

**Smithfield Township Planning Commission
County of Monroe, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Regular Meeting on March 9, 2023, at 7pm.
Meeting Minutes**

1. Call to Order:

A Regular Business Meeting of the Smithfield Township Planning Commission was held on March 9, 2023, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Road, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and 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, Robert Moses, Michael Albert, David Strunk, Mitch Bowyer, and Chris Bowers.

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 Township Budget & Finance Manager Lucas DeBartolo.

Also present from the public included the following individuals who shared their names: Robert Howell.

3. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

4. Minutes for Review: Regular Meeting on February 9th, 2023.

Commissioner M. Albert motioned to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Commissioner D. Strunk. All votes in favor (7-0), minutes accepted.

5. Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

6. New Business and Plans to Act On:

a. Franklin Hill Manor Land Development Plan

The applicant had asked for an extension until April 15, 2023. Commissioner M. Albert makes a motion to table this plan until the Planning Commission receives data regarding the necessary easements. Commissioner M. Albert retracts this motion after discussion regarding a decision being needed before April 15, 2023, pending any extensions.

Chair S. Amori makes a motion to deny approval of the plan based upon the lack of response to the November 3rd, 2022, review letter from LVL Engineers. Commissioner D. Schryver seconds this motion. All votes in favor (7-0), motion carries.

Solicitor Karasek explains that this means the Planning Commission is recommending to the Supervisors to deny the plan. It will now go to the Board of Supervisors to act on before April 15th, otherwise the plan would automatically be deemed approved. The Supervisors can accept the recommendation and deny the plan or ask the applicant to provide additional time to review the plan. There are no adverse consequences from the Township for accepting the extensions as granted by the applicant, and townships are generally required to do so.

b. Review Draft Solar and Warehouse Ordinance

The commissioners discuss and review the final draft of the Solar and Warehouse Ordinance. They discuss the modified warehouse definitions and minor solar adjustments based on the previous meeting's discussion.

Commissioner D. Strunk wants the commission to consider adding an enhanced definition related to covering community-based solar systems, specifically discussing where the ordinance currently states, "thermal power primarily for offsite use", it could be changed to say, "or within the local community". Commissioners discuss current definitions, and what is allowed by law. Commissioner M. Albert recommends taking away the wording "primarily for offsite use" in a future iteration of this ordinance.

Commissioner S. Amori asks about decommissioning requirements – commissioners discuss what is listed in the ordinance.

Commissioner M. Albert makes a motion to recommend approving the draft Solar and Warehouse Ordinance as written. Commissioner C. Bowers seconds. Commissioners D. Schryver, R. Moses, M. Albert, C. Bowers, and D. Strunk approve, Commissioners S. Amori and M. Bowyer opposed (5-2). Motion carries.

Commissioner M. Bowyer asks for additional discussion, reviewing the need for this ordinance to be in compliance with the Township's comprehensive plan related to maintaining the "rural character" of the township. Commissioner M. Bowyer states opposition to allowing ground-based solar systems in R1 zoning, and discusses how residents may feel about these ordinances. Commissioners discuss ground solar and characteristics of the township.

Supervisor R. Lovenheim comments that no amendments are perfect, and can be adjusted much more easily once passed. Commission discusses re-voting on this ordinance.

Commissioner M. Albert makes a motion again to recommend approving the draft Solar and Warehouse ordinance as written. Commissioner C. Bowers seconds.

Commissioners D. Schryver, R. Moses, M. Albert, C. Bowers, and D. Strunk approve, Commissioners S. Amori and M. Bowyer opposed (5-2). Motion carries.

Commissioner M. Bowyer makes a motion to request that the Supervisors update and revise the Township Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2024. Commissioner M. Albert seconds this motion. Commissioners discuss needs and costs. Commissioners M. Bowyer, M. Albert, C. Bowers, D. Strunk, and S. Amori approve, Commissioner D. Schryver opposed (5-1). Commissioner R. Moses abstains. Motion carries.

c. Review Parking Requirements in Township's current ordinances.

