

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 26, 2015
6:00 pm

I. ATTENDANCE

The Planning Commission held its second regular meeting of the month on Tuesday, May 26, 2015 at the Ferguson Township Municipal Building. In attendance were:

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

Staff: David Pribulka, Assistant Township Manager
Jeff Ressler, Zoning Administrator
Lindsay Schoch, Community Planner

Others in attendance included: Heather Bird, Recording Secretary; Duke and Monica Gastiger, John LeClair, Laura Dininni, Mike Twomley, Stephen White

II. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McMaster called the Tuesday, May 26, 2015 Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

III. FARM CAFÉ DRAFT ORDINANCE

Mr. Pribulka stated in October 2014 Ferguson Township an ordinance amendment application from John LeClair and his business partners Duke and Monica Gastiger to amend the Rural Agricultural Zoning District to include a Farm Café as a conditional use. Staff prepared a draft ordinance that has been reviewed by the Centre Regional Planning Commission as well as the Ferguson Township Planning Commission at its May 11, 2015 meeting. The comments from both commissions have been incorporated into the draft ordinance. The amendments include clarification that the total gross floor area be applied to the portion that is used for the farm café. The maximum use of the farm café is 2,500 square feet. A provision was added to address the minimum lot size. Parking requirements were added to create consistency with the Township's zoning ordinance. Permission to permit retail sales was added. Additionally a comment from the Centre Regional Planning Commission was to be consistent with the use of Centre Region or region throughout the entire ordinance. Staff completed research on retail sales of farm products that grown outside of the defined Centre Region area. Staff would like feedback on the area allowed for the retail sales. Three options include allowing the sale of items located solely within the Centre Region, solely within Centre County or the defined regional area of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture which would include the counties of Centre, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Clearfield, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin and Somerset.

Mr. Crassweller does not think the sale of products should be limited to only the Centre Region. Mr. Harkcom agreed that this should not be limited to the Centre Region and it should be all of Pennsylvania. Mr. Crassweller agreed with Pennsylvania as a limit. Ms. Strickland stated there should be a parameter defined and she stated Pennsylvania would be a natural border. Mr. Homan was concerned that a local farm may be prevented by participating if a larger operation outside of the area were allowed to be used.

Ms. Strickland discussed the issue of allowing take-out food service. She would support take-out service. Mr. Wheland agreed with Ms. Strickland. Mr. Pribulka stated that after further research it was determined that permitted take-out service would not create enough increase in vehicle traffic to require a traffic study to be completed for this project. The amendment will be made to allow take-out food service.

Mr. Crassweller made a motion to RECOMMEND APPROVAL to the Board of supervisors on the adoption of the Farm Café Ordinance including the changes discussed and amendment of the Rural Agricultural Zoning District to permit Farm Café as a conditional use. Mr. Wheland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. HAYMARKET LOT 425 SKETCH PLAN PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE

Mr. Pribulka presented the sketch plan for Haymarket Lot 425. The proposed development would encompass approximately 9 acres and would include two schools, a church and an athletic field. The lot has been classified as natural area conservation on the Township's official map. The definition of natural area conservation is the protection of natural area during development for its water quality or recharge enhancing abilities. Mr. White requested a pre application conference which is proved for in the subdivision and land development ordinance as a discussion on the proposed development of the land. The sketch plan included a stormwater analysis completed in 2003.

Mr. McMaster asked if the entire parcel was designated in the natural area conservation. Mr. Pribulka confirmed it is for the entire parcel. Mr. Ressler stated the Township chose this area based on engineers' recommendations. Mr. Pribulka stated the area has unique characteristics critical to stormwater management. During a stormwater evaluation of the Pine Hall drainage area in 1998 the Township received a report on the value of this parcel to the overall stormwater management for the general upstream area adjacent to the Glenview Subdivision. Mr. Wheland asked what year this was designated a natural area. Mr. Pribulka stated it was done in 2008. Mr. Crassweller asked how long the Township can reserve the area as a natural area. Mr. Pribulka stated that the MPC states that the Township has one year after the owner of the property submits written notice to the governing body announcing his intention to build, subdivide or otherwise develop the land.

Mr. Crassweller mentioned past flooding in this area. Mr. Homan stated if development occurs on this land, stormwater management controls will be enforced.

Mr. Crassweller confirmed this development will connect into Owens Drive. Mr. Homan asked if it would connect to the Waffle Shop. Mr. Stephen White stated that is a possibility.

Mr. White stated he was caught by surprise that this land was designated a natural resource area. Mr. White stated he was not notified of this designation. The property is zoned R1 and items such as schools and churches are permitted by right in the R1 zoning district. His plan is to continue the development theme along Blue Course Drive, instead of incorporating single family homes. The land has an existing stormwater basin on it.

Mr. McMaster stated he likes the concept of the various buildings sharing the athletic field. Mr. Crassweller asked if this field would be used by Parks and Recreation. Mr. White stated that is not planned as part of the concept for this lot.

Mr. White stated a traffic study would need to be completed for this proposal. Mr. Homan stated that traffic would be a concern for the development of this lot.

Ms. Strickland questioned if the sketch plan included enough parking and what type of schools was he envisioning. Mr. White stated he envisioned one K-12 and a dance school type facility. Mr. White stated the sketch plan doesn't have a full breakdown of parking but does include some areas with sufficient parking.

Mr. Wheland asked if the building sizes are a concept. Mr. White stated some buildings are partially designed and one of the buildings is entirely a concept idea.

Mr. Wheland has no problem with the proposal assuming all engineering studies were completed and favorable.

Mr. Harkcom asked if the Township purchase of the land can include portions of the land or if it is for the full parcel. Mr. White stated he believes it would be for the full parcel.

Mr. Homan asked if Mr. White disputed that 75 acres of land does discharge into this parcel. Mr. White stated there may be 75 acres up stream but the water doesn't necessarily make it to this parcel.

Ms. Strickland stated the concept is good but the scale of the project seems very large for the property.

V. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

Mr. Pribulka stated the last update of the Township Zoning Map was March 22, 2011 and there have been quite a few ordinance amendments since that update including establishment of the airport overlay district, update to the corridor overlay district and the rezoning of the area along North Atherton Street to General Commercial. The map amendment is not fully complete at this time. Specifically, the districts alignment with parcel boundaries needs for be more fully investigated and errors corrected.

Mr. Wheland questioned the need for an airport overlay district. Mr. Ressler stated this area is required by the FAA for University Park Airport.

Mr. McMaster asked what other information needs to be completed. Mr. Pribulka stated final definition of the zoning districts and the parcel alignment with those. Mr. McMaster stated that the Ferguson Township Zoning Map is one of the best in the county for reference. He recommended that the map include as many labels as possible without making the map too busy. The map should include some major roads labeled for a reference point.

Ms. Strickland agreed with Mr. McMaster on the labeling of some roads for reference and suggested including the natural areas. Mr. Pribulka stated that the Township Official Map would include the natural areas, but not included on the Zoning Map. Ms. Strickland stated she would love to someday see an interactive map.

VI. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING UPDATE

Mr. Pribulka reviewed the planning related issues discussed at the May 18, 2015 Board of Supervisors meeting.

VII. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 11, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

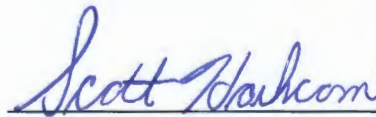
Mr. Homan made a motion to APPROVE the Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes from May 11, 2015. Ms. Strickland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

With no further business, the May 26, 2015 regular Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Scott Harkcom, Secretary
For the Planning Commission