

SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNTY OF MONROE, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 8, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.
MEETING MINUTES

1./2. Call to Order and Members Present:

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Township Planning Commissioner Chair Attorney Scott Amori. Along with Commissioner Amori, Commissioners D. Schryver, D. Strunk, M. Albert and M. Boyer were all physically present in the meeting room at the Township Municipal Building. Commissioner R. Moses was absent. The meeting was also streamed remotely via ZOOM.

In addition to the above Commissioners, the other Township officials who attended the meeting were Township Supervisor Chair Jacob Pride, Township Engineer Jon S. Tresslar, PE and PLS and Township Solicitor, Ronold J. Karasek, Esquire, of the Karasek Law Offices, LLC, all of whom were all physically present in the meeting room.

3. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: was recited.

4. Minutes: The Minutes of March 11, 2021 were approved on motion of Commissioner Strunk, seconded by Commissioner Schryver and vote of 4-1 (M. Albert abstained).

5. Public Comments: None.

6. Plans to Act On:

a) Shukaitis Preliminary/Final Minor Subdivision

The plan proposes a minor subdivision of lands along Hidden Valley Drive approximately 400' west of its intersection with Franklin Hill Road. The existing property is located in the RC (Residential Conservation) Zoning District with an area of 10.586 acres.

Proposed Lot No. 1 will have 8.405 gross acres with the existing dwelling and garage to remain with no additional development proposed. Proposed Lot No. 2 will consist of woodlands with 2.181 gross acres; and, as with Lot No. 1, no development is proposed.

Neither the Applicant nor the Applicant's Planning Professional G. Fetch, Jr., PLS, were present to discuss the Plan and the overall project. However, the Township Engineer stated that the plan was acceptable for review; and, the Engineer went through his Review Letter of March 26, 2021.

Mr. Tresslar's major comments were that the use of Lot No.2 should be clarified, setbacks appear to be incorrect, coverage and heights need to be addressed and tract acreage should be adjusted to take slope percentages into consideration.

Commissioner Amori questioned whether Lot No.2 needs to front on a public road as Hidden Valley is a private road.

On motion by Commissioner Strunk (and seconded by Commissioner Amori) and on a vote of 5-0, the plan was tabled for the Applicant to address the Township Engineer comments and for the Township Engineer to investigate the road frontage requirements for Lot No. 2.

7. Unfinished Business:

a) Khan Proposed Mixed Use Development

The proposed development is located in the ED (Economic Development) Zoning District and on the southern side of Independence Road (SR 447) at its intersection with Franklin Hill Road. It proposes four 4-story apartment buildings with a total of 144 units (36 units per building) and a 4,800 sq. ft. medical office building with 273 off-street parking spaces. The property presently consists of meadow and woodlands with existing wetlands on a corner of the property.

Neither the Applicant nor the Applicant's Planning Professional were present to discuss the plan. The last time this matter was heard by the Planning Commission was at the February 2021 Planning Commission Meeting. At that time there was a discussion as to whether the mixed-use 25 acre minimum applied to the plan or did the ED Amendments (which have no 25 acre minimum) apply? There was no answer to that question in February. Moreover, the Township Engineer had just completed his Second Review by correspondence dated February 10, 2021. No submissions or responses by either the Applicant or his Planning Professionals have been received since that meeting.

Meanwhile, a number of residents/neighbors were present at tonight's meeting to voice their objections to the plan.

- A Chris Hess (of Stonegate Drive) stated that the size of the apartment buildings and off-street parking would be right behind his property and would be an inappropriate use and a nuisance next to the residential area where he (and others) live.
- A Williard Roche (also of Stonegate Drive) is an engineer in New York and stated that environmental and traffic studies should be performed as SR 447 would not be able to handle the increased traffic from the project.
- Lynn Pryor was present on behalf of her parents (the Faulsticks) who also live on Stonegate Drive. They are concerned with blasting (that could adversely affect building foundations and wells), light pollution and the height of the buildings. There was also a concern with drainage easement issues
- Maryann Bridges (who owns property along Franklin Hill Road) questioned highway occupancy requirements and that the area will be lit up "like a city"

Since no one from Khan's side was present and there has been no response to the Township Engineer Second Review Letter of February 10, 2021, on motion of Commissioner Amori (seconded by Commissioner Strunk) and on a vote of 5-0, the matter was removed from further agendas.

8. New Business:

a) Dangerous Structures Ordinance of Stroud Township-the Vacation, Removal, Repair or Demolition of Structures Dangerous to Health, Safety or General Welfare

Commissioner Chair Amori discussed how he was involved in a case where this ordinance was referenced; and, he believed that it was a good idea to place this matter on the Planning Commission agenda for discussion.

Commissioner Amori liked the Stroud Township Ordinance as it outlined clear procedure to follow, stated specific standards to be met and contained reasonable enforcement provisions; and, consequently, he urged the Township Board of Supervisors to "take a look" at this ordinance.

Commissioner Albert was of the opinion that the ordinance might be overreaching i.e. he gave the example of bad porch steps. Commissioner Schryver stated that (in his opinion) the issue was the present look of the commercial corridor so that addressing the Township's residential areas at this time might be too ambitious i.e. he gave the example of a town on Long Island. While Commissioner Schryver felt that only the commercial properties should be targeted, Commissioner Amori felt that this ordinance needs to be township-wide... not just in the commercial areas... to pass legal muster.

Supervisor Pride stated that the Township's Zoning Ordinance may need to be amended while Commissioner Schryver was of the opinion that the Township should simply enforce the existing (zoning) ordinances. Commissioner Strunk questioned why add another ordinance to the books when the existing ordinances are not enforced. The discussion then evolved into the duties and responsibilities of the Township Zoning Officer; and, Commissioner Schryver suggested that the Planning Commission meet with the Zoning Officer once a month.

On motion of Commissioner Amori (and seconded by Commissioner Albert) and on vote of 4-0¹, this matter was tabled and placed on the May Planning Commission meeting for the Zoning Officer to be present to further discuss this matter.

9. Public Comment: See above.

10. Adjournment:

There being no other business coming before the Commission and on motion by Commissioner Albert, seconded by Commissioner Schryver and on a unanimous vote of 4-0, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Karasek Law Offices, LLC

By: 

Ronald J. Karasek, Esquire

PA I.D. No. 23233

Solicitor to Smithfield Township

¹ Commissioner Boyer needed to leave the meeting shortly prior to the vote.