

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
Monday, May 11, 2015
6:00 pm

I. ATTENDANCE

The Planning Commission held its first regular meeting of the month on Monday, May 11, 2015 at the Ferguson Township Municipal Building. In attendance were:

Commission: Marc McMaster, Chairman
Ralph Wheland
Scott Harkcom
Kurt Homan
Lisa Strickland

Staff: Jeff Ressler, Zoning Administrator
Maria Tranguch, ~~Director of Planning and Zoning~~
Lindsay Schoch, Community Planner

Others in attendance included: Heather Bird, Recording Secretary; Duke and Monica Gastiger, reFarm Café; John LeClair, reFarm Café; Dan Sieminski, Penn State University; John Sepp, PennTerra Engineering; Laura Dininni, Pam Steckler, Bill Hechinger, Eric Scott, Bob Radzwich, Steve Miller, Board Member; David Pribulka, Assistant Township Manager

II. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McMaster called the Monday, May 11, 2015 Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

III. SUNDAY SUBDIVISION

Ms. Tranguch stated the Sunday subdivision is a minor subdivision plan located off Nixon Road. Two existing lots will be redefined into a total of three lots. The remaining comments include a comment on fee-in-lieu and the remainder is mainly administrative. The applicant also requested a modification for installing sidewalks.

Mr. Wheland asked why a fee-in-lieu is required if no development is planned. Ms. Tranguch stated fee-in-lieu is required with the creation of R1 lots.

Mr. Homan asked what happens in the future if sidewalks were required in this area. Ms. Tranguch stated the Board reserves the right to require the installation of sidewalks in the future.

Mr. Wheland made a motion to RECOMMEND APPROVAL to the Board of supervisors on the Sunday Subdivision subject to all conditions on the May 6th memorandum from the Director of Planning and Zoning including a modification for relief from installing sidewalks. Mr. Homan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. FARM CAFÉ DRAFT ORDINANCE

Ms. Tranguch reviewed the Farm Café draft ordinance which included the following items. The total gross floor area specific to the farm café use shall not exceed 2500 square feet. The use of innovative BMPs and low-impact design is required to address the sensitivity of rural agricultural area. The ordinance discourages the use of curbing with inlets and piping and encourages down spouts to be directed to sumps or disconnected from storm pipes. To reduce traffic impacts no take-out or drive-through service would be permitted. The ordinance currently includes the current parking standards in the Township Zoning Ordinance with the addition that a parking study submitted for review by the Township may suffice as justification for a number of parking spaces smaller than the Zoning Ordinance requirement and that gravel parking lots with bumper blocks shall be allowed. The farm associated with the farm café must be an active Agricultural Operation as defined in the zoning code and the purpose of the farm café is to serve primarily local and regional foods in support of sustaining local agriculture. A land development plan would be required. The benefit of this being a conditional use is that additional items could be added on a case by case basis.

The Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC) comments included the following. Clarify if farm cafes would be permitted to have a liquor license. It wouldn't be appropriate to have drive-thru windows but take out might increase viability of the operations. CRPC supports that a parking study in place of Township parking regulations would be good. The plan should include bicycle parking. This may be attractive for large groups and buses so bus parking

should be included. CRPC suggested including a minimum lot size. The hours of operation should be modified to be closed earlier than midnight.

Ms. Strickland stated that at the CRPC meeting a member had suggested the hours to be 6am to 11pm.

Mr. Wheland asked about allowing gravel parking and what is the threshold for payment to be required. Ms. Tranguch stated the threshold is based on the size of facility. She stated that gravel parking may be a better environmental option with specific conditions such as a zero percent slope.

Mr. Wheland commented about the minimum lot sizes stating that if the minimum lot size for a farm is 50 acres than that should be the minimum size for this type of facility. Ms. Tranguch stated staff discussed this and thought a limit would not be best because of viable non-conforming farms. The Commission discussed the appropriate minimum lot size.

Mr. Homan asked if the café must grow the produce on their property. Ms. Tranguch stated as long as the farm were a viable agricultural operation, such as a cattle farm, it could include local regional produce. Mr. McMaster agreed with this. Mr. Harkcom stated that maybe the ordinance should include a condition for percentage of income from the sale of regional items.

Mr. Homan stated he likes the idea of using a 10 acre minimum lot size.

Mr. Wheland asked if the intent of the reFarm Café is to serve hard apple cider. Mr. Duke Gastiger, reFarm Café, stated the facility will include two separate operations, a cider operation and the café sharing the space. The café does not plan to have a liquor license and serve alcohol.

Mr. Laura Dininni, resident, stated she thought a smaller minimum lot sizes might be beneficial to more residents in the Township.

Mr. Homan stated he does not see an issue with takeout service. He is in favor of a gravel lot, basing parking on a case by case basis and maybe including a requirement to pave after the need for a certain number of parking spaces.

Mr. Harkcom asked if the building size of 2,500 feet needs to be specified as a free standing facility or an addition to an existing structure. Ms. Tranguch stated this should be specified as part of the conditional use.

The Commission recommended staff review all comments and incorporate into the ordinance.

