

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
Monday, January 11, 2016
6:00 pm

I. ATTENDANCE

The Planning Commission held its organizational and first regular meeting of the month on Monday, January 11, 2016 at the Ferguson Township Municipal Building. In attendance were:

Commission:	Marc McMaster, Chairman	Staff:	Ray Stolinis, Director of Planning and Zoning
	Rob Crassweller, Vice Chairman		Lindsay Schoch, Community Planner
	Scott Harkcom		Jeff Ressler, Zoning Administrator
	Lisa Strickland		
	Ralph Wheland		
	Erik Scott		
	Bill Keough, Alternate		

Others in attendance included: Heather Bird, Recording Secretary; Laura Dininni and Steve Miller, Board Members; Bill Hechinger and Pam Steckler

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McMaster called the Monday, January 11, 2016 Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

I. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Stolinis accepted nominations for the Chair position. Mr. Crassweller made a motion nominating Mr. McMaster as Chair. Mr. Wheland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. McMaster accepted nominations for the Vice Chair position. Mr. Harkcom made a motion nominating Mr. Crassweller as Vice Chair. Mr. McMaster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Wheland made a motion nominating Mr. Harkcom as Secretary. Mr. Crassweller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

II. ALTERNATE PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER PROCESS

Mr. Stolinis stated the Township Supervisors appointed two alternate members to the Planning Commission, Cristin Mitchell and Bill Keough, under House Bill 33. The Planning Commission Chair would designate the alternates as needed for a quorum. Alternates may be appointed to substitute for any absent Commission member or a recused member. Alternates will continue to serve on the Commission for any proceeding in which they were originally appointed until the Commission reaches a decision on the matter. Appointed alternates may be designated as needed on an alternating basis according to seniority among alternates. Alternates may participate in any discussion but are unable to vote unless designated to do so.

III. ESTABLISH MEETING DATES FOR 2016

Mr. Wheland made a motion to accept the meeting dates for 2016 for 6pm on the second and fourth Mondays of the month, with exceptions in November meeting only on the second Monday and in December meeting on the second Monday of the month. Mr. Harkcom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. SELECTION OF THE CENTRE REGION PLANNING COMMISSION (CRPC) REPRESENTATIVE AND ALTERNATE

Mr. Crassweller made a motion APPOINTING Lisa Strickland as the primary representative and Ralph Wheland as the alternate representative to the Centre Region Planning Commission. Mr. Harkcom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. LAND USE ORDINANCE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Mr. Stolinas stated the Commission received a copy of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for planning consultant services for the Township to complete revision to the zoning and subdivision land development ordinances. The introduction to the RFP outlines all the zoning districts and the regional location of the Township. The scope of work will examine the strength and weaknesses of the existing ordinances and provide a consistency with the Comprehensive Plan of the Centre Region and the Municipalities Planning Code. The goal is to revise unclear language, outdated verbiage and update definitions within both ordinances. They would like to establish a steering committee in order to move things efficiently. The committee would include members from the Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, ag community, business research community and staff to help the consultant with the rewrite of these ordinances. A twelve month process is aggressive but the current goal.

Mr. Keough stated on page 3, he would like to omit the statement in the second paragraph, mainly hay or corn, and he is glad to see ag land preservation included in the RFP. He stated on page 4, item 2a, he doesn't understand the word verify. Mr. Wheland said it would make more sense to eliminate the word verify. Mr. Keough expressed concern on completing the review in a twelve month time frame.

Mr. Crassweller stated on page 2, transportation corridors doesn't list Atherton Street.

Mr. Wheland stated on page 5, proposal submission the statement cover letter not shall be provided needs to remove the not.

Ms. Strickland asked for an explanation of form based codes in relation to the Terraced Streetscape District. Mr. Stolinas stated that form based codes are a concept that focuses on form of architecture, building, bulk as opposed to use of the district.

Mr. Scott asked if there will be any uniformity amongst the other municipalities on regulations such as between Ferguson Township and the State College Borough. He has heard complaints from developers about the lack of conformity among municipalities. Mr. Stolinas said he can no say for sure now if that will be included with the RFP.

Mr. McMaster had no further questions or comments.

Mr. Crassweller made a motion to recommend ADVERTISEMENT of the Request for Proposals for a planning consultant to the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Strickland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. BUFFALO WILD WINGS LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN / ATHERTON & BLUE COURSE DRIVE

Mr. Stolinas stated the proposed Buffalo Wild Wings land development plan has been sent out to the appropriate agencies for review and comment of the plan with comments due back to the Township. The proposed plan is owned by CSC Northland LP, tax parcel 24-12-18. The area is 3.54 acres and currently zoned commercial in the corridor overlay district.

Ms. Schoch stated the Township will be requesting a sidewalk to be installed connecting Blue Course Drive to the site of the development. The applicant will need to transfer a liquor license.

Mr. Keough asked what the next step is for this plan. Ms. Schoch stated the complied comments will be sent to Bohler Engineering, agent for applicant, and then staff will meet with Bohler and once consideration is given to comments received Bohler will resubmit the plan. This process will continue until all items are satisfied and it is brought back to the Planning Commission for recommended approval.

Mr. Wheland asked for clarification on the where the sidewalk requested would be constructed. He also asked where the bus stops are in the area.

Mr. Keough asked if there are any staff issues with the access onto North Atherton Street or Blue Course Drive. Mr. Wheland asked along with that if there will be any changes to the right in / right out onto Atherton Street. Ms. Schoch

stated the traffic study was completed in February and the comments will be included with the information to Bohler. As of now they will be keeping the right in / right out access and will include increased signage for this area.

Mr. Crassweller asked if the parking proposed is enough. Mr. Ressler stated it means the requirements of the ordinance for parking but he recommended that they have an easement or parking agreement with the Giant Grocery store.

Mr. Harkcom is concerned with the distance from Atherton Street to the entrance to the parking lot.

Ms. Strickland asked about CSC Northland owning the land. Mr. Stolinas stated they most likely have a lease with Buffalo Wild Wings. Ms. Strickland asked if there are any pictures of the facade. Mr. Ressler stated in the corridor overlay district the facade must be the same on all four sides. Ms. Strickland asked if the main entrance will be the right turn of Atherton Street. Ms. Schoch stated the front of the building will face Atherton Street. Ms. Strickland expressed concern for the bus stops in the parking lots surrounding this area and the effects with increased traffic in the lots.

VII. MANAGED NATURAL LANDSCAPES AMENDMENT

Mr. Stolinas stated back in October staff along with Doug Ford and Darlene Chivers met to discuss a proposed Natural Landscape amendment to the Grass and Weed Ordinance. As a result of the meeting some revisions were compiled. Now Natural Landscapes are defined as planned and intentional maintained planting of native and non-native grasses, wild flowers, ferns, shrubs and trees including but not limited to rain gardens, meadow vegetation and ornamental plantings. The Township would like to see a required landscape plan for landowners to include their property line, structures, new vegetation and existing vegetation and size, quantity and spacing in the drawing. It would require a 10 foot setback from neighboring property and cover less than 30% of the total yard.

Mr. Scott asked if this is for residential and commercial districts, ordinance is vague.

Mr. Wheland said the ordinance is too specific; some land owners have too much land to eliminate noxious weeds. Mr. McMaster stated that in the grass and weed ordinance it states that this would not apply so this would not apply to land zoned Agricultural or Rural Residential.

Mr. McMaster asked what would happen if the adjacent property owners would complain when notified of the intent to plant a natural landscape.

Mr. Bill Hechinger, resident, stated this ordinance is crazy. Residents should not be required to register what they plant in their yard.

Ms. Schoch stated the goal of this ordinance amendment is to no allow residents to let their yards go, if the reason they stop managing their land is for the environment and enjoyment than it would need to be registered and meet the requirements of this ordinance. Ms. Pam Steckler asked who defines a yard that would need to be registered and suggested that requiring residents to register their lawn is a bad idea.

Mr. Scott asked who will enforce this ordinance. Mr. Ressler stated that it would be the Ordinance Enforcement Officer.

Mr. Keough stated he is not in favor of making laws because of a few residents making bad decisions. Most Homeowners Associations already have strict rules on maintenance of yards. He does not think that staff time should be spent on this.

Ms. Strickland agreed with Mr. Wheland that the ordinance is too specific. It should not be confined to 30%. Individuals who wish to have every item defined than they would live in an area with a Homeowners Association.

Mr. Scott agreed with Mr. Keough that this should not be legislated.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE WEST COLLEGE AVENUE CORRIDOR JOINT WORKSESSION WITH STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH

Mr. Stolinis stated the joint worksession was held on September 21, 2015. He included the executive summary of both districts within Ferguson Township and the State College Borough. The Executive Summary includes an overview, a comparative analysis and moving forward. The Planning Commission should decide if they would like to continue to work cooperatively with the Borough for developing this district.

Mr. Scott stated that there should be cooperation with the Borough.

Mr. Harkcom asked if the goal is to have consistency between the Terraced Streetscape District and Urban Village. Mr. Stolinis stated that the goal of the comparative analysis was to determine where there are possibilities for consistency in the two districts.

Ms. Strickland stated she does not think it's a bad thing to noticeably see the difference between the Borough and Ferguson. She is not sure that a charrette is the proper way to handle this.

Ms. Steckler stated that she would like to see the community heavily involved in this process.

Mr. Keough stated West College Avenue is one of the only major spokes in the community yet to be developed. There should be a conversation on this and Penn State should be involved.

Ms. Strickland made a motion for the Township to CONTINUE DIALOGUE with the State College Borough Council and encouraged including participation from the university. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Stolinis stated on December 14, 2015 the Board of Supervisors granted an extension to the Cottages Subdivision and Lot Consolidation Plan until March 30, 2016. However, the applicant's engineer provided staff outstanding items and received signature for lot consolidation plan approval on December 30, 2015. A Land Use Appeal has been filed in the Centre County Court of Common Pleas for the Cottages Final PRD Plan. The Board of Supervisors granted approval of the Final PRD on November 16, 2015. The Land Use Appeal was filed December 15, 2015 and, since that time, parties mutually agreed to extend the hearing for twenty (20) days to establish the record for the case. On December 7, 2015, Mr. Stolinis met with Trish Meek, Senior Transportation Planner, CRPA and Susan Wheeler, Public Works Project Manager, Patton Township regarding the proposed TAP Grant that would fund the Valley Vista Shared Use Path. The proposed path will run the length of Valley Vista Drive from Carnegie Drive in Patton Township to the Tudek/Circleville Bikeway and Science Park Path located in Ferguson Township. The overall length of the path will be approximately 1.8 miles, 1.2 miles located within Patton Township and 0.6 miles located in Ferguson Township. The grant application was successfully submitted January 6, 2016. Staff met with the owner of Hillside Farms Phases 3 & 4 to review options for housing units and a potential PRD application. Staff met with Ed LeClear, Planning Director, Borough of State College on December 9, 2015 to review State College Borough's experience with implementing affordable housing measures within their land use ordinances. The proposed Affordable Housing MOU and Ordinance will be placed on a future agenda for Planning Commission consideration and recommendation. Results have been received on the Centre Region Planning Agency "Training Needs Survey". Staff conducted an internal staff review of the Pine Hall TTD Master Plan revision and followed a subsequent meeting with Michael Pratt on January 6, 2016 to review recommendations on the revision for a forthcoming concept plan. The Community Planner issued recommendations on the plan for the meeting. Mr. Stolinis participated in a new Board of Supervisors Orientation on December 21, 2015. An overview of the Planning & Zoning Department had been discussed with both existing and incoming Supervisors along with other department overviews and considerations. On December 21, 2015, the Planning & Zoning Director corresponded with Michelle Halsell, Director, Sustainable Communities Collaborative regarding potential student projects related to a residential stormwater management workshop and rain garden design & installation. Further discussion will follow with the Public Works Director. Related to this, staff also attended the Campus and Sustainability Expo at the Land & Water Research Building on December 3rd to view various student projects. The township received five applications for the open

Ordinance Enforcement Officer position and conducted joint interviews today with the Police Department in order to fill the position. On January 20, 2016, the Ferguson Township Department of Planning & Zoning and Centre Region Planning Agency will be co-sponsoring a Penn State Cooperative Extension Land Use Webinar from 12:00 to 1:15 p.m. in Conference Room #2 for anyone interested in attending. Mr. Stolas received an email from Kurt Homan requesting the Hunter's Chase Final Development Phase be discussed with the Planning Commission.

X. ACTIVE PLANS UPDATE

Ms. Schoch reviewed the current active plans.

XI. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 1, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Wheland made a motion to APPROVE the December 1, 2015 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Harkcom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Wheland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Strickland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business, the January 11, 2016 Organizational and Regular Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Scott Harkcom", is written over a horizontal line.

Scott Harkcom, Secretary
For the Planning Commission