

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

Attendees: Dave Shula, Sherri Glantz Patchen, Peter Cornog, Bob Dambman, Scott Quitel, Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning, Krista Heinrich, Township Engineer, T&M Associates, Amy Grossman, BOS Liaison and Dave Sander, Township Solicitor

1. Call to order: 7:00 PM by Vice-Chair Dambman
2. Announcements & Correspondence

Announcements:

- There will not be a meeting on October 8, 2019; tentatively the next meeting is Monday, October 14, 2019. The decision will be made after tonight's meeting.
- In the Planning Commissions packet are Vince's suggestions for the additional actions for the rest of the action plan in the document.

Correspondence:

- Open Space Committee's original comments from last May.
- Ms. Patchen's suggestions for the Open Space section and the Historic Resources section of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Two page memo from Sydelle Zove also about Historic Resources

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes from September 10, 2019. The meeting minutes were tabled due to inadequate members present who were at that meeting. Mr. Cornog made a motion to table the meeting minutes until the next meeting with the minor corrections made to the meeting minutes suggested by Ms. Patchen; seconded by Mr. Shula. Vote 5-0

4. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals: None

5. Subdivision & Land Development Applications: None

6. Conditional Use Applications: None

7. Old Business:

- Comprehensive Plan (Selective) Update; Complete Review of Action Plan. Review of Goal 2 – Housing.
- **Infill Residential Development (Housing, Policy 1)** - Comments from Commission Members include: Would like to see clearer definition of open space (open space is currently only defined in zoning ordinance); front yard as open space could be addressed in cluster development district; need to come up with strengthened language related to cluster development; don't think developers understand what natural habitat is; would like to see something added to SALDO to what is required for resource inventory (natural resources, trees, viewscapes, etc.)
- Sydelle Zove, Harts Ridge Road, what is open space, recreational space, green space, they are used somewhat interchangeably; stormwater basin are counted towards open space/recreational space/green space requirement; does counting detention basins meet the intent of the code. Eli Glick, 7 Whitefield Dr., really important to define open space in the plan at this time. Brett Saunders, W. Valley Green Road, defining open

space is a great idea; be cautious of the wording; simplify cluster development regulations to facilitate and encourage the use of cluster development.

- The Planning Commission recommended to eliminate G2.1.1 completely; change phase 2 to near term; and add a new action to reflect the concept of developing flexible design standards leading to higher quality development based upon site-specific inventories of natural and manmade features (Planning Commission will come up with suggested language)
- **Housing Diversification (Housing, Policy 2):** allowing for a variety of housing types and sizes and promoting mixed-income neighborhoods.
- Eli Glick, who says we don't have diversity, there should be an inventory to see where we are lacking. Linda Doll, Fairway Road, we don't want in-law quarters to become AirBnb/short term rentals. Brett Saunders, not afraid of renters, need more diversity; should include more housing points that allow for socio economic diversity, culture diversity, etc.
- The Commission underscored the need for a variety of housing uses, types and sizes and that appropriate changes need to be made to the residential standards in zoning.
- **New Residential Development (Housing, Policy 3):** ensure new neighborhoods are interconnected through greenbelts, pathways, or sidewalks to surrounding development centers (2.3.1), and require landscape buffers along roadways to preserve open space and green corridors (2.3.2). Planning Commission suggested adding 'forested areas' to 2.3.2.
- Sydelle Zove – what does 'development centers' mean (anything that is developed in some way, neighborhoods, commercial stores, etc.); suggests changing the wording to surrounding destinations) feels they need to be more explicit or inclusive; Commission agreed to this change. Thinks that "forested areas" may be a poor word choice, developers misinterpret the intent. Linda Doll - is the landscaping that is proposed to be along new or existing roads? Brett Saunders – does this goal need reference to cluster? Perry Schwartz – there needs to be more of a definition to what a landscape buffer is. Eli Glick – this is a good place to talk about tree preservation and the value of existing trees.
- The Planning Commission recommends adding "preserve established vegetation, open space and green corridors" to 2.3.2. and take 4th item from p. 72 and move to p. 75, 2.3.2.
- The Planning Commission would also like to see 2.3.2 changed to 'on-going'.
- Comprehensive Plan (Selective) Update; Complete Review of Action Plan. Review of Goal 3—Circulation.
- **Roadway Systems, Complete Streets, Streetscape Amenities and Pedestrian/Bicycle Connectivity and Trail Network (Circulation, Policies 1 – 4).** The Planning Commission discussed changes to the individual action items and priorities. As part of 3.1.2, mitigation of traffic impacts should be required as part of the development approval process. There was discussion about recommending denial of development when there are significant traffic impacts; Mr. Sander explained to the Commission that the Township cannot legally deny development because it has an adverse traffic impact; fees paid by developers are to be used to mitigate adverse traffic impacts. In terms of bike planning, it was suggested that developing a bike plan should be a short-term priority with implementation being on-going. Many roads in the Township are dangerous for cyclists and need signage; some have no room for a bike lane, etc. Commission members will work to re-word some of the actions in the Circulation section.
- Heidi Meiers, Crescent Avenue, wanted to know if there is a fee that exists to improve traffic impact and is it being used and are there regulations (yes, developers pay a fee based on peak hour traffic impacts; there is a capital improvement plan that was explained in detail by Dave Sander); Eli Glick stated that if you can't stop builders from building because of traffic, what about air quality (there is nothing about mitigating quality of

air). Brett Saunders suggested adding a separate action for different types of conveyances (driverless cars and uber drivers, for example), need to address electric cars and charging stations as part of the development process. Sydelle Zove – the plan needs to advocate improvements to county and state roads not just township roads (Mr. Sander explained that our authority is limited to Township Roads); looking to push back on development that's out of control; need to address SALDO waivers, that has to be in the Comprehensive Plan; stated we need to educate the public about these amenities; we need interpretive signage. Perry Schwartz – any avenue we can use against rampant development is welcome. Elise Kaplan – we need different kinds of development with lesser trip generation (55-plus communities, for example).

8. New Business: None

9. Public Comment:

- Steve Kauffman – re-distributed the Open Space Committee comments on the Draft Comprehensive Plan. He also read Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Statement on climate change. (Mr. Dambman commented that Mr. Manuele suggests we incorporate a statement about climate change in the Comp Plan, based on the DVRPC statement. Mr. Quitel is working on this.)
- Eli Glick – Karabots Property—the minutes do not reflect the concerns of the Planning Commission; Commission's concerns aren't carried forward to the Board of Supervisors.
- Sydelle Zove – need a standard deliberation process which conveys the basis of decisions made; minutes don't do it.

10. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 9:47 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.

All written or graphic material that is presented to the Planning Commission at a public meeting shall be kept in Township files and is subject to examination under the PA Right-to-know Law.