Commissioners discuss parking schedules and minimum requirements. Commissioner D. Strunk comments that the Township can keep the current schedule but allow all changes via request. Commissioners discuss.

Engineer Tresslar recommends leaving parking requirements in for residential zoning but removing required minimums in commercial zoning – to prevent developers from “building and running” in residential areas. Commissioners S. Amori and M. Albert discuss agreement with Engineer Tresslar regarding parking requirements in residential areas.

Commissioners discuss parking requirements in other locations, as well as high-minimum requirements that have not been beneficial, forcing developers to overbuild parking.

Commissioner M. Bowyer shares parking requirements currently listed in the Township's Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioners discuss parking requirements in the SALDO (Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance) and any methods that waivers would not regularly be needed from applicants. Commissioners discuss best practices revolving around what developers see in the ordinances when planning to develop or redevelop.

Supervisor R. Lovenheim recommends the Planning Commission schedule a joint work session with the Township Supervisors to further discuss parking requirements.

Commissioner M. Albert makes a motion to table further discussion on Parking until a joint work session with the Township Supervisors can be scheduled. Commissioner D. Schryver seconds. All in favor (7-0), motion carries.

d. Smithfield Gateway Land Development Plan – Phase 1A2

Commissioner S. Amori discusses two issues, regarding road degradation due to construction, and a possible unplanned side entrance cut onto the property. Representative present for Smithfield Gateway will investigate both issues.

Phase 1A-2 consists of a Wawa Convenience store and gas station as well as a restaurant. This is utilizing the same infrastructure that was developed for the tenants that are already located at this site. They ask that the plan be accepted to start the 90-day review period. Plans comparing the old, approved plan to the current Phase 1A-2 plan are presented to the Commissioners. Minimal changes are present, but include different locations for the retail, restaurant, and gas station.

Commissioners have questions regarding when the stop light will be installed at St. Luke's. Representative for Smithfield Gateway comments it is in the approved contract, and government by PennDOT for the install. The road will also be expanded to either 4 or 5 lanes in additional phases of construction and development of the property.

Commissioner D. Strunk asks why the pipe crossing Seven Bridges Road was 42 feet down. John comments this was to avoid boring two holes across the road and avoid any open cutting of the road. They were able to place one pipe underneath the road instead of two.

Commissioner M. Albert makes a motion to accept the submission of Plan 1A-2. Commissioner D. Strunk seconds this motion. All in favor (7-0), motion carries.

e. Shawnee Holdings Conditional Use Application – Robert Howell

This application is to change the use of a property that is contiguous to the resort property. There are garages and Worthington on one side of the property, and homes on the other. There is an existing building/house on the property, with no additional structures or buildings to be constructed. This change would be from an R1 residential use to being a part of the resort. It would operate in the same manner as Worthington House currently operates, with customers booking and checking in through the front desk at the hotel. This would be the 4th "bungalow" in that location for Shawnee. As a three-bedroom house, it would hold a limited number of guests.

The commission discusses general safety features currently installed at the building. Commissioner D. Strunk comments that with a change of use, the applicant should make sure the building is up to code for that new use.

Chair S. Amori makes a motion to recommend the property for resort use, considering it complies with all building code requirements for a resort use property. Commissioner R. Moses seconds. Commissioner M. Albert recused himself from this discussion as a commissioner and abstained from this vote. All in favor (6-0), 1 abstention. Motion carries.

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 the following prior recommendations.

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

8. General Public Comments:

Supervisor R. Lovenheim discusses the request to have the Planning Commission create a certificate of merit for good design and sound development practices within the Township, that they can give out as they would like to.

9. Adjournment:

There being no other business before the Commission, Commissioner Chair S. Amori motions to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner M. Albert. All in favor (7-0), motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:34pm.

Minutes recorded by Lucas DeBartolo.

Respectfully submitted,



Lucas DeBartolo

Recording Secretary

Smithfield Township Planning Commission