V. TOLL BROTHERS PRD REVIEW OF FINAL PRD COMMENTS

Ms. Tranguch presented the comments on the final planned residential development (PRD) comments. She began by summarizing the plan; Toll Brothers is proposing the Cottages a 268 home community on three parcels. Two parcels are zoned R4 and one parcel is zoned RA. The three parcels span College Township, Ferguson Township, Harris Township and the State College Borough. A subdivision / lot consolidation plan is pending.

The following is an overview of substantial comments from each entity that reviewed the plan.

Planning and Zoning comments included that the PRD is not consistent with the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan last adopted November 25, 2013. The landscaping plan submitted does not comply with Chapter 27-807 (landscaping) with regard to buffer yards. The FEMA floodplain revision and the DEP planning module for sewage facilities are both pending.

Riparian Buffer and Tree comments from Dr. Eric Burkhart, Riparian buffer consultant, suggested the use of Native species in place of the non-native and exotic species proposed. The Tree Commission supports this comment.

Stormwater / Engineer Review comments included securing access to basins, which would require an easement from Penn State University. Create a sinkhole action plan. Infiltration basins B, C and D include capture depth of 1.5 feet (calculations needs corrected). Toll Brothers is being asked to document everything they are proposing to minimize sinkhole formation.

Township Engineer comments included the ADA curb ramps require a turning space with minimum cross slope and longitudinal slope of 2%. Adjust the turning radii throughout the site to accommodate CATA buses and change the roundabout design.

Water Authority comments included a contingency plan for repair of any sinkholes. There appears to be fractured bedrock in the vicinity of Basin B. The water authority requested a subsurface geophysical survey exploration of the area with resistivity tomography in the detention basin areas. The Authority requested an infiltration rate of no greater than 5 inches per hour and tall grass stands with well-developed rooting systems should be provided. A monitoring well shall be provided on developer's property. Basin A and B are areas with shallow bedrock and potential for significant rock excavation. The Authority shall have permission to monitor, inspect, enter and test the site.

Transportation comments on Share Use Path requested that they submit for analysis first they can review and concur before they submit the design. Comments on the number of users on the path and the design level of service for the path. It was determined that there is enough room within the easement area and the right-of-way to build appropriate width.

Township's Engineer Signal Design comments stated there have been no reviews completed for a traffic signal design yet. Designs for intersections have been prepared and submitted for three intersections but two still remain to be submitted. The Township was waiting for the TIS to be approved before reviewing these designs.

CATA comments included the relocate and merge the larger Blue Course Drive pull off with the second Blue Course Drive pull-off. This location is less convenient for a group of residents and will dramatically reduce the amount of pedestrian crossings on Blue Course Drive.

Traffic Impact Study included the intersection of Blue Course Drive and Westerly Parkway, the intersection of Whitehall Road and Blue Course Drive, the intersection Whitehall Road and Waupelani, the Blue Course Drive and Bristol Avenue intersection and the Whitehall Road and Eastern Site Driveway.

Centre Region Office of Refuse and Recycling met with the Township and it was determined that all of their comments have been satisfied including adding a second cardboard bin and increase the pavement strength where the vehicles will travel.

Mr. Wheland asked if a CATA bus will be able to travel in the roundabout. Mr. John Sepp, PennTerra Engineering stated that a bus size was taken into account in the redesign of the roundabout.

Mr. Homan discussed the concerns over water. There is other development east of this project. What is the risk here and what is the largest catastrophe that could occur. Ms. Tranguch stated this is a sensitive well head area. Mr. Wheland stated there are multiple developments on the other side of Whitehall Road. Ms. Strickland stated it is the location of the basins. At the CRPC meeting on Thursday, Bob Hoffman – College Township, had been to a Water Authority meeting and he shared with CRPC that the Authority was concerned with the basins and existing topography, the shallow depth of soil, blasting, park maintenance facility and the risk of hazardous materials.

Ms. Laura Dininni, resident, discussed her concerns with this project to the Commission. She suggested changing the roundabout into a cul-de-sac so that no further development occurs close to the wellheads.

Mr. Eric Scott, resident, stated his opposition to this development plan. He created a Facebook page and has a large petition opposing this plan.

Mr. Bob Radzwich, resident, stated his concerns with this plan. The community feels this plan threatens the local water supply. He stated the growth plan for the community needs to be better thought out.

Ms. Pam Steckler, resident, referenced an article from Women's Resource Education Network (WREN) about the link between forests and clean water supply and the purchase of Musser Gap to protect the recharge fields for the wellfields. She requested that the Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors to deny the plan and rezone the property back to RA.

Mr. John Sepp, PennTerra Engineering, professional engineer. He stated he has a responsibility to the public, community and firm to design a responsible development. The development is designed under current standards and is completing all requested testing on the site.

Bill Hechinger, resident, expressed concerns with the infiltration basins planned for the development and the slope of the land and the effects this may have on the wellfields.

VI. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING UPDATE

Ms. Tranguch gave an update to the Commission on the items discussed at the May 4, 2015 Board meeting.

VII. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 25, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Wheland made a motion to APPROVE the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes from April 25, 2015.
Mr. Homan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Harkcom made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Strickland seconded the motion.

With no further business, the May 11, 2015 regular Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Scott Harkcom, Secretary
For the Planning Commission