

**FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, SEPTEMBER 9, 2019  
6:00 PM**

**ATTENDANCE**

The Planning Commission held its first meeting of the month on Monday, September 9, 2019 at the Ferguson Township Municipal Building. In attendance were:

**Commission:**

Bill Keough, Chair-person  
Ralph Wheland  
Erik Scott  
Jeremie Thompson  
Jerry Binney  
Shannon Holliday  
Rob Crassweller, Secretary  
Dr. Ellen Taricani-Alternate

**Staff:**

Kristina Aneckstein, Community Planner  
Jeff Ressler, Zoning Administrator

Others in attendance were: Summer Krape, Recording Secretary; Laura Dininni, Ferguson Township Board Member; Ben Beldin, representative from Gwin, Dobson, and Foreman.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Keough called the Planning Commission meeting to order on Monday, September 9, 2019 at 6:04 pm.

**II. CITIZEN INPUT**

No citizen's input. Mr. Keough stated that this is not on the agenda but he received communications from the Centre Municipal training program. They informed him that they will be having different training sessions around the county and as a Planning Commission member you will be receiving information on them.

**III. MUSSER GAP 2 VALLEYLANDS (MG@V)**

Ms. Aneckstein introduced Ms. Deb Nardone executive director of the Clear Water Conservancy and Charima Young from Penn State. They will be giving the Commission a presentation on the Musser Gap 2 Valleylands initiative. Ms. Young stated that they will be doing a recap of where they have landed after all of the collaboration with the public. Ms. Young stated that they have done surveys, have had three public meetings and a stake holders meeting. They had over 300+ participants that gave them ideas of what they would/wouldn't like to see. After all of these meetings they have settled on five ideas. Ms. Nardone stated that they have generated five different themes from the surveys. The first theme is habitat creation this idea really revolves around habitat protection. Increasing biodiversity, forested corridors all along the trail, meadow areas for habitat, look out points and bird observation platforms.

The second theme was designed around farm land while balancing high diversity for wildlife habitat. Ms. Nardone stated that currently a lot of the property is being leased for agriculture and with this idea you will see agriculture continue to be there. There was some discussion on moving conventional Ag into sustainable Ag. This idea opens partnerships up with local breweries/other organizations that could benefit from crop production. The third theme was recreation, and this idea has been persistent and consistent in all discussions. Recreation

and education based ideas would be bird observation points, stream access and crossings. It was noted in all public meetings that there is a need for a safer crossing across route 45. The fourth theme is focused around water resource protection. This is reforestation, connectivity, water quality improvements and partnerships with adjacent land owners for habitat improvement. This idea was consistently highlighted as the most important consideration. There are opportunities to do storm water, agricultural runoff ideas, and collaborative opportunities to work with the land owners. Theme five would be minimal intervention and maintain the land as is. Leave the agriculture in place, make a safer crossing across route 45, some trail enhancement and maintenance but for the most part leaving everything as is.

At their last meeting they really asked people to prioritize the ideas and what they would really like to see out of all of five ideas. They heard idea four, water resource protection; idea one, habitat creation; and idea three, passive recreation were the top three ideas that most people felt should be integrated into the site. Ms. Young explained that for the fall they will not have a class but they will have a project and they will be working on a feasibility study of these ideas. Ms. Young asked if the Commission had any feedback on this project. Ms. Taricani asked if they spoke with the homeowners that live close to the project. Ms. Young stated that they have had number public meetings so they have spoken to some of the close residents. Ms. Nardone stated that they do have relationships with a lot of the adjacent land owners. Mr. Crassweller asked about Penn State's risk management given the landscape of this project. Ms. Young stated that this will be a part of the feasibility class. Mr. Crassweller also inquired about the parking for the project. Ms. Nardone stated that there is a parking area that right now isn't signed well but is very well used at the top the project is also very close to the Whitehall Road Regional Park and they will have an abundance of parking. Meetings have also brought up ideas regarding parking, such as more signage and location of signs. Mr. Keough stated that he has some concern about clearly identifying the difference between ownership and management of the project.

#### **IV. WATKINS SUBDIVISION**

Ms. Aneckstein stated that the Watkins Subdivision is a new subdivision that Penn Terra submitted this week. This subdivision is located at 550 Bloomsdorf Drive. The purpose is to divide the lot into two parcels. The existing lot is currently around three acres and the revised lot will be around three and a half acres, and the other lot will be around one acre. Ms. Aneckstein stated that the lot is currently serviced by the State College Borough Water Authority and has sewer septic and the second lot will have well water and septic. Mr. Keough stated that there may be a discrepancy with the water service asked Ms. Aneckstein to clarify the water service for the existing lot and new lot. She will look into this and take these comments and give them to the engineer. Mr. Keough also asked staff to look into how many lots can be put in, especially regarding the closeness of the septic systems. Mr. Keough stated that he spoke with staff regarding park fee and lieu. Mr. Ressler stated that based on the new proposed ordinance it would not require park land fee and lieu.

#### **V. SCBWA RELOT/SCBWA WATER TREATMENT FACILITY LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Ms. Aneckstein stated that a representative from the SCBWA couldn't be here tonight but Ken Beldin a representative from Gwin Dobson and Foreman is present to answer any questions. Ms. Aneckstein stated that the property is located at 3062 Ernest Lane in State

College. The SCBWA property and the Gary and Carol Myers property will be blended together and the purpose of this replot is to allow the water authority to build their water treatment facility on this lot and outside of the flood plain. The SCBWA was granted several variances that mostly had to do with the construction of the roadway to the facility. Mr. Keough stated that the Commission has seen this plan multiple times. Mr. Wheland asked about the variances for the minimum lot area in the RA and the non-conforming use that were granted and if they met the criteria. Mr. Ressler stated that the Zoning Hearing Board felt it was warranted to grant the variances given the hardship. Mr. Keough stated that there will need to be two separate actions. First is the replot of the SCBWA land, based on information from staff the only thing needed is signatures. Mr. Keough entertained a motion to approve the SCBWA and Gary and Carol Myers replot. Mr. Jerry Binney moved the motion, Mr. Wheland seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Keough stated that the with the land development plan Commission is recommending nine conditions as a part of the approval to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Crassweller moved the motion, Mr. Binney seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **X. SALDO/ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE**

Mr. Keough explained that the Commission has been asked to look over the ordinance update. Ms. Aneckstein highlighted issues from Carolyn's memo that are still issues that haven't been resolved. Ms. Aneckstein stated that the first issue is whether or not to eliminate the industrial area. Mr. Crassweller stated that the Township will need to have an inter municipal agreement in place and ready to go before eliminating this. Mr. Keough stated that at the moment we don't have an agreement. Mr. Keough's thought is we pass the ordinance with the industrial use in it and then if the Board of Supervisors would like to remove it then they could pursue an inter municipal agreement and then remove it. The next issue is incinerators. Ms. Aneckstein stated that this needs a definition and an area where it is allowed. Mr. Scott asked if there are currently any farmers in the area using incinerators. Mr. Wheland stated that it is usually big operations that use them. Mr. Wheland stated that more commonly people are composting their deceased animals. Mr. Wheland stated that it as an accessory use for agricultural use so why not keep it. Mr. Keough stated there needs to be a way to distinguish incinerators. Such as agricultural and non-agricultural or industrial incinerators vs. all other incinerators. Mr. Keough also suggested looking for the state's definition of an incinerator. Mr. Keough moved on to issue number three the removal of mining/quarrying. Mr. Crassweller stated that a soil pit is something completely different and shouldn't be listed under mining/quarrying. Mr. Keough suggested not giving soil pits a definition and just removing mining/quarrying because soil pits is something different. Mr. Ressler agreed with Mr. Keough by stating that no one will be going out and checking for soil pit permits. Mr. Keough stated the fourth issue is assigning traditional farm structures as a conditional use in all AR categories or keeping them as a permitted use by right. The Commission discussed and stated they feel they should keep it. Ms. Laura Dinnini took the stand and stated that the BOS were talking about nontraditional farm structures as a conditional use in the AR. Mr. Keough stated that his recollection of that discussion was that there will be housing units in RR and also have some Ag activities. The concern is where housing units are located do we want open those areas to Ag activities because of the issue of proximity. This is in relation to item number seven, kennels. Ms. Dinnini stated that the Ag Ad Hoc recommendations were two acres and that changed but that wasn't the main issue. It was some of the other uses such as kennels. What is the appropriate parcel size and

appropriate uses in the diversity of the RR district. Mr. Wheland stated to make a definition for special exception. Mr. Ressler stated special exception is a use that is appropriate for public health safety and welfare for the zoning district in which it is permitted but is subject to specific standards and criteria. The municipal planning code relies on the Zoning Hearing Board to grant special requests. Mr. Keough asked what if we treated kennels in the RR zone like we treat mining and quarrying as a special exception.

Mr. Scott suggested bringing the consultant back and the Commission agreed. Mr. Keough asked if it would be possible to have a Carolyn by phone at our next meeting. Ms. Aneckstein stated that she can see if she is available. Mr. Keough stated the Commission needs to have a clear list of what needs asked. Category of kennels and definition, the category special exception regarding kennel and mining/quarrying. Can kennel appear under principal uses under more than one category under area and bulk regulation.

**XI. SUMMARY OF ACTIVE PLANS**

Ms. Aneckstein stated that not much has changed since last meeting. The Commission saw the water authority replot of lands and water treatment facility tonight. There is a meeting scheduled later this week with Stahl Sheaffer Engineering, CRPR and staff to discuss the landscaping plan at the Whitehall Road Regional Park. Harner Farm, Sheetz and Orchard View is waiting for the traffic study to be complete. Mr. Keough stated that the public meeting to discuss the comprehensive plan has been cancelled at rescheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the State College high school.

**XII. CENTRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT**

Mr. Thompson stated they were updated on the Scott Road pump station and they plan to move forward. Update on biking in the Centre Region, learned different things about biking. Atherton street paving will start sept 17<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting will be October 7, 2019 at 12:15 pm they will be meeting with COG transportation and land use committee.

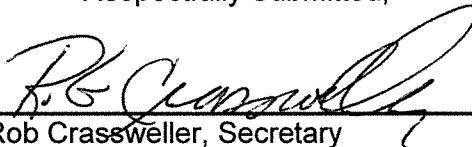
**XIII. APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 26, 2019**

Mr. Keough asked for a motion to approve the August 28, 2019 minutes. Mr. Wheland moved the motion, Mr. Crassweller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

The Planning Commission meeting for Monday September 9, 2019 was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rob Crassweller, Secretary  
For the Planning Commission