

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
Monday, February 22, 2016
6:00 pm

I. ATTENDANCE

The Planning Commission held its second regular meeting of the month on Monday, February 22, 2016 at the Ferguson Township Municipal Building. In attendance were:

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

Others in attendance included: Heather Bird, Recording Secretary; Scott Pflumm, Francine Jones, Ansusan Brewer, Andrea Harman, Christine E, David Martin, Chris Summers, Bob Poole,

II. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McMaster called the Monday, February 22, 2016 Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

III. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE REVISIONS

Mr. Stolas stated at the last Planning Commission meeting the members received a presentation from Ron Seybert and Scott Brown. There is a stakeholders meeting scheduled for February 29th at the State College Borough Water Authority. Do the Planning Commission members have any additional comments to make?

Mr. Keough asked if these revisions would apply to all zoning districts in the Township. Mr. Stolas stated yes and especially to new land development.

Mr. Keough commented about the infrastructure costs associated with the requirements included in the ordinance and how this will be passed on to the home buyer. Mr. Scott agreed with Mr. Keough about the cost and is concerned with the added cost to home buyers if the sensitive water districts are not protected and future water filtration costs are incurred. Mr. Keough suggested this and wellhead protection should be discussed at CRPC because it is a regional concern. Mr. Scott said the Township should not focus on growing with development unless the controls are increased.

Ms. Strickland commented about the undeveloped land in the Township. She is disappointed that more of the hydrogeologist and water authority comments were not incorporated into the future development for the township with regards to stormwater management. If a developer wants to develop in the area they can pay for the heavier controls. Mr. McMaster stated that if the costs for the infrastructure were increased even more then no developer would build any housing in the Township.

Mr. Crassweller stated this ordinance is required. Ms. Strickland stated yes it is required but it is an opportunity to add more requirements. Ms. Mitchell stated who are we more beholden to; the development community or the general public. Mr. McMaster stated builders are a part of the community too; they are business owners who live and work in the Township. Mr. Harkcom stated we need to reach a happy medium and have a tax base. People want more services provided but that won't happen if we have zero growth. Mr. Wheland stated that residential development does not carry its weight as far as services required, more is not better. Commercial development also does not carry its weight. So who pays for the services - open land requires no services. We need to figure out what we can do to help the local farmers.

Mr. Homan asked Ms. Strickland to give her specific items to Mr. McMaster to bring up at the stakeholder meeting.

Mr. Keough stated that he understands that the some of the water authority's issues are best addressed in the wellhead protection ordinance.

IV. JOHNSON FARM ASSOCIATES REQUEST FOR ZONING AMENDMENT- "THE LANDINGS" PRD

Mr. Stolas reviewed The Landings Planned Residential Development (PRD) neighborhood commercial section that is the area in question for a zoning amendment. The section of this plan the developer would like to amend is the 60,000 square feet of commercial space. This was originally approved as three separate spaces each of 20,000 square feet. Staff sent the amendment request to CRPC who asked and expressed the following: clarify the intent of the amendment through the preamble, would unintended consequences of the amendment eliminate ground floor commercial uses, will the Township require a market study to demonstrate support and size of the commercial spaces, has the traffic utilized traffic demand models and concerned for fundamentally changing the intent of the PRD and surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Schoch stated that as a result of the CRPC letter we sent the following responses: we did change the preamble, specific to the neighborhood commercial center of the PRD, unintended consequences needed a little more than one word change decided to keep that section of the ordinance as is, market studies, staff does not have access to those market studies, market study has not been done in the past 12 months, traffic demand model – Township Engineer stated we have not utilized a traffic command model, the impacts will not be known until that plan is submitted, fundamentally changing character of the PRD – we do intend to have mixed uses, to say it is coming out of character it is the intent of the PRD ordinance to provide a mix of uses to the residents there and CNG fueling would be required unless another fueling station was within one mile. Ms. Strickland stated the CRPC take was that this was not keeping in character with this particular PRD.

Ms. Schoch asked Mr. McMaster if a person buys a home do they know they are located in a PRD. Mr. McMaster stated that most people would inquire about what is to be built in the open space and the do not have to show the master plan. Mr. Crassweller stated people should always ask what is proposed for open land near their proposed home.

Mr. Wheland asked about gas pumps and electric fueling being permitted but CNG is required. Ms. Schoch stated that should fall under the same language as gas and electric. Mr. Homan stated the CRPC or Township should not be involved in deciding what type of product is available. Mr. Keough asked if we have to permit CNG because he is concerned with enough demand to support the infrastructure needed for natural gas piping. Mr. Wheland stated that a few years ago a referendum was passed that no piping was permitted in the Township. Ms. Schoch she will remove the comment saying it is required and just leave it in the previous section as an optional use.

Mr. Harkcom stated he is assuming the accessory use of the fuel pumps is above and beyond the 60,000 square foot building, which may take quite a bit of land. Would that leave enough space for all the required parking? Ms. Schoch stated that would be reviewed if and when a land development plan was submitted.

Ms. Schoch stated they removed not including drive-thru from the pharmacy use. It was requested that banks, financial institutions and restaurants have permitted drive-thru. This will be included in the ordinance in the future. Ms. Strickland asked why these uses were not included with the original plan. Mr. Bob Poole stated back when this plan was approved they were not something that was commonly requested for businesses. Ms. Strickland stated the idea of a drive thru really changes the idea of neighborhood commercial. Mr. Poole stated that now most commercial businesses that would come to the area require having this option available just as a grocery store would not come for 20,000 square feet but would for 60,000 square feet. Ms. Strickland asked if a grocery store is the right fit for this area. Mr. Poole stated that a grocery store would be a good fit because there is not one on this end of town and it would be nice for the local residents to be able to walk to the grocery store. Mr. Scott said the neighborhood grocery store is an idea of the past.

Mr. Scott asked if the 70,000 square foot commercial will include apartments over it. Mr. Poole stated that yes that is the current plan. Mr. Scott asked if there is going to be a light at Bristol and Blue Course. Mr. Crassweller stated that yes there will be a light installed as part of the Toll Brothers Plan.

Mr. Keough stated that back when this plan was approved the concept was that a small mom and pop type grocery store would be great in this location. One of the challenges we have is fitting the commercial market so that lots like this don't remain stagnant. Do the current residents that bought the homes abutting this know lot was intended to be commercial use?

Mr. Harkcom asked if we would approve the changes in the ordinance would the developer still have the option to do one 60,000 square foot commercial space or three 20,000 square foot spaces. Ms. Schoch stated yes it would allow for that option. Mr. Harkcom said the flexibility to the developer will help to bring in the type of business that will be an asset to the community.

Mr. Wheland stated grocery store here would be fine.

Mr. Stolas stated back in December the Planning Commission did make a motion to move this forward as a conditional use for a PRD.

Resident stated she was aware that this area was for commercial space for development but she is concerned with a 24/7 operation in the area. She was under the impression that the commercial space would operate on limited hours such as a medical office.

Mr. Scott asked what type of buffer would there be to the neighborhood. Mr. Poole stated the area would be buffered under Township requirements.

Resident asked what the number of allocated parking spaces is for the plan. Mr. Poole stated the Township parking requirements would be met. Resident said grocery store parking volume is much greater.

Resident referred to the neighborhood shopping center portion of the Township ordinance where it states market area population is determined to be the daytime employment. Would this mean that the shopping center would be only for daytime employment? Mr. Ressler stated that the market area population would not define the hours of the grocery store but how they would determine the size of the store.

Ms. Strickland brought up that the ordinance should include the definition of a grocery store so that a Sheetz or such place that also carries food would not be placed here when anticipating a typical grocery store. Ms. Schoch stated that the ordinance does not currently define a grocery store.

Resident expressed concern for increased traffic on Blue Course Drive and Bristol Avenue.

Mr. Scott stated he is concerned with the buffer. He would like it to be highly vegetative. Mr. Poole stated it would take a few years after construction for it to grow and fill in to provide the best cover.

Residents made comments that they don't want to see gas pumps in this area.

Residents questioned for the best time to make comments on the plan. Ms. Schoch stated there will be a public hearing for comment as part of a conditional use process.

Mr. Crassweller made a motion to RECOMMEND APPROVAL of the proposed changes to the draft zoning ordinance amendment to the Board of Supervisors including a definition for grocery stores, removing the requirement of CNG fueling station and allowing drive-thrus. Mr. Harkcom seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6 – 1 with Ms. Strickland voting no.

V. THE OFFICIAL MAP

Mr. Stolinas stated the Commission members received a full size copy of the map. Ms. Schoch stated the map they received is the current Official Map which is in need of many updates. The map will include the full Township which is currently missing. The Township GIS Technician will be working closely with staff to make all the necessary updates. The Commission would like to see the current map updated to the current information to help in determining what additional information should be included in the future.

VI. PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Stolinas stated staff met with Wes and Christine Glebe on ideas for the Terraced Streetscape District based on designs in the Vancouver area. Staff met with representatives from Smith/Packett on the assisted living amendment that the Planning Commission will discuss further at a later meeting. He attended the Coffee and Conversation which included good discussion with Township residents.

VII. ACTIVE PLANS UPDATE

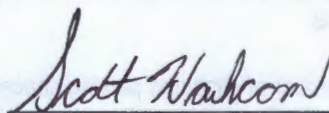
Ms. Schoch reviewed the current active plans.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Crassweller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Homan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business, the February 22, 2016 Organizational and Regular Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Scott Harkcom, Secretary
For the Planning Commission