map shows building #2 totally in floodplain and building #1 partially in floodplain. Most of the issues discussed will be addressed during the Land Development process. After considerable discussion, Mr. Manuele made a motion to recommend the Board of Supervisors schedule a public hearing to consider adoption of an ordinance creating the Fort Washington Transit Oriented District and establishing specific requirements governing development within that district; seconded by Mr. Cornog. Vote 5-1 Mr. Quitel opposed.

- SLD #02-16 – 3047 Spring Mill Road, Plymouth Meeting, PA; 23 Single Family Dwellings (Sketch Plan). Sal Paone, Jr. showed the initial sketch plan at the very early stages of the project. They are currently in the due diligence period. This tract is in the Plymouth Meeting Historic District and contains three historic homes and additional out-buildings. It has frontage on Spring Mill Road and Butler Pike. The tract is in the A – Residential District and since it includes 5 or more homes, the sketch has been done using the standards of the Conservation Design Overlay District. As proposed, the development would take access from Spring Mill Road with an emergency access proposed to Cardinal Drive. The applicant had an informal discussion with HARB on April 13th and based upon that discussion has submitted a revised plan with less lots, preserving the existing barn. The architecture is consistent with HARB requirements. Mr. Paone met with the Fire Marshal, the neighbors on Black Walnut, and some of the residents on Cardinal Drive and received a lot of feedback. The biggest discussion with Cardinal Drive was the proposed emergency access and stormwater management. Mr. Paone is proposing to build a small berm and swale to contain the stormwater on site and convey the water to a basin so that the water doesn't run across the properties. Comments from the Planning Commission: they like the fact that they are saving the existing homes on the property and they are not building the maximum as allowed by the ordinance; there was discussion as to whether there are other options for the emergency access; explained the reason for not having access on Butler Pike (more traffic, topography, less desirable neighborhood). Public Comment: Connie Canniff, 12 Cardinal Drive; Joe Uriani, 7 Cardinal Drive; Scott Forsyth, 14 Cardinal Drive; Larry Grewe, 3033 Spring Mill Road; Mike Kapuscinski, 1 Cardinal Drive; Le Sheppard, former resident of Whitemarsh Township; Hope Nagy, 4 Tracey Road; Eileen McDonald, former resident who lived at 3068 & 3037 Spring Mill Road; Amy Clark, 105 Black Walnut Lane; Bill Totten, former resident; Elise Kaplin, 102 Black Walnut Lane; and Linda Doll, Fairway Road all spoke. Their comments and concerns were as follows: the emergency access should be configured to be on Paone's property; it's going to change the character of the neighborhood and it is going to be used as a cut through creating more traffic; the emergency access will decrease property values; egress of the development onto Spring Mill Road; consideration of a stop sign along Spring Mill Road to slow traffic; existing stormwater management and drainage issues and how it will increase with the new development; who will maintain the basin; diminishing the lot size will create more runoff; lots are too small and not compatible with what is existing – too congested; who is liable for future damage; concerns of the open space being in the front yard and that it should be a dedicated public area; historic and aesthetic concerns; and large wind breaking trees on boundaries;. All comments and concerns will be taken in consideration. As a sketch, no formal action is requested of the Planning Commission.

6. Conditional Use Applications:

- None

7. Old Business: None

8. New Business:

- None

9. Public Comment: None

10. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 10:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning

The Planning Commission is appointed as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board with respect to comprehensive land use planning, existing land use, and various land use and zoning applications in Whitemarsh Township. No formal decisions are rendered by the Planning Commission. Formal decisions are rendered by the Board of Supervisors or Zoning Hearing Board, as prescribed by law, based on the type of application.