

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

Attendees: Bob Dambman, Vince Manuele, Sherri Glantz Patchen, Dave Shula, 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 Manuele
2. Announcements & Correspondence

Announcements

Correspondence

- September 9, 2018 e-mail from Kathy Agster regarding her concerns on SLD#01-15 VFW at Fort Washington, Ltd.
- E-mail from Patrick Doran, a fellow commissioner who was unable to attend, with some suggestions he had about the ordinance.
- Reminder: Next Thursday, September 20, 2018 will be the final public Comprehensive Plan workshop. All members are encouraged to attend this meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Mr. Shula moved to approve the minutes from the August 28, 2018 meeting; seconded by Ms. Patchen. Vote 4-0-1. Mr. Quitel abstained (not present at that meeting)

4. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals:

- None

5. Subdivision & Land Development Applications:

- SLD#01-15 VFW at Fort Washington, LTD, 451 Bethlehem Pike, Fort Washington, PA; Zoning Text Amendments adding a new Fort Washington Transit-oriented Development District; Revised (Continued Discussion). Gregory Harth, developer and applicant, was present along with Rob Lewis, Esquire with Kaplin Stewart, Tom Barton, Land Planner and Architect, and Neil Liebman, Architect with Benardon Architects. Mr. Barton discussed the dimensional standards and floor area ratio (FAR) requirements and how they are calculated. Mr. Barton also stated that going forward more ordinances will refer to (FAR) as the criteria to determine density and not units per acre; Mr. Barton's comments were intended to relate the proposed ordinance density to comments made by Jody Holton, MCPC Executive Director after the last meeting, in which she commented that the FAR in the proposed ordinance is lower than that in the County's New Town Mixed Use Ordinance (TOD) District. Mr. Liebman clarified the standards for height and setbacks as it is written in the ordinance and their interpretation of how it impacts the design as presented. Public Comment: Andre Stormont, 227 Madison Avenue; George Ozorowski, Esquire, representing Fort Washington Rescape; Andrew Kane, 113 Fort Washington Avenue; Richard Drescher, Fort Washington; Sydelle Zove, 644 Harts Ridge Road; Wendy Bailey, 305 N. Bethlehem Pike; Benjamin Shienbaum, 7020 Lafayette Avenue; Richard Rosenal, 430 S. Bethlehem Pike, owner of Rich's Deli; M.J. Fischer, Farmar Lane; Joy Lenhardt, 438 Bethlehem Pike (owner of architecture firm at this address); Peter Blood, Fort Washington Rescape; and Sam Stormont, 227 Madison Avenue all spoke. Their concerns and comments included: (FAR) calculation are used more for an urban setting vs. a suburban setting and the impact is different; use regulations – adequate on-site parking (especially for non-residential uses); dimensional requirements – building and parking setbacks from the street and property lines; density and building heights are still an issue; design standards – Riparian Corridor shouldn't be waived; and traffic congestion. Mr. Lewis responded to many of the concerns, including explaining that the ordinance stipulates that non-residential parking can be provided if Township sees need, that a certain mass of population is needed before

other retail uses will locate here, floodplain and riparian corridor regulations are not waived, and the traffic improvements won't be made without development. Planning Commission comments and concerns: still have issues with building height and setbacks; density and mass; and traffic concerns until the bridge is widened. After discussion amongst members, Mr. Manuele stated they are not prepared to recommend approval without significant changes to the ordinance. The applicant was asked to re-work the ordinance and provide a new plan that complies with the revised ordinance.

6. Conditional Use Applications:

- None

7. Old Business:

- None

8. New Business: None

9. Public Comment:

- Sydelle Zove, 644 Harts Ridge Road, encouraged the Planning Commission members to attend the Conditional Use Hearing for townhouses on the Corson Tract.
- Peter Blood, Fort Washington Rescape, stated 5 years ago Rescape started working with Upper Dublin Township and Whitmarsh Township for intelligent traffic signals which are currently being installed on Pennsylvania Avenue and the engineers say that there will be a 50% increase in traffic that can flow through the area.
- Joy Lenhardt, 438 Bethlehem Pike, thanked the Planning Commission members for their deliberations; stated the idea of shared parking is appreciated and they do that and it's not a liability issue; and the height along Bethlehem Pike should at least retain the village character.

10. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 9:35 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 Whitmarsh 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.