

SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNTY OF MONROE, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
REGULAR MEETING ON JUNE 8, 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 Chair Scott Amori. Along with Commissioner Amori, Commissioners M. Albert, B. Moses, D. Schryver, and D. Strunk are physically present in the meeting room at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center, located at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301. Commissioners M. Bowyer and C. Bowers are 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 (via Zoom), Township Engineer Melissa Hutchison, PE, and Township Manager Julia Heilakka.

Present also were Don Peters and Doug Olmstead.

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

4. Minutes of Regular Meeting of May 11, 2023: Commissioner Amori motions to approve the minutes, Commissioner Strunk seconds. Vote: all in favor; minutes accepted.

5. Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

6. New Business and Plans to Act On:

a) Land Development Plan – Franklin Hill Manor – Tabled.

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 applicant submitted an extension until September 3, 2023 for this item. As such, it is not discussed.

b) Sketch Plan – JPSPA Realty, LLC.

The proposed sketch plan encompasses approximately 5.75 acres of land (Parcels 16.8.2.21-4 and 16.8.2.21-5) at the intersection of SR 209 and SR 447. The plan demolishes the current hotel and gas station and builds four buildings: a Sheetz with a drive-through, two fast-food restaurants with drive-throughs, and a retail space. The proposed access includes a new access on SR 447 directly across from E. Brown St. and keeping one entrance off SR 209 (instead of the four current ones).

Don Peters introduces the project. The sketch plan and scoping application have been submitted to PennDOT and are awaiting comments. The applicant is in receipt of the township engineers' review letter dated June 6, 2023. Commissioner Amori express concern that the intersection of SR 447 and E. Brown St. is already dangerous; adding another access point will make it much worse.

Commissioner Albert states the commission has started the process to consider reducing parking requirements, but the physical spaces are too small. Engineer Hutchison

states the property is in the ED district, where only one principle use is permitted on a lot by right. The applicant will need to submit for a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board or subdivide the parcels.

Commissioner Strunk suggests an access point through Gateway, and the Commission discusses the Martz property to the north of the site (Parcel 16.8.2.21). The Commission is interested to see PennDOT's comments. Don Peters asks the Commission about maintaining the 50 ft setback from SR 447 and SR 209; the property is currently nonconforming. Engineer Hutchison and Solicitor Karasek confirm that the redevelopment of the property invalidates the current nonconformance. The applicant will need a variance for the setback.

Don Peters asks about the requirements of sidewalks along the frontage of the property, and whether the township would consider a connection point from the Gateway project for internal circulation. After much discussion, the Commission agrees that sidewalks must be present, but may be back further from the road to accommodate existing stormwater swales. Don Peters states the project will require an NPDES permit. Doug Olmstead discusses the sidewalks at Gateway and that the sidewalk ends at Music Center Drive. Public transportation stops at St. Luke's (Parcel 16.8.2.2), and there will be a bus stop on Mosier Farm Drive.

The Commission stresses that traffic patterns are a large concern in that area, and input from PennDOT may greatly affect this sketch plan.

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.

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

9. Public Comment

Commissioner Strunk enquires about the status of Waterfront Park. The township has hired an architect to survey the house and consider what would need to occur to turn the space into a community use with offices.

Commissioner Amori expresses concern regarding lighting at MC Auto (Parcel 16.7.2.8-1). Commissioners Albert and Schryver concur that overly bright lights are a problem throughout the township.

Julia Heilakka asks why the Commission recommended against adopting the proposed fence ordinance. The Commission feels that a fence ordinance would create more work for the Zoning Officer and would be used by disgruntled neighbors to involve the township in civil matters; there are more important items the township should regulate.

Adjournment:

There being no other business before the Commission, Commissioner Strunk motions to adjourn, Commissioner Moses seconds. Vote: all in favor; meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Julia Heilakka', written over a horizontal line.

Julia Heilakka
Assistant Township Secretary
Smithfield Township