

**FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022
6:00 PM**

ATTENDANCE

The Planning Commission held its first meeting of the month on Monday, September 12, 2022, as a hybrid meeting. In attendance:

Commission:

Jerry Binney –Chair
Rob Crassweller - Secretary
Shannon Holliday
Bill Keough
Dr. Ellen Taricani – Vice Chair
Qian Zhang - Alternate

Staff:

Jenna Wargo - Planning & Zoning Director
Jeff Ressler - Zoning Administrator
Kristina Bassett – Community Planner

Others in attendance: Rhonda R. Demchak, Recording Secretary; Bryce Ciccarelli, Martin Solodky; Andrew Taylor, Michael Giacomponello; Colin Maloney

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Binney called the Ferguson Township Planning Commission's regular meeting to order on Monday, September 12, at 6:00 p.m. and it has been advertised in accordance with the PA Sunshine Act as a hybrid meeting.

Ms. Wargo took roll call, and the Planning Commission had a quorum.

II. CITIZEN INPUT

There were no comments.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Crassweller pointed out that the minutes did not reflect that Ms. Wargo took over the meeting until the Chair was appointed. Ms. Wargo will have that corrected in the minutes.

Mr. Keough moved that the Planning Commission **approve** the August 22, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes. Ms. Holliday seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Wireless Communications Facilities Amendment (PA Act 50)

Ms. Wargo reported that the Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act (Act 50) was signed into law on June 30, 2021 and was drafted in unison with the Pennsylvania Municipal League and telecommunications providers. The legislation provides for fair and equitable treatment of small wireless facilities and comprehensive protections for the municipality to ensure proper maintenance of public rights-of-way. At a Regular Meeting held on September 20, 2021, the Board of Supervisors authorized staff to prepare an amendment to the Wireless Communications Facilities Ordinance.

After further review by the Township Solicitor, staff has updated the draft amendments and included redlined drafts in the agenda for amendments to §27-710—Wireless Communications Facilities, §27-1102—Definitions and the

establishment of Chapter 21, Streets and Sidewalks, Part 6, Non-Tower-Based or Small Wireless Communications Facilities in the Right-of-Way. The Board reviewed the drafts at their September 6, 2022, meeting and authorized advertisement of a public hearing.

Ms. Wargo stated that the last time the Planning Commission reviewed the amendments were in April 2022. Ms. Wargo noted that the biggest change is the addition to Chapter 21 and that PA Act 50 requires that this type of use be permitted in every zoning district.

Mr. Keough referenced page 22 of the agenda packet regarding B.3, preserving the character of the Township and asked who determines the characterization of the Township. Ms. Wargo answered that the Township gets to retain the design guidelines.

Mr. Crassweller asked which category the hand-radio operator towers will fall into. Ms. Wargo stated they weren't moved into Chapter 21.

Also, Mr. Crassweller suggested making the track changes in red because they were hard to read.

Mr. Crassweller inquired about the historical district listed on page 24 of the agenda packet and asked if Pine Grove Mills is included. Ms. Wargo reported that it doesn't because the Township doesn't have any established historical districts.

Mr. Keough stated there are still problem areas in the western end of the Township due to lack of service and suggested that staff keep requesting more access.

Dr. Taricani expressed concerns with the emissions.

Mr. Crassweller moved that the Planning Commission **recommend** approval to the Board of Supervisors to adopt the amendments to Chapter 27, Zoning, Section 710, Wireless Communications Facilities, Section 1102, Definitions and established Chapter 21, Streets and Sidewalks, Part 6, Non-Tower-Based or Small Wireless Communications Facilities in the Right-of-Way. Mr. Keough seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Elder Cottages Review and Discussion

Ms. Bassett noted that included in Planning Commission's 2023 Work Program is a review of Elder Cottages for potential implementation in Ferguson Township. Staff has reviewed regulations in Pennsylvania for Elder Cottages and how they are regulated and has included in the agenda a staff report

Ms. Bassett presented a PowerPoint presentation that included the following:

- Definition of an Elder Cottage - An apartment, not less than 600 square feet, sharing utility connections with a principal building. Such unit(s) may be within an outbuilding (usually located toward the rear of the same lot as the principal building). These accessory dwelling units do not count toward density calculations.
- Types of Accessory Dwelling Units – Internal, Attached, or Detached (Elder Cottage)

- Why choose an Elder Cottage? – Temporary, Care for Aging Parents, Aging Parents Can Assist Family with Childcare
 - Mr. Keough suggested adding language for people who have medical needs that can still live independently.
- Regulations – Size, Utility Connections, Parking, Owner Occupancy, Entrance/Accessibility, Stormwater
- Challenges – Zoning Limitations, Site Access, Cost/Financing, Removal, Utility Connections
 - Mr. Keough suggested looking into what constitutes a foundation.
 - Ms. Zhang asked if a person could build a second dwelling onto their home. Mr. Ressler reported that in R-1 and R-1B, it is only for single-family dwelling district. Ms. Holliday asked if the Elder Cottages are implemented could they be considered in the R-1 and R-1B districts. Ms. Wargo stated that the Planning Commission will need to make that recommendation. Mr. Binney reported it would require a zoning change. Mr. Keough stated that some should be included the R-1 zoning designations.
- Current FT Zoning – Rural Residential (RR), Rural Agricultural (RA), Traditional Town Development (TTD)
- Factors to Consider – Close to walking trails, Close to Transit, Close to shopping/doctors, Close to social/activity centers
- Regulations to Consider – Where, Lot Size/Setbacks, Minimum/Maximum building size, Temporary or Permanent, Conditional Use, Elder Cottage Permit, Minimum age of occupant in Elder Cottage
 - Mr. Binney inquired about the requirement to remove upon the death of a person and asked if it could stay on the property. Ms. Bassett reported there is no Township requirement, but there is for HUD. Ms. Wargo stated that HUD will reuse the dwellings. Mr. Keough stated that what he has researched in other communities, the cottages are portable.
 - Ms. Zhang inquired if non-family members could live on the property to help care for the elderly homeowner.
 - Mr. Crassweller stated that finding a lot big enough might be a problem.
 - Mr. Keough discussed the expenses with utility connections and suggested inviting some utility people to speak to the Planning Commission on best practices.

V. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE COMMISSION

There were no communications.

VI. OFFICIAL REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCES

A. Board of Supervisors

Ms. Wargo reported that the Board reviewed the IMBT Preliminary Subdivision Plan,

Act 50 Amendment, and the Request for ACT 537 Special Study. Ms. Wargo stated that Jim May gave a presentation on the regional growth boundaries and the sewer service area. Ms. Wargo reported that Mr. Armen Sahakian was requesting the study to see if he could run a gravity fed sewer from the subdivision down through the farm parcels to the Scott Road Pump Station. Ms. Wargo stated that his request was to run infrastructure outside the original growth boundary and the Board denied the request.

Mr. Keough urged staff to obtain a good resolution for the lane at the IMBT Subdivision.

B. CRPC Meeting

Dr. Taricani reported that they met and discussed new bike trails being placed in Patton Township and on campus. They discussed the new bank that will be built near Aldi's on North Atherton Street; new homes out by Toftrees and a medical center. Dr. Taricani reported that the Whitehall Road Regional Park construction has started, and they also honored Jon Eich for his service.

Mr. Crassweller asked if the intersection coming into Toftrees from the bypass will be signalized.

C. Land Development Plans

Ms. Bassett reviewed the following:

- a. Farmstead View Preliminary Subdivision – Awaiting Response to fifth review
- b. Peace Center and Cemetery Preliminary Land Development Plan – Awaiting Response to first review
- c. Fusion Japanese Steakhouse – Awaiting Response to first review
- d. IMBT Preliminary Subdivision Plan– Conditionally approved on September 6, 2022
- e. West College Avenue Vertical Mixed-Use Preliminary Land Development Plan – Awaiting Response to first review
- f. MP Machinery Preliminary Land Development Plan – Under second staff review
- g. Minor Subdivision of 2161 and 2151 Sandy Dr – Under first staff review
- h. Salvation Baptist Church – Awaiting Response to first review
- i. 165 Volos Lane (296 W. Pine Grove Road) Minor Land Development Plan– Under third staff review

D. Staff Updates

Ms. Wargo reported that on October 10th from 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. there will be a Design Charrette session for the Terrace Streetscape District. There was a public input meeting on August 31 via zoom and it can be seen [here](#). Mr. Keough suggested that they give input on the alley and the Buckhout/College Avenue intersection.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Crassweller made a motion to **adjourn** the September 12, 2022, Planning Commission meeting at 7:24 p.m. Dr. Taricani seconded the motion.

Ms. Holliday announced that there is a Multicultural Unity Fair on September 17th from

12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Borough Building. Also, Global Connections is having their annual membership picnic on September 18th at Tudek Park at 5:00 p.m. Ms. Holliday Chairs both events.

Mr. Keough suggested adding Announcements to future agendas.

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Crassweller", is written over a horizontal line.

Rob Crassweller, Secretary
For the Planning Commission

