

SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
COUNTY OF MONROE, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
REGULAR MEETINGS ON FEBRUARY 9, 2023, AT 7 P.M.  
MEETING MINUTES

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Scott Amori. Along with Commissioner Chair Amori, Commissioners B. Moses, M. Albert, D. Schryver, D. Strunk, and C. Bowers were physically present in the meeting room at the Township Municipal Building. Commissioner M. Bowyer was absent. The meeting was also streamed via Zoom.

In addition to the above Commissioners, the other Township officials who attended the meeting were Supervisor Robert Lovenheim, Township Solicitor Ronold J. Karasek, Esquire of the Karasek Law Offices, LLC, Township Engineer Jon S. Tresslar, PE and PLS, and Township Manager Julia Heilakka, who were physically present in the meeting room.

Present also were Martha Carbone, Steve Hettel, and Lynn Lesoine.

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

**4. Minutes of Regular Meeting of January 12, 2022:** Commissioner Albert motions to approve the minutes, Commissioner Amori seconds. Vote: all in favor; minutes accepted.

**5. Public Comments on the Agenda:** Steve Hettel confirms that discussion for the Franklin Hill Manor Land Development Plan is tabled. This will be addressed under item 6a.

**6. New Business and Plans to Act On: none.**

**a) Franklin Hill Manor Land Development Plan.**

The proposed Plan subdivides a 6.1895-acre parcel into four residential lots and develops land on the eastern side of Franklin Hill Road at its intersection with Albert Lane (a private road). The residential lots will take access from an improved Albert Lane.

The Township received an email earlier today stating that Mr. Meckes, the planning profession for the project, is still working on compliance with the township engineer review letter and asking for the item to be tabled. Solicitor Karasek states there has been no action on the site, so there is no harm in tabling the project. Engineer Tresslar states easements are probably the holdup. Commissioner Strunk motions to table the plan, Commissioner Albert seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries. The Commission will discuss this again on March 9<sup>th</sup>.

**b) Draft Solar Ordinance.**

The Township Board of Supervisors activated Section 609.2 of the Municipalities Planning Code regarding code deficiencies in solar and warehouse uses. The Board of Supervisors must act no later than March 27, 2023.

The concept of a community solar system – a development that uses a solar field to offset the power demands of the development – is brought before the Planning Commission, and there is much discussion on how to, if at all, incorporate this principle into the draft ordinance. Commissioner Strunk explains community solar systems function by contributing

energy to the power lines, which is sold back to the users on that property for a discount that is agreed on by the electric provider and owner. The ordinance as written would not allow a community solar system because of the 10kW limit on ground-mounted Accessory Solar Energy Systems (ASES).

Commissioner Strunk believes the ordinance should not regulate energy limits because electric companies will do that; this same principle will prevent large solar farms in residential areas. The Commissioners discuss where community solar systems should be allowed and whether the use should be permitted or conditional. Commissioner Albert agrees with no wattage limit ASES, but believes larger ground-mounted systems should be buffered more. After discussion, the Commission removes the 10kW maximum for ASES, and allow solar energy facilities as a conditional use in the ED, R-2, RE, and M-1 zones.

**c) Draft Warehouse Ordinance.**

The Township Board of Supervisors activated Section 609.2 of the Municipalities Planning Code regarding code deficiencies in solar and warehouse uses. The Board of Supervisors must act no later than March 27, 2023. Solicitor Karasek introduces the draft warehouse ordinance, which was created after surveying local ordinances, notably Pocono Township and Plainsfield.

The Commission reviews the proposed definitions. Engineer Tresslar states many of the requirements stated here already exist in the SALDO ordinance. The Commission discusses reducing or eliminating parking requirements for commercial development at a future date.

After much discussion, the Commission decides that many of the requirements set forth are already located in SALDO and do not need to be repeated. Warehouses 50,000 square feet and smaller should be a principal permitted use in the ED zone, while warehouses, fulfillment centers, wholesale establishments, and logistics distribution centers and/or depots that are larger than 50,000 square feet should be by-right uses in the M-1 district, with a maximum size of 150,000 square feet. The following items are changed: maximum building height shall be 50 feet with an additional 10 feet for roof projections, loading and unloading space requirements will match dock spaces, and buffers will be measured from any residential district boundary. The following elements should remain: requirements for outdoor storage, minimum distance between buildings, an emergency access road, sprinklers, and requirements for a mechanical scraper system. Earthen berm requirements and the exclusion of storage for explosive and flammable items are removed. The Commission will not change the definition of truck terminal.

**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, granted (or refused), Zoning Violations Cited and any Legal status of those Zoning Violations.**

**c) Review of Action on prior recommendations.**

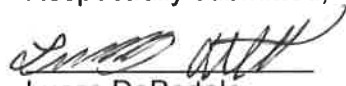
These items were carried over from prior meetings. No action was taken on any old or unfinished business.

**9. Adjournment:**

There being no other business before the Commission, Commissioner Moses motions to adjourn, Commissioner Schryver seconds. Vote: all in favor; meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Julia Heilakka

Respectfully submitted,



Lucas DeBartolo  
Recording Secretary  
Smithfield Township Planning Commission