

**Smithfield Township Planning Commission
Regular Business Meeting
November 10th, 2022
Minutes**

1. Call to Order:

A Regular Business Meeting of the Smithfield Township Planning Commission was held on November 10th, 2022, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Road, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and also via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chair Scott Amori at 7:00PM.

2. Members Present:

A quorum was present. Planning Commission members present include Commissioners Scott Amori, Douglas Schryver, David Strunk, Mitch Bowyer, and Chris Bowers. Michael Albert arrived at the meeting at 7:03pm. Commissioner Robert Moses was absent.

In addition to the above Commissioners, also in attendance were Township Engineer Jon Tresslar, PE, Township Solicitor Ronold J. Karasek, Esquire, Township Supervisor Robert Lovenheim, and Budget & Finance Manager Lucas DeBartolo.

Also present from the public were the following individuals who shared their names: Stephen Hettel, Nate Oiler, and Steven Kemper.

3. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

4. Minutes for Review: October 13, 2022 - Regular Business Meeting

Commissioner D. Strunk motioned to accept minutes as written, seconded by Commissioner Chair S. Amori. All votes in favor (6-0), minutes accepted.

5. Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

6. New Business and Plans to Act On:

a. Franklin Hill Manor Land Development Plan.

Solicitor R. Karasek states that the developer has requested an extension. Engineer J. Tresslar states that the developer is currently working on addressing stormwater issues with their proposed plan as reviewed by Township Engineer J. Tresslar, and this is still in process. Commissioner Chair S. Amori motions to table this item until the January 12th, 2023, regular Planning Commission Meeting. Commissioner D. Schryver seconds this motion. All in favor (6-0), motion carried. Plan is tabled until the January 12th, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting. Extension expires on January 31, 2023.

Public Comment: Stephen Hettel commented that residents had not yet been contacted by Franklin Hill Manor regarding land development and the potential stormwater issues on neighborhood properties.

b. Black Buffalo Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan.

Request by developer for extension. Commissioner Chair S. Amori comments he would plan to vote no on the plan if another extension is requested. Commissioner D. Schryver motions to table this plan until the January 12th, 2023, Planning Commission meeting. Michael Albert seconds this motion. All vote in favor (6-0), motion carried. Plan is tabled until the January 12th, 2023, regular Planning Commission Meeting. Extension expires on February 9th, 2023.

c. Review Signage Amendment Chapter 19, Code of Ordinances.

Commissioners discuss current ordinances, and issues the township has enforcing zoning laws. Supervisor R. Lovenheim discusses how these zoning changes will make it easier for signage ordinances to be enforced.

Specific items including luminosity, types of signs, banners, blighted signs, temporary signs, and permanent signs are discussed. Commissioners discuss real estate signs, political signs, and the timely removal of signs. Commissioners discuss billboard spacing and grandfathering of signs, and the idea that the repair or replacement of a sign would give the owner a requirement to conform with the new ordinances.

Commissioner M. Albert comments on directional signs, and how it must be stated in the township code that they are allowed, recommending stating that directional signs are permissible at T intersections when parallel with the road, on land that is leased or owned by the individual placing the directional sign. Commissioners discuss directional signs on residential versus economic development-zoned areas.

Commissioner Schryver discusses putting requirements in place to standardize all signage, Supervisor R. Lovenheim disagrees with this idea.

Public Comment: Frank Riccobono discusses his concerns with the new draft signage ordinance, and his ability to repair and replace his already approved signs without having to conform with new ordinances. He also discusses concerns about limited wording regarding the allowance of electronic billboards in the new draft ordinance.

Commissioners discuss wording to get rid of junk signs. Township Solicitor R. Karasek discusses maintenance or repairs of a nonconforming sign being different than a major alteration. Commissioners discuss the inability to regulate what words can be stated on signs.

Commissioner Chair S. Amori comments that he likes the readability and clarity of the new signage ordinance. Supervisor R. Lovenheim asks all Commissioners to send him

any edits recommended for additional review a future Planning Commission meeting. Solicitor R. Karasek will also send over recommended edits to Supervisor R. Lovenheim.

d) Review Russell D. Scott et.al. - Petition to Amend the Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioners discuss letter received, the developer's request to move the parcels to the Economic Development Zone, and potential spot zoning issues. Commissioner M. Albert mentions that neighbors may have some concerns about the change in zoning, though promoting mixed use overall is usually beneficial. Commissioner Chair S. Amori also comments that this is a zoning change request, not a plan. Commissioners discuss what the property should allow or not allow. Supervisor R. Lovenheim asks the Planning Commission to develop a recommendation on what should be allowed to develop at the property.

Commissioner Chair S. Amori motions to table the Petition to Amend the Zoning Ordinance until the December 8th, 2022, regular Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner M. Albert seconds this motion. All in favor (6-0), motion carried. Petition is tabled until the December 8th, 2022, regular Planning Commission Meeting.

New Business:

e) Westfield Commons – Realignment of Franklin Hill Road, Dr. Khan

Motion to add Westfield Commons to the agenda to stay within the time limit for a grant application made by Commission Chair S. Amori, seconded by Commissioner D. Strunk. All in favor (6-0), motion carried.

Nate Oiler speaks as representative for the Westfield Commons project. He discusses the Realignment Plan for Franklin Hill Road. A \$1.3 Million Multimodal Grant application is in development to improve the road. Smithfield Township Supervisors have approved a resolution for conditional funding for the Multimodal grant, with the stipulation that if the grant is received, Dr. Khan must make the financial commitment of 30% of the grant to cover the required match for the township to accept it, estimated at \$300,000 to \$350,000. Township Solicitor R. Karasek states that there is no guarantee the project will be fully funded, and only if the grant is received, then Dr. Khan will need to make a funding guarantee for the project to move forward. Nate Oiler requests that the Planning Commission approve that the realignment plan is consistent with Smithfield Township Comprehensive plans. Township Engineer J. Tresslar comments that he has reviewed the realignment and it is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Separately, there is a new sketch plan submitted on this property for a mixed-use development, that Township Engineer J. Tresslar has reviewed, and will be discussed at a future Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner D. Strunk makes a motion to approve that the Realignment Plan for Franklin Hill Road is consistent with comprehensive plans of Smithfield Township and the Township Engineer Review Letter from 11/10/2022. Commissioner M. Albert seconds this motion. Motion passes (5-1) with a nay vote by Commissioner Chair S. Amori.

7. Old and Unfinished Business:

- a) Discuss & Consider: That the Planning Commission ask the Supervisors to request the Planning Commission to develop, recommend for approval and then implement a specific onboarding plan for new Planning Commission Volunteers.
- b) Discuss & Consider: A motion of the Planning Commission for a periodic report of activities of the Zoning Officer and Building Inspector or permits applied for, grated (or refused), Zoning Violations Cited and any Legal status of those Zoning Violations.
- c) Review of Action on prior recommendations

No action taken on any old or unfinished business. Carried over from prior meetings.

8. General Public Comments: No additional public comments.

9. Meeting Adjourned:

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner D. Strunk, seconded by Commissioner Chair S. Amori. All in favor (6-0), motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Minutes recorded by Lucas DeBartolo

Respectfully submitted



Lucas DeBartolo
Budget & Finance Manager
Smithfield